

**EXPLORING THE ALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE POLICY IMAGE OF
TEACHERS AND TEACHERS' NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY**

by

TSWAKAE JOYCE MORAKE

(BA, PGCE, PGDIP)

Dissertation submitted to fulfil the requirements for the degree

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

in the

School of Education Studies

Philosophy and Policy Studies in Education

Faculty of Education

at the

University of the Free State

Bloemfontein

Supervisor: Dr Adré le Roux

Co-supervisor: Dr Marguerite Müller

Date of submission: June 2020

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the degree

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

is original and entirely my own work, except where other sources have been acknowledged. I also certify that this dissertation has not previously been submitted at this or any other faculty or institution.

I hereby cede copyright of this thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.



.....

TJ Morake

Bloemfontein

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, friends and colleagues who have supported me throughout the journey. I also dedicate this dissertation to my son Katleho-Bokamoso, I hope it will inspire him to work hard and follow in my footsteps.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who supported me during my dissertation writing process. This dissertation would have been impossible without the help of my supervisor, Dr Adré le Roux. It is also my pleasure to thank Dr Marguerite Müller as my co-supervisor. Thank you so much for all your support and understanding. It has truly been an advantage to work with each of you. I have learned a great deal from you; I will forever be grateful for your feedback, recommendations and suggestions that has challenged my thinking and improved my work.

I express my gratitude to the participants of this study who so willingly spared their time to share their experiences with me. Their sacrifice and willingness made this study possible. I also acknowledge the support from my family; without them I would not have succeeded. They provided me with love, persistence and understanding during demanding times. They managed to withstand the lack of motherly care since my attention was divided between them and my studies. Instead, they adopted a supportive role that helped me to succeed. Ho tswa botebong ba pelo yaka kere keya leboha, Ntate Modimo a mpolokele lona!!!

Completing this dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my study mates, friends, colleagues and SADTU comrades. I would like to especially thank my study mate, Sister Moretlo Rapiiso. I could have not finished this dissertation without your support and flexibility along the way, thank you so much my sister from another country. Kannete Mosotho one a nepile ha are “ntja pedi hae hlolwe ke sebata”.

I would like to also thank the language editor, Ms Annamarie Du Preez. Thank you so much for doing such a wonderful job. And lastly, I thank God for bringing amazing people to my life, and for giving me the strength and perspective to persevere and to enjoy this journey.

SUMMARY

Teachers' identity construction is central to the teaching profession. Teachers use their professional identity as a framework to develop their ideas about their role in the profession. To be successful in the profession, teachers need to align their professional identity with their understanding of policy expectations. Teachers begin their teaching career with various ideas about the profession. Their personal schooling experiences and teacher education are crucial factors in determining their attitudes towards teaching, and their professional beliefs. However, pre-conceived ideas about the teaching profession are often far removed from reality. In this study I explore the alignment between policy image and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identities. I contend that research aimed at exploring such an alignment could foreground and elucidate a multifaceted understanding of teacher identity.

Framed within a narrative paradigm and informed by a qualitative approach, several findings derived from this study. A literature review enabled a conceptual understanding of concepts that are central to this study, namely identity, identity construction and teacher professional identity. Academic insights and a conceptual understanding of these concepts constitute the backdrop of my research. Various policy documents were analysed to foreground the policy image of South African teachers. An analysis of the *Employment of Educators Act 76 (1998)*, the *Code of Professional Ethics in South African Council for Educators Act 31 (2000)*, the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2015)*, and the *Personnel Administrative Measures (2016)*, enabled the construction of a policy framework for teacher image. Although the analysis of education-related documents foregrounded the policy image of South African teachers, the findings are presented in alignment with the collective roles of teachers as highlighted in the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2015)*. The policy image portrays teachers as specialists of their subjects or phases who can mediate learning, design learning programmes and assess learners. While they have to be leaders, managers and administrators in their classrooms and the broader school context, teachers must also assume a community, citizenship and pastoral role. Teachers have to stay abreast with developments in the profession, and are therefore required to be life-long scholars.

Data generated through narrative interviews with ten participants revealed that constant changes influence teachers' construction and reconstruction of their professional identity. Teachers enter the profession with pre-conceived ideas and are often disillusioned when confronted with

complex requirements and pathways in the profession. They have to continually rethink their understanding of the profession as they struggle to comply with policy expectations. Having to take care of the well-being of learners, coupled with an array of roles and responsibilities, teachers often feel overburdened, incompetent and ready to quite. Although teachers are expected to make use of professional development opportunities, the findings revealed that teachers are frustrated by a lack of informative and constructive workshops that address their specific needs. This study foregrounds misalignment between policy expectations and teachers' experiences of school realities. As a consequence, teachers experience conflict between the policy image portrayed of them on paper, and their roles and responsibilities within the complexity of their daily experiences. Three suggestions are made to mitigate the tension between policy expectations and teachers' professional identity. Consideration should be given to teachers' specialised knowledge – ideally, teachers should teach within the scope of their specialised knowledge and skills. School realities must be acknowledged, teachers must be recognised within these challenging realities, and teacher participation in policy-related issues should be encouraged. The strengthening of the partnership between higher education institutions and the Department of Basic Education can assist in preparing future teachers in terms of a realistic balance between policy expectations and challenging school realities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 RESEARCH INTEREST AND CRITICAL QUESTIONS	2
1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES	5
1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	5
1.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM	7
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN	9
1.6.1 <i>Research methodology</i>	10
1.6.2 <i>Research methods</i>	11
1.6.2.1 <i>Literature review</i>	11
1.6.2.2 <i>Document analysis</i>	12
1.6.2.3 <i>Narrative interviews</i>	13
1.6.3 <i>Participant selection</i>	14
1.6.4 <i>Data analysis</i>	15
1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY	16
1.7.1 <i>Credibility</i>	16
1.7.2 <i>Transferability</i>	17
1.7.3 <i>Dependability</i>	17
1.7.4 <i>Conformability</i>	17
1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	18
1.9 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY	19
1.9.1 <i>Scientific demarcation</i>	19
1.9.2 <i>Geographical demarcation</i>	20
1.10 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY	20
1.11 SUMMARY	21
CHAPTER 2: IDENTITY, IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY	23
2.1 INTRODUCTION	23
2.2 IDENTITY: A MULTIFARIOUS CONCEPT	23
2.2.1 <i>Defining identity</i>	23
2.2.2 <i>Personal identity and social identity</i>	24
2.2.3 <i>Identity and practice</i>	26
2.3 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION	29
2.3.1 <i>Factors influencing identity construction</i>	30
2.3.1.1 <i>Family and identity construction</i>	31
2.3.1.2 <i>Language and identity construction</i>	32
2.3.1.3 <i>Social influences on identity construction</i>	33
2.3.2 <i>Narrative identity construction</i>	34
2.4 TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY	35
2.4.1 <i>Teacher professional identity construction</i>	37
2.4.2 <i>Importance of teachers' professional identity</i>	39
2.5 SUMMARY	40
CHAPTER 3: POLICY IMAGE OF SOUTH AFRICAN TEACHERS	41
3.1 INTRODUCTION	41
3.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	42

3.2.1	<i>Framework for analysis</i>	42
3.2.2	<i>Documents analysed</i>	44
3.3	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS .47	
3.3.1	<i>Learning mediator and specialist</i>	48
3.3.2	<i>Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner</i>	52
3.3.3	<i>Interpreter and designer of learning programmes, and assessor</i>	55
3.3.4	<i>Leader, administrator and manager</i>	58
3.3.5	<i>Community, citizenship and pastoral roles</i>	62
3.4	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY	67
3.5	SUMMARY	70
CHAPTER 4: TEACHERS' NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY		
		72
4.1	INTRODUCTION	72
4.2	<i>Narrative interviews</i>	73
4.2.1	<i>Description of site and participants</i>	74
4.2.2	<i>Steps taken to analyse the narrative interviews</i>	75
4.3	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	79
4.3.1	<i>The impact of constant changes within the teaching profession</i>	80
4.3.2	<i>Entry, requirements and pathways in teaching profession</i>	84
4.3.3	<i>Effects of socio-economic and social factors on the construction of professional identity</i>	89
4.3.4	<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	93
4.3.5	<i>Informative and constructive developmental workshops and training</i>	98
4.4	SUMMARY	101
CHAPTER 5: COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND REFLECTION		
		103
5.1	INTRODUCTION	103
5.2	OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS	103
5.3	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS	105
5.3.1	<i>Consideration of teachers' specialised knowledge</i>	105
5.3.2	<i>Acknowledging school realities and teacher participation</i>	108
5.3.3	<i>Strengthening the partnership between Higher Education Institutions and the Department of Basic Education</i>	110
5.4	IN REFLECTION	112
5.5	CONCLUDING REMARKS	115
REFERENCE LIST		
		117
APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE (UFS)		
		126
APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER - FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION		
		127
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER		
		128
APPENDIX D: NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS		
		129
APPENDIX E: LETTER – LANGUAGE EDITOR		
		130

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 3.1: Basic policy framework for teacher image.....	46
Table 4.1: Biographical data of the participants.....	75
Figure 1.1: Map of the Free State province.....	20
Figure 3.1: Steps taken in the document analysis.....	43
Figure 4.1: Steps taken in the narrative analysis data	76

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS -	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CPDT -	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
DBE -	Department of Basic Education
DHET -	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE -	Department of Education
EEA-	Employment of Educators Act
MRTEQ-	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification
NCS-	National Curriculum Statement
NSE-	Norms and Standards for Educators
NPPPR -	National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements
OBE-	Outcomes-Based Education
PAM -	Personnel Administrative Measures
PLCs -	Professional Learning Communities
RNCS -	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RSA -	Republic of South Africa
SACE-	South African Council for Educators Act
SADTU -	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SA-SAMS-	South African School Administration and Management System
SGBs -	School Governing Bodies
SMT-	School Management Team
TALIS-	Teaching and Learning International Survey

CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the largest single occupational group that serves as a building block for other professions (RSA, 2007). The role of teachers has strategic significance for the development of skills, knowledge and the cultural preparation of young people. However, teachers can no longer claim that their task is limited only to developing the cognitive skills of their learners and to knowing their subjects well (Isotalo, 2017). In addition to the facilitation of learning and the organisation of extra mural and co-curricular activities, teachers also need to care for the emotional well-being of the learners, assist with how they associate with others, perform pastoral duties and attend to their sexual learning (Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk & Nguyen, 2015; Banda & Mutambo, 2016).

The way in which teachers identify themselves as professionals subsequently serves as a significant contributing aspect for an understanding of their professional lives. In this regard, Chikoko (2015) and Hong (2010) indicates that the construction of teachers' identity is central to the profession of teaching as it offers a structure for teachers to create their own ideas about how to understand their work and place in society. Studies across different countries have considered teachers' professional identity as a vital factor in teachers' motivation, productivity and perseverance, and in shaping their professional teaching image (Hong, 2010; cf. also Carrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink & Hofman, 2011). In other words, as teachers' identity helps them to set goals and pave the career route they would like to take, it is important for them to make sense of their professional identities (Izadinia, 2013).

Most qualified teachers begin their teaching career with numerous images of the profession and of how they perceive themselves as teachers. Teachers' own educational experiences play a vital role in determining these initial images and understanding of teaching as a profession (Chong, Low & Goh, 2011). However, as noted by Daniels (2015), such pre-conceived ideas about what the teaching profession entails are often far removed from reality. Over the past few years the roles, duties and the responsibilities of teachers have changed and broadened to such an extent that teachers had to redefine their professional profiles (Chong *et al.*, 2011). In addition, educational policies often require teachers to undertake more responsibilities that are out of their professional context (Esteve, 2000). By implication, education amendments and work-related changes have an

influence on professional beliefs. Concerns about teacher professionalism and professional identity are subsequently challenged on policy level and in terms of practice (Sachs, 2001). In this regard, Daniels (2015) writes that in order to comply with policy expectations, teachers often experience conflict between their professional and personal identities.

Recent discussions have indicated that there are contending views around the nature of teacher professional identity as portrayed in different policies and as viewed by teachers themselves (Bosso, 2017). These debates evoked my interest and I became curious as to whether in the extent to which the assumed ideal image of the teacher as portrayed in education policy is aligned with the way in which teachers construct their own professional identities. In other words, my research interest centred, by implication, on how policy visions are aligned with what teachers realistically perceive in their schools and classrooms. My interest was also informed by the possibility that the teachers' policy image can create expectations and demands that are not aligned with their personal identities, which, in turn, might leave teachers with an identity conflict.

1.2 RESEARCH INTEREST AND CRITICAL QUESTIONS

According to Mhlauli, Salani and Mokotedi (2015) and Weber (2008), apartheid can be defined as a system of discrimination for different races, and the separation of black and white people in all areas of government and the labour market. This ideology was rooted in the social, economic and political structures of the country, and a race-inspired policy of segregated schools and curricula was implemented. Teachers' professional image was also aligned with the expectation in official apartheid documents that a teacher must have sober habits, be a follower of religious principles, and be committed to the cultural traditions of the colonial power (Jacklin, 2010). Informed by an ideology of apartheid or separatism, the school curriculum was used to serve the interests of society as alleged by the then apartheid government. As a consequence, an institutionalised curriculum intended to cater for the needs of those in power at the expense of the powerless, limited teachers' main task to delivering a curriculum that promoted white superiority and black inferiority (Weber, 2008; Mhlauli *et al.*, 2015). During apartheid, teachers' professional identity was reduced to that of state functionaries. However, since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africans and by implication teachers, have had the remarkable opportunity of fashioning in a new set of policies and reshaping new identities (Francis & Le Roux, 2011).

With the dawning of democracy, South African teachers have been placed in a position to consider what is of value to them as teacher professionals and to re-construct their professional identities. In this regard, Kepalaite (2013) is of the opinion that current educational policies portray the image of teachers as transformative intellectuals who are tasked with promoting democratic values and the rule of law as enshrined in the Constitution (cf. RSA, 1996:Section1; RSA DoE, 2001a). According to the *Code of Professional Ethics in South African Council for Educators Act* (SACE) (RSA DoE, 2000:3), teachers 'ought to' conduct themselves well in their working lives as qualified teachers, namely to

act in a proper and becoming way such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute, acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the constitution of South Africa and exercise authority with caution.

The *Code of Professional Ethics*, which forms part of *SACE* (2000), subsequently provides an ethical perspective and moral prescriptions for acceptable teacher behaviour. Although vaguely alluded to in Section 4 of the *National Education Policy Act* of 1996, the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE) of 2000 introduced seven integrated roles with their associated integrated and applied competencies for qualified South African teachers. In 2015, the NSE was substituted by the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification*. The seven intergrated roles are included in this document, and South African teachers are expected "to function as a specialist in a phase, subject discipline or practise; a learning mediator; an interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; a leader, administrator and manager; a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; an assessor; and to assume a community, citizenship and pastoral role" (RSA, 2015: Appendix A). As noted by Voinea (2014), the teaching profession entails not only the acceptance of roles related to that of teaching facilitators in the learning process but also the reanalysing of traditional teachers' roles.

The tasks of teachers in South Africa today are more complex and demanding because of the constant reforms and associated changes. The changes and reforms in schools include *inter alia*, the de-categorisation of schools, thus the change from primary, intermediate and secondary schools to primary and high schools (Chikoko, 2015). Also, teachers have been challenged by various changes in the curriculum. The post-apartheid government introduced *outcomes-based education* (OBE) as an attempt to improve the quality of post-apartheid education (Jansen, 2001). *Curriculum 2005*, which was based on the philosophy of outcomes-based education, was

introduced as an alternative to apartheid education. In 2002, *Curriculum 2005* was revised, and the *National Curriculum Statement (NCS)* was adopted, which in turn was changed to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)* in 2004. The South African curriculum underwent another revision, which resulted in the current *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)* in 2011 (Francis & Le Roux, 2011). These curriculum reform initiatives led to confusion and a sense of unsettledness amongst teachers, as the training they received in order to adapt to new changes was often perceived as not enough (Davids, 2018). In addition to curriculum challenges, teachers also have to answer to parents' demands concerning the educational outcomes for their children, the need for access to education and more democratic participation (Banda & Mutambo, 2016). As noted by Davids (2018), the teaching profession in South Africa is presently experiencing new types of pressure and enduring profound changes concerning the roles, competencies, values, and the basic knowledge of teachers.

It has, however, been noted that education policies are sometimes created in a way that may deviate from teachers' values and beliefs, and the ethical purpose of education (Bosso, 2017). With regards to the assigned seven roles and competencies for teachers, reference was made to these roles as seemingly being "out of sync not only with teachers' professional identities but also with their personal and cultural identities" (Matheson and Harley in Jansen, 2001:245). In a similar manner, Banda and Mutambo (2016) indicate that the teacher, who has to play various roles in school and society, might find him or herself in a situation that is complicated because of the hopes from different sectors of society. Such different hopes can lead to conflict within teachers themselves, and can also affect the relationship with the school management, colleagues and society at large. Banda and Mutambo (2016) note that many teachers have fallen prey to unjust decisions because of supposedly deviating from the norms of the local culture. It is therefore quite possible that policy images of teachers can lead to an identity conflict when they are not aligned with teachers' personal identities as practitioners.

A misalignment between policy image and teacher identity can also impact on teachers having to continuously create immediate coping mechanisms. In this regard, Kepalaite (2013) mentions heavy workloads, problems with cooperation from fellow colleagues, too many roles, lack of support and too many expectations from the community, and problems in coping with external and internal policy requirements as some of the major issues faced by teachers. The gap between policy expectations and school practices remains a frustration for teachers, which in turn, has also

led to a lack of professional autonomy and the disempowerment of teachers (Daniels, 2015; Chong *et al.*, 2011). It is because of the possibility of an identity conflict within teachers and subsequent problems relating to a dislocation between policy visions and practical realities that I became interested in exploring the alignment between policy image and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identities. Based on my research interest and informed by the possibility of identity conflict, this study was guided by the question: *what is the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity?*

To answer this research question, these subsidiary questions were asked:

- 1.2.1 How are the concepts identity, identity construction and teacher professional identity conceptualised?
- 1.2.2 What image is portrayed of the South African teacher in education policy and other related documents?
- 1.2.3 How do teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities?
- 1.2.4 What comments and suggestions can be made regarding the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' narratives of their professional identity construction?

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Following the research question, the aim of this study is to explore the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity. In order to attain this aim, the study is built around the objectives to

- 1.3.1 develop a clear and broad understanding of concepts such as identity, identity construction and teacher professional identity;
- 1.3.2 analyse how education policies and related official documents portray a particular image of teachers;
- 1.3.3 gain an understanding of how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities; and
- 1.3.4 make comments and suggestions regarding the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' narratives of their professional identity construction.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

I started my career as an intermediate phase teacher in 2010 and can identify with Cook and Brown's observation (in Somnath, 2017) that the practice of teaching is complicated, as instructional practices are informed by both the implicit and explicit dimensions of teachers'

thinking. The demand for change in my teaching practice has been constant and ranges from curriculum revisions, to the de-categorisation of schools, and to endless amendments of policies. As a teacher, it is difficult to obtain a comfortable level in terms of subject mastering as one is often expected in the primary school to teach any grade and subject. From my own experience, I can recall having to move from teaching Grades seven, eight and nine to teaching grades four to seven. As a teacher who also serves in the school governing body and a branch secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), I have observed changes in teachers' beliefs about and understanding of the teaching profession during professional meetings and interactions with colleagues. I have come to realise that a lack of understanding of what policies expect teachers to do often leaves teachers confused, and at times results in the negligence of core duties.

Moreover, I have also learnt from my teaching experience that some teachers opt for early retirement due to their inability to cope with the constant flow of new trends and changes in the profession. Circumstantial evidence indicates that some teachers often find it difficult to incorporate their personal values and beliefs with the expectations articulated in education policies. Since I became a deputy branch secretary of SADTU in 2015, currently serving as a branch secretary, I have observed that most of the cases and disciplinary hearings centre on issues related to teachers failing to cooperate with what is expected from them as teachers, as opposed to what they consider good and best for them to do. It subsequently seems that there are various factors that influence the way in which teachers construct their own professional identity. These factors may include changes in the profession, the expectations articulated in education policies, and miscommunication between policy expectations and teachers' perceived views and understanding of the profession. My interest for exploring how teachers construct their professional identities has therefore been triggered by my experiences and observations regarding difficulties surrounding such identities.

My contention is that a study which aims to explore the alignment between the policy image of teachers and the way in which teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities can foreground and elucidate teacher identity as a multifaceted phenomenon. In highlighting the complexity surrounding teacher identity, especially in relation to the alignment between policy image and teachers' narrative identity construction, this study can potentially contribute towards a better understanding of teachers' professional identity further than the most apparent

traditional stereotypes. As this study deals with the image of teachers as espoused in education policy, the outcomes of this study might also be beneficial to the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Understanding how teachers perceive their role as teacher professionals within their actual realities, could assist the DBE in times of policy review and amendment. The study could also possibly be useful for tertiary institutions involved in teaching education, as teacher education programmes also work with issues related to professional identity and education policies.

1.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The word paradigm was coined by American philosopher, in his eminent book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Thomas (1962). Paradigm refers to a philosophical way of thinking and “represents what we consider about the world (but cannot prove)” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:26). When framing paradigm in the context of research, it is perceived as representative of “a particular worldview that defines, for the researchers who hold this view, what is acceptable to research and how this should be done” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017:22). A research paradigm subsequently entails a set of paradigmatic theories that relate to broad approaches to research that define the nature of enquiry for research (Scotland, 2012; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Nieuwenhuis, 2017a).

On further refinement, a research paradigm involves various philosophical assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontological assumptions refer to what the research assumes about the natural surroundings and structure of reality (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017; Al-Saadi, 2014). As noted by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:27), ontological questions would typically be: *“Is there a reality out there in the social world or is it a construction created by one’s own mind?; Is reality of an objective nature, or the result of individual cognition?; What is the nature of the situation being studied?”*. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:27) further note that while ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of reality, “epistemology is concerned with methods of knowing and learning about the social world, and emphasis on questions such as: *how can we know about reality and what is the basis of our knowledge focuses?”* (Nieuwenhuis, 2017a; Al-Saadi, 2014). Epistemological assumptions subsequently embody a certain understanding of what that knowledge entails, and of how the researcher comes to know (gain knowledge) about what is assumed to be real (ontology). Assumptions of a methodological nature refer to how the researcher accesses and reports on what was learned about the reality (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). The term paradigm therefore defines a researcher’s worldview in terms of the ontological,

epistemological and methodological assumptions that underpin and guide the research endeavour in education research.

Based on this explanation of a research paradigm, it is worth noting that my study is informed by interpretivism paradigm, which draws on the ontological assumption that social reality can be understood through words created by the mind and within the levels of individual experiences (cf. Maree, 2017). According to Nieuwenhuis (2017a), interpretivism focuses on how people's subjective experiences assist them in constructing social reality. By implication, interpretivism alludes to the way in which one should look at social reality. In this regard, Maree (2017) explains that knowledge can be viewed in one of two ways, namely from an external or positivist stance, or an interpretive stance. An external point of view has no bearing on my study, because I did not assume and maintain a distant stance while exploring the alignment between policy image and teachers' narrative constructions of their professional identity. Rather, the ontological stance of interpretivism can be strongly associated with my study because I proceeded from the assumption that the research participants' internal and subjective experiences are important, and that I can therefore only make sense of it through an empathetic understanding between myself as the researcher and the participants. Framed within interpretivism, knowledge is generated through interpretation, and agreement may be pursued through dialogue (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017).

As a research paradigm, interpretivism is premised on the assumption that all meaningful communication in research is a form of story-telling, and maintains that communal reality is largely a narrative reality with a detailed emphasis on the storied nature of human conduct (Spector-Mersel, 2010). As Widdershoven (in Spector-Mersel, 2010:211) elegantly puts it: "life is both more and less than a story. It is more in that it is the basis of a variety of stories, and it is less in that it is unfinished and unclear as long as there are no stories told about it". While a narrative understanding emphasises the centrality of stories in the existence of people, it also defines how people employ the principles of probability and fidelity to test communication (Moran, 2015; Fisher in Robert & Shenhav, 2014). Probability refers to the coherence of a story as assessed by its structure and material in reference to other stories, and the actions or behaviours of its characters. While coherence refers to the extent to which a story 'hangs together', fidelity rests on the truthfulness of a story – the reliability of the story. As noted by Spector-Mersel (2010), in narratives we gain logic of stability and identity, connect with others, study our culture and change our behaviour.

In alignment with the ontological belief that my study comprises of people's individual experiences of the world, and premised on the assumption that the manner in which people respond in a given situation depends mainly on their past experiences and circumstances. I accepted that teachers construct their professional identity in different ways due to people's different knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences (cf. Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). Events are, to my understanding, assumed through the mental methods of the interpretation of stories that is influenced by contact with social contexts. While stories help people to make sense of the world, narrative theorists study how people make sense of stories. Stories subsequently construct action and people construct identities by putting themselves in a repertoire of stories based on their experiences (Somers & Gibson, 1993). Given my interest in how teachers narrate their professional identities, my study is informed by a narrative identity theory, according to which individuals create an identity by incorporating their life understandings into internalised, evolving stories that incorporates their past, apparent present-day and imagined future (cf. McAdams & McLean, 2013). Framed as a study of identity construction, this study is premised on the ontological and epistemological suggestion that teachers come to know, understand and make sense of their professional world through narratives that they establish about their professional identities (cf. Somers, 1994). To comprehend identity construction, interpretivism paradigm informed by a narrative identity theory is useful for this study, as this will enable an understanding of how teachers construct their professional identity as a vibrant and changing activity (cf. S reide, 2006).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design relates to a researcher's methodological choice for the generation and examination of the data that is required to answer the research question (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). By implication, methods and choice of data generation influence the nature of the research methodology and the research problem of a study. As such, a research design constitutes a strategy for choosing topics, research places and data generation measures that will assist to answer the research question(s) (Rakotsoane, 2012). The basic aim of a research design is to ensure that there is a connection between the research question and the generated data. Given the close link between research methodology and research methods within a research design, in the subsequent sections I discuss my choice of research methodology and research methods, with specific reference to their relevance for my study.

1.6.1 Research methodology

Research methodology is the approach or strategy which is concerned about the selection of specific methods (Scotland, 2012). Methodology answers the questions why, what, from where, when and how data is generated and evaluated. In a similar vein, Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013) define research methodology as a logical way to solve a problem. By implication, research methodology constitutes a particular approach to the carrying out of a research study and therefore serves as the basis and guide to the research.

Educational research is not just about engaging in the major steps of the research process, but it also encompasses the planning and writing of the research. The latter can take place within the scope of quantitative or qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). In this study, I made use of a qualitative research methodology, which “is a field of inquiry that crosscuts disciplines and subject matter, it relies on reasons behind various aspects of behaviour” (Rakotsoane, 2012:21). A qualitative research methodology depends on linguistic data instead of numerical data, and tries to find answers to questions by investigating different individuals (Nieuwenhuis, 2017b; cf. also Golden, 2014). Creswell (2012) states that questions in qualitative research are designed in such a way that the researcher is able to obtain the best possible information from participants.

In line with my ontological belief that my study comprised of people’s individual experiences of the world, I opted for a qualitative research methodology, which included a narrative inquiry. As I was interested in exploring the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers’ narrative construction of their professional identity, I considered narrative as a distinct form of discourse used to shape or order experience and to understand ones’ own or others’ actions (cf. Chase, 2005; also Fouche, De Vos & Schurink, 2018). Perceived as a complex and dynamic methodology in which the researcher and the participants have constant meetings to negotiate the meaning of the stories lived by the participants, narrative inquiry entails various qualitative procedures (Wang & Geale, 2015). These procedures include how individuals describe their lives, the telling of stories and the writing of narratives about their individual experiences. In an educational context, these stories relate to school and classroom experiences in the teaching profession (Creswell, 2012). In pursuit of the aim of my study (cf. 1.3), I regarded a qualitative research design as the most appropriate for my study. It was my contention that a qualitative methodology would afford me an opportunity to explore the policy framework for the policy image of teachers, and that the use of narrative inquiry would allow the research participants to

narrate how they perceive their professional identities through their different life stories and lived experiences. Accordingly, my research methodology was mainly interactional, interpretative and qualitative in nature (Nieuwenhuis, 2017a).

1.6.2 Research methods

Maree and Pietersen (2016) assert that a research methodology constitutes a particular approach to a study, while research methods are particular techniques applied to generate and analyse data. Research methods subsequently reflect the methodological position, and by implication the epistemology and ontological position of a researcher (Scotland, 2012). According to Spector-Mersel (2010), the choice for a research method must suit the research aim and must be most appropriate to best answer the research question. As was previously indicated, this study followed a narrative inquiry, and therefore the primary method to generate data for this methodology was personal narrative interviews. This enabled a detailed picture of an individual's life (cf. Fouche, De Vos & Schurink, 2018). While narrative interviews were regarded as my primary method of data generation, the study was complemented by a literature review and document analysis.

1.6.2.1 Literature review

Creswell (2008) defines literature review as a written summary of books and articles that describe the historical and present state of the research topic. Nieuwenhuis (2017a) gives a more encompassing definition in that the literature review represents sources on the phenomenon being studied and justifies a study through reflection on the extent to which new research can add to previous research, fill a gap, or explore the views of an underrepresented group. A literature review is generally perceived as a means to acquire knowledge and to identify relationships between theory, concepts and practices (Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017). While a sophisticated literature review can be regarded as the foundation and inspiration for substantial, useful research, it is also perceived as unbiased in the sense that it entails the review of published academic books and scholarly articles (cf. Fouche, Delpont & De Vos 2018; Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017; Rakotsoane, 2012).

Academic books and scholarly articles are regarded as sources of good and accurate information. Bertram and Christiansen (2017:13) point out that a literature review is a discussion of the significant research that has previously been done in the field which is being researched. As my research interest centres on concerns related to identity, identity construction and teachers' professional identity, I deemed a literature review as most appropriate to gain an in-depth and

conceptual understanding of these issues (cf. 1.3.1). I perceived a literature review in both the international and local contexts as most appropriate to gain academic insight into these concepts. A conceptual understanding of these concepts was important as they formed an integral part of my study, in particular in my sense-making of the data I generate through document analysis and teachers' narratives.

1.6.2.2 Document analysis

As a methodical process, document analysis enables the assessing of documents with the aim to produce meaning and generate empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). Nieuwenhuis (2017b) points out that documents analysis requires the researcher to converge and corroborate through drawing upon multiple sources of evidence, and in effect using different data sources and methods. According to Strydom and Delpont (2018), document analysis is not as time consuming and is more efficient than other research methods in the sense that documents are easily available and no personal contact with any respondents is required. The method of data collection is cost effective and documents are stable in the sense that they are non-reactive and the researcher cannot change what is being studied. Documents also have the advantage of offering broad coverage over a long time, and they include exact details of events.

Strydom and Delpont (2018) also refer to the disadvantages of document analysis, which could include gaps in reports and historical documents, usually because most of them were not meant for publication. Documents can be biased in the sense that they were not intended for research purposes, and their fairness might have been influenced by various factors. The availability of documents might sometimes be a problem, and the lack of a standard format might make the comparison of documents difficult or even impossible, as the situations in which the documents had been created might not be the same as the current situation. While a lack of linguistic skill may negatively influence the contents of documents, the origin of documents is often impossible to determine in cases where documents are not the primary sources of information.

Despite the above disadvantages of documents analysis, Babbie and Mouton (in Strydom & Delpont, 2018) point out that documents serve as a touchstone for the evaluation of theories, hypotheses and assumptions. In this regard, Nieuwenhuis (2017b) writes that documents must be contextualised within the scope of the research being carried out. Within the scope of this study, I analysed various education policy documents to determine how teachers' professional image is

constructed in policy. The documents that I analysed included the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996), the *Employment of Educators Act 76* (1998), the *Code of Professional Ethics in South African Council for Educators Act 31* (2000), the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification* (2015), and the *Personnel Administrative Measures* (2016).

As indicated in the objectives of this study (cf. 1.3.2), document analysis was considered important because it assisted me in uncovering the policy image of teachers. The foregrounding of teachers' policy image provided the necessary insight for designing an appropriate protocol for the narrative interviews, and to eventually juxtapose teachers' narrative identities with the policy image. Document analysis subsequently assisted with the means of tracing adjustments and developments of how teachers are portrayed in policy and other related documents (cf. Bowen, 2009).

1.6.2.3 Narrative interviews

Narrative interviews refer to a discussion with the purpose of gathering accounts of the experience and knowledge of participants with respect to the phenomenon being studied (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Schostak (2006) also perceives narrative interviews as conversations aimed at delivering comprehensive evidence about a certain topic. In this way a phenomenon can be understood in terms of the insights that interviewees have. Nieuwenhuis (2017b) denotes that narrative interviews aim to see the world through the eyes of the participants. Research participants could be the important basis of rich data that can assist the researcher to gain an understanding of the way in which the participants construct their understanding and experience of social reality.

Pandey and Pandey (2015) indicate that one of the advantages of narrative interviews is the fact that it requires one-on-one contact sessions between the researcher and the participants. As such, the researcher is placed in a position to obtain confidential information and to determine attitudes. Furthermore, narrative interviews allow for cross-questioning and can assist the researcher to construct an impression of the person concerned. On the other hand, narrative interviews may have disadvantages such as participants providing misleading or inadequate information due to participants' knowledge (or lack thereof) on the phenomenon under study. Data may also be affected due to preconceptions and the mental outlook of the researcher, which can result in one-sided and incomplete research (Pandey & Pandey, 2015).

For my study, I conducted narrative interviews with teachers from Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba 'Nchu. The decision to use narrative interviews was based on the in-depth and personal nature of narratives as they allow for personal interaction. Resulting from the objective of the study (cf. 1.3.3), I considered this form of data generation appropriate because narrative interviews allow for the deepening of the research through the generation of first-hand information from the participants. Narrative interviews allowed me to ask open and direct questions during the direct contact with the participants. I was therefore able to generate not only hard and factual data, but also passionate data from stories narrated by my participants. Through the participants' stories, I gained an understanding of how they construct their professional image based on their teaching experiences.

1.6.3 Participant selection

Tongco (2007) indicates that generating data is vital for a better understanding of the research topic. It is therefore essential to decide which technique is most appropriate for the generation of data and which participants are most likely to provide rich data (cf. Walliman, 2011). It is important that these decisions are well thought through prior to data generation as no extent of analysis can make up for insufficiently generated data. By implication, the selected participants must relate to the research questions and develop an understanding of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2017b). The technique for selecting participants relies on the type, nature and the aim of the study. The researcher firstly has to deliberate on whether he or she must study the entire population, and if not, how to competently select an appropriate number of participants. Decisions about the number of participants to involve in a study are important, and the selection technique should assure that the generated data is solid and relevant (Bernard, 2011).

A technique that is normally used in qualitative research is purposive participant selection, which requires the thoughtful identification and selection of those participants that could provide in-depth information (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). As such, purposive participant selection does not require core theories or a certain number of participants. Rather, the researcher must decide what must be known, and which participants can offer the necessary information from their own experiences (Bernard, 2011). By implication, purposive participant selection focuses on people with particular qualities and experiences, and who are best positioned to assist with the required information.

I purposively selected the participants for my study, based on certain qualities I regarded as important. As I was interested in exploring the way teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities, I selected participants from four high schools. I worked with the assumption that high school teachers face complex challenges in school, and that their personal experience of their own professional identity might be influenced by challenges that are more demanding than what one would find in primary schools. I selected participants based on individual teaching experience, ranging from one year to twenty years and beyond. My reason for selecting teachers according to their years of experience was because of different experiences with *inter alia*, curriculum changes. I subsequently accepted that the years of teachers' experience may influence the way that teachers have been constructing and reconstructing their professional identities. And for these reasons, I also selected participants from post levels one, two and three. My participant selection was also based on convenience selection (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2017b), as all the participants were in close vicinity to where I reside. Accessibility was not a problem, and since I did not have to travel far, the study was also cost effective.

1.6.4 Data analysis

Fouche, De Vos and Schurink (2018), state that the process of data analysis is imperative in determining the trustworthiness of research outcomes. Essentially, data analysis comprises of the conversion of data gathered into a final description, themes and categories. Pandey and Pandey (2015) describe data analysis as studying the structured material in order to determine essential facts. The data must be studied from as many angles as possible to discover new facts. Nieuwenhuis (2017c) justifies that there is a considerable deviation on how data is analysed, subject to the research question and the method used. In this study, I used document analysis (cf. 1.6.2.2) and narrative interviews (cf. 1.6.2.3) to generate data. The use of two methods compelled me to engage in two different forms of data analysis, which I considered most appropriate for my study, namely a hermeneutical analysis for the data generated through document analysis and narrative analysis for the data generated through narrative interviews.

In this study, I analysed documents and people's individual experiences, both of which are centred on an interpretative philosophy designed to examine important contents of qualitative data (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2017c). Walliman (2011) indicates that data in the form of texts and documents afford historical and present-day data about society. Within the context of my study, to make

sense of and understand the textual data from education policies and related documents, I used hermeneutical analysis. By using the hermeneutic cycle, namely the dialectic amid the understanding of the text and the analysis of its parts, my analysis of policy documents and related texts consisted of descriptions guided by anticipated explanations (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2017c).

I used narrative analysis to analyse the data generated through the narrative interviews. The advantage of using a narrative analysis is that it provides a richer and detailed glimpse into the narrators' experience through shared stories based on their lived experience (Nieuwenhuis, 2017c). In analysing the data, I took various steps such as transcribing the verbal recordings of the narrative interviews to classify and identify themes. Lastly, to allow for the emergence of themes from the data, I coded repetitive words and key words with the aim of clustering and comparing trajectories for an easy interpretation of the data.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

According to Kornbluh (2015), qualitative studies aim to improve the critical understanding of a phenomenon, albeit through the examination of the methods used to explore how participants make sense of the experiences of their lives. Although qualitative research has been acknowledged for its remarkable place in education, it is important to create sound protocols and techniques to ensure the trustworthiness of a study (Amankwaa, 2016; Kornbluh, 2015). Trustworthiness refers to confidence in the methods used to safeguard the quality of a study. In this regard, I refer to four criteria, namely credibility, transferability dependability and conformability (Lincoln and Guba in Cope, 2014; Connelly, 2016).

1.7.1 Credibility

Cope (2014) writes that credibility refers to the reality of the data or the participant's interpretation and representation of the gathered data. Nieuwenhuis (2017c) indicates that processes to warrant credibility may comprise of frequent information sharing sessions between the researcher and the supervisors, and the researcher's reflective notes and member checks. Shenton (2003) also indicates that in order to enhance credibility, steps must be taken to ensure that the research findings reflect the experiences of the participants. It is therefore important to ensure that the research findings are not influenced by the preferences of the researcher. In this study I took a number of steps to ensure the credibility of the study. I used credible sources such as scholarly works, articles and policy documents to acquire an in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon. I conducted the interviews based on information obtained from a literature review

and from policies, and kept detailed records of the interviews in order to ensure that my findings correspond with the raw data generated from the voice recordings and transcripts of the interviews. Through informal conversations, I also asked participants to comment on the interpretation of the findings from their narratives. In order to clarify the biases and assumptions on my part as researcher, I was committed to frequent debriefing sessions, member checks and persistent objectives.

1.7.2 Transferability

Shenton (2003:69) notes that transferability “is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations”. Nieuwenhuis (2017c) is of the view that transferability invites readers of the study to establish connections between aspects of the study and their own experiences. It therefore refers to how other people may assess similarities between their own situations and the study that is being carried out. To enhance transferability in this study, I used several criteria for the selection of participants (cf. 1.6.3). I involved teachers from four different high schools, taking into account different levels of teaching experiences, different post levels, and included both male and female teachers. The four schools are based in different areas in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, namely Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba ‘Nchu. As a researcher I cannot claim that my research is transferable, so my duty was to provide a full depiction of the research context, my research participants, the research design and the entire research process to allow readers to decide whether the research can be transferable or applicable in their contexts.

1.7.3 Dependability

Connelly (2016), states that dependability is about the firmness of the data over time and over the conditions of the research. Dependability is usually established through the research design and its application, the components of data gathering and the thoughtful appraisal of the project (Nieuwenhuis, 2017c). In order to support the consistency between the research outcomes and the data generated in this research study, I kept detailed notes in a reflective journal of all the conclusions I make during the course of the study.

1.7.4 Conformability

Lincoln and Guba (in Nieuwenhuis, 2017c) define conformability as the extent to which the outcomes of the research are fashioned by the participants and not by the researcher’s motivation and interests. To reduce bias from my part as a researcher, I admitted my own predispositions

from the onset and used an audit trail, which allowed observers to trace the course of the research through all its steps. In addition, I asked my supervisors to monitor the generated data because data analysis by more than one person ensures quality assurance (cf. Connelly, 2016; Nieuwenhuis, 2017c).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study entails the use of narrative interviews as a form of data generation. By implication, human beings are involved as research participants. A comprehensive study consists of honest and ethical efforts to protect the interests of the participants and to ensure that no harm is caused during the research undertaking (Halai, 2006; also Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). To summarise the importance of ethical considerations in qualitative research, I draw on Creswell's explanation (2008):

In all phases of the research process, researchers must consider ethical practices. Practicing ethics is a complex matter that involves more than a set of static guidelines such as those from professional associations or conforming to guidelines from institutional review boards. Ethics should be a primary consideration rather than an afterthought, and it should be forefront of the researcher's agenda. Of all the steps in the research process, it relates closely to the data generation and reporting and distribution of reports than any other phase of research.

In developing my study, I considered and safeguarded the emotional state, well-being, and rights of the teachers who participated in the study. In order to adhere to ethical requirements, my study was guided by the University of the Free State Degree Guide (2015), which guides all researchers to ensure that they do not harm research participants. As such, it was necessary to acquire informed consent, to protect confidentiality, and to avoid deception. During the generation of data, the participants should never be subjected to any physical or emotional harm (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Halai, 2006; Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2007). I subsequently explained the purpose and value of this study, and requested written informed consent from the participants. The participants were told in advance that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time, and that the information they provide will be handled as confidential. I took into consideration all the moral and general ethical principles, including confidentiality and the protection of their identity, and assured them that no names and personal details will be used in the research report. I also informed them that the data generated through the narrative

interviews will not be released to any third party. The generated data was kept safe on a password-protected laptop, and I refrained from any form of plagiarism. However, prior to any of the above, I first applied for and was granted ethical clearance from the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State (cf. Appendix A). Also, as my study was conducted in various schools in the Motheo district of the Free State province, I requested and was granted permission from the Free State Department of Basic Education to conduct this study (cf. Appendix B).

1.9 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The scientific and geographical demarcations of this study are explained in this section.

1.9.1 Scientific demarcation

Definitions of policy are numerous and varied, and for this study I draw on Vargas-Hernandez, Noruzi and Ali's (2011:288) definition of policy "as operating rules that can be referred to as a way to maintain order, security, consistency, to reach explicit and implicit goals or mission". Policy therefore strives to achieve a particular goal, namely to be in the best interest of all citizens (Torjman, 2005). Within the context of education, education policy consists of the principles and government policies in the educational domain, as well as all the laws that govern the procedures of an education system in a particular country (Turnbull, 2014). Accordingly, education policy studies is a composite made up of contributions from a variety of disciplines and perspectives which attempt to offer some, albeit tentative, coherence while at the same time demonstrating the variety, diversity and vitality of the field (Saltman, 2010). Similarly, the primary aim of studies in education policy is to help teachers to have an understanding of education policy in the context of democratic transformation, as well as to test teachers to evaluate, question and reflect on educational policies, practices and theories (Torjman, 2005).

Based on this discussion of policy, education policy and education policy studies, it can be concluded that policy is a product of human need and activity, and that its implementation is a human activity. As such, not only do policies affect people differently, but it is also implemented differently by people (Turnbull, 2014). For the teaching profession, policy is significant as teachers must comply with the national context of education policies. Furthermore, they must work within the local context, which shapes their skill or desire to endorse the policy. As such, teachers cannot function without direction, but they must understand and implement national policy within their school context (Turnbull, 2014). The main aim of my research was to explore the alignment

between the policy images of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity. In order to explore a policy framework for the policy images of teachers, I analysed different education policies. Given the centrality of policy in my study, the latter can therefore be demarcated to the discipline of policy studies in education.

1.9.2 Geographical demarcation

South Africa is a country named after its geographical position, which is the southern part of Africa, and has nine provinces. My study was confined to the Free State province, and more specifically to the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, which governs Bloemfontein and surrounding towns such as Thaba 'Nchu and Botshabelo (cf. Figure 1). My study was undertaken in different high schools, namely two in Bloemfontein, one in Thaba 'Nchu and one in Botshabelo. Ten teachers participated in this study (cf. 1.6.3).



Figure 1.1: Map of the Free State province (https://www.places.co.za/html/free_state_map.html)

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In addition to this chapter that provides an orientation to this study, my research report unfolds through four consecutive chapters.

- To gain a conceptual thorough understanding of concepts that are considered as central to this study, namely, identity, identity construction and teacher professional identity (cf. 1.3.1), a

literature review was undertaken in Chapter 2. I considered the discussion of these concepts important for the expansion, clear and broad knowledge of the topic. Chapter 2 therefore provides enough and important information that contextualises the study and carries academic perceptions into understanding identity, identity construction and teacher professional identity. It was also my contention that the conceptual understanding of these concepts is important to help me to analyse the data generated in this study. Without thorough knowledge and information about professional teacher identity, it can be a challenge to frame exactly what to deliberate on.

- Chapter 3 outlines and analyses education policies and related documents that portray a particular image of the South African teacher. To realise the second objective of this study (cf. 1.3.2), I undertook a document analysis with the aim of drawing meaning, understanding, and empirical knowledge regarding the way in which the image of South African teachers is constructed in policy.
- Chapter 4 places the focus on the generation of data through the use of narrative interviews. The purpose of this chapter was to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities (cf. 1.3.3). The relevance of narrative interviews for the study is the advantages of extendable in-depth and personal conversations to generate passionate data from the participants in order to understand how they construct a professional image of themselves.
- In Chapter 5, I make comments and suggestions, informed by a synthesis of the entire study, regarding the alignment between the policy image of teachers and the narrative construction of teachers' professional identities (cf. 1.3.4).

1.11 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I provided a brief orientation of the study. The research topic, namely the alignment between policy images of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity, was introduced. While the research aim posed to explore the alignment between policy images of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity, various sub-questions and objectives were listed to be pursued in the realisation of the research aim. Framed within a qualitative research methodology, a literature review, documents analysis and narrative interviews were identified as appropriate research methods. The next chapter focuses on the literature review that aimed at developing a clear and broad understanding

of the concepts that are perceived as central to this study, namely identity, identity construction and teacher professional identity.

CHAPTER 2: IDENTITY, IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I outlined the research problem, the research question, aim of and rationale for the study. A review of literature is undertaken in this chapter to gain a conceptual understanding of the concepts *identity*, *identity construction* and *teachers' professional identity* (cf. 1.3.1). The rationale for this chapter centres on the need to bring to the fore academic insights and conceptual understanding of important concepts which constitute the backdrop of my study. In addition, it is my contention that while the said concepts form an integral part of my study, its conceptual understanding is imperative for my interpretation of the data which will be generated through document analysis and narrative interviews (cf. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).

This chapter consists of three parts. In the first part I outline the concept identity as espoused by different scholars. In the second part, I review literature on identity construction in general and in the third part, the focus is placed on teachers' professional identity. As it was my aim to explore identity in relation to teachers' professional identity, the primary focus of this chapter is on identity construction in the field of education.

2.2 IDENTITY: A MULTIFARIOUS CONCEPT

Most researchers agree that an understanding of identity extends well beyond the limits of the physical body of an individual and that the concept is broad and multifaceted (Botha & Onwu, 2013; Daniels, 2015). Many scholars in different fields including philosophy, sociology, anthropology, political theory, gender studies and psychoanalysis, as well as across discursive, personality, social, developmental, and cross-cultural fields of contemporary psychology have been writing about *identity* (Francis & Le Roux, 2011; Izadinia, 2013; Daniels, 2015; Marañón & Pera, 2015; Taylor, 2016; Henry, 2016). Seemingly, conceptualising identity differs across disciplines and the notion is difficult to pin down (Vignoles, 2017).

2.2.1 *Defining identity*

Historically, identity evolved from how human behaviour has been interpreted and represented as an external or internal phenomenon. Castañeda (2011) highlights how both sociology and psychology contribute towards the meaning and principles of identity. While sociologists define

identity as the result of external forces that include social, political, and economic forces, psychologists are concerned with the internal self and an individual's potential. For Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), identity in the social context focuses on the stages pertaining to psychological maturation. Each stage has its own characteristics, and subsequently regulates how the individual interacts within his or her environment. However, despite differing interpretations, there seems to be some general consensus that identity denotes how individuals answer the question: *Who am I?* (Vignoles, 2017). In an attempt to conceptualise identity, this question may be posed explicitly or implicitly at a personal or a communal level to oneself or to others.

Powell (2015) indicates that scholars concerned with identity literature tend to emphasise that identity is shaped by various factors. These factors relate to various individual and contextual aspects that act together in a common and vigorous manner. Thus, if identity is shaped by such factors, it can be assumed that any definition of identity must include both individual and contextual factors. As noted by Vignoles (2017), identity is both personal and social in its content and in the processes by which it is made, sustained, and changed over time. These factors are significant for studying identity as the manner in which an individual is seen by the self and by others at a particular time in a particular context (Izadinia, 2013). Through the personal and social nature of identity, an individual can gain insight into his or her relationship with society. While identity defines our ability to speak and act freely, it also permits individuals to continue being who they are (Bosso, 2017).

Identity, however, is a complex matter, and in this regard Riyanti (2017:24) foregrounds identity as “a complex matter of the social and the individual; of discourse and practice; of reification and participation; of similarity and difference; of agency and structure; of fixity and transgression; of singular and multiple and of the synoptic and the dynamic”. Complex as it is, identity develops throughout a person's life. As such, identity cannot be regarded as something that individuals have. Identity is not static or fixed - it is repeatedly reshaped throughout the life of individuals as it is forever re-established and negotiated (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004; Powell, 2015).

2.2.2 Personal identity and social identity

Identity can be distinguished in terms of personal identity and social identity. This distinction originates from Mead's perception (1934) of social identity as a sociological component of the self (the me) that stems from interaction with the environment. A personal identity refers to the

personal component (the I) that deals with intergroup relationships. It is through the development of social and personal identities that people perceive themselves as members of one group and not of another group – a categorisation of ethnocentrism would typically be a consequence of such an identity construction (Michael, Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; McAdams, 2018; Davids, 2018). Although identity is our most essential and personal characteristic, it also consists of belonging to social groups, the traits we display, and the characteristics ascribed to us by others. For Newman (in Francis & Le Roux, 2011:300), identity is a way in which individuals define themselves as belonging to one community or another. In turn, one's identity, consciousness and behaviour are influenced by the groups with which one identifies, be it racial, ethnic, language, gender or other communities. To a greater or lesser extent, our identity positions us in the community and influences how we see, understand, feel and act, including the way others view us (Michael *et al.*, 1995).

Personal and social identities are actively developing and changing. The differences they might have are subject to change, and many of the differences are matters of importance and degree rather than categorical (Michael *et al.*, 1995; Beijaard *et al.*, 2004; Henry, 2016; Riyanti, 2017). While personal identity helps to explain the role-related behaviours of individuals, social identity elucidates intergroup relationships and group processes. Social identity places more emphasis on socio-cognitive processes and provides a distinction between role and group, including group behaviour and intergroup relations. Personal identity focuses more on individual behaviour and draws on how individuals learn from and reflect on others, appraisals, the roles they take, how they define the situations they find themselves in, and self-verification (Izadinia, 2013; Bosso, 2017). Even though personal identity places less emphasis on the socio-cognitive, each of the processes within personal identity depends heavily on social events and processes resulting from on-going interactions. Therefore, personal identity and social identity are not that different in the elaboration, although each theory does focus on different socio-cognitive processes.

As noted, identity has been differently defined in different fields. These definitions of identity give us some knowledge into the different ways the concept is understood and used (Powell, 2015; Davids, 2018). However, Luehmann (in Botha & Onwu, 2013:6) states that various definitions of identity share some common features such as

identity is socially constituted, is based on the socialisation or interactions with others; Identity is constantly being formed and reformed, though the change

process for one's core identities is long term and labour intensive; Identity is considered by most to be multifarious, i.e. consisting of a number of interrelated ways one is recognized as a certain kind of person and lastly identity is constituted in interpretations and narrations of experiences.

In general, identity seemingly stems from a socio-cultural perspective that foregrounds how a person's identity is shaped through daily reciprocal practices, and navigated through stories of lived experiences (Castañeda, 2011; Izadinia, 2013; Powell, 2015).

2.2.3 Identity and practice

According to Wenger (1998), identity in practice consists of stories by individuals, based on their participation in communities and the subsequent lived-experiences produced through such participation. As such, identity in practice can be defined socially as it is endorsed by the social discourse that stems from the relation among the self and the social. Identity develops and changes in relation to the roles individuals play as members of community. Essentially, the question 'who are we?' refers to how people relate to other group members and the practices they do within the community. Practices that people do in a community and experiences they gain from their interaction with community members, significantly gives the answer to 'who are we?', and how we think and believe. There is subsequent link between identity and practice (Wenger, 1998; Marañón & Pera, 2015) - the understanding of identity in practice, is a way of being in the world. Different aspects of identity and practice can result from the individual's positioning of the self in the community. Such positions, however, are constantly changing and taking on different forms. For example, a person may take a position of being a mother at home but a powerful manager in her professional practice who leads community projects. These positions are interlaced and inform each other in different ways.

Wenger (1998) identifies five dimensions of identity. The first dimension, *identity as negotiated experiences*, refers to the way in which people define who they are. This is about the ways in which people experience themselves through participation, as well as the way others see them. Individual experiences subsequently serve as the strongest factor that shapes one's identity in practice. People are most likely to define who they are based on what they have experienced and how people treat them, including how people see or perceive their participation in the community. *Identity as reference to community membership* is perceived to be the second dimension of identity in practice. For an individual to be a complete member of a community, he

or she must be able to work within the demands of the community. Identity in relation to community membership is about being acknowledged as skilled by the self and by theirs, shared engagement, and an accepting the responsibility required to be part of the community. Identity is subsequently established through the capability to relate to familiar and unfamiliar things surrounding the individual in the community.

When thinking about identity in practice, Wenger's third dimension (1998) refers to *identity as a learning trajectory*. In this dimension, people define themselves by the experiences they gained from their backgrounds, and the types of futures they are hoping or intending to have. People learn new things every day and this contributes to their identity in practice. New things can be learned from colleagues, workshops, developmental courses and from further studies. Bosso (2017) writes that learning helps individuals to acquire knowledge and to modify their skills, and to grow professionally. The interaction of multiple personal and contextual factors contributes toward the shaping of identity (cf. Powell, 2015; Isotalo, 2017). All these contextual factors affect the personal identity in practice to a certain degree. Wenger's fourth dimension (1998) refers to *identity as the nexus of multi-membership*. In this dimension people describe who they are by how they resolve their different forms of identity into one identity. Multi-membership equals multiple learning trajectories. The possibility exists that there might be a conflict between the existing identity and the one which an individual acquires through learning trajectories and from diverse community memberships. In order to define who they are, individuals reconcile the various forms of their identity into one. Wenger's fifth dimension (1998) refers to *identity as a relation between the local and the global*. This dimension involves the way in which people define their identity, which is simultaneously constituted at multiple levels of scale. For example, people can identify themselves with their colleagues from their respective workplaces, districts, provinces, countries, and even across the world. Through the combination of imagination, alignment and engagement, many levels of scale contribute to the composition of identity in practice. The construction of identity in practice subsequently follows from interplay between belonging to and participating in local ways of doing, and broader discourses on a global scale.

Marañón and Pera (2015) agrees with Wenger (1998) that there is a philosophical connection between identity and practice, because the development of identity in practice requires engagement in the community. It is within the community that members work together, where they engage with one another, acknowledge individual differences, and accept each other as

participants with unique capabilities. The close connection between professional identities and the ability to work with others is supported by the fact that through investing the self and one's values in work, social relationships are created within the community (Chong *et al.*, 2011; Botha & Onwu, 2013; Chikoko, 2015; Isotalo, 2017). As such, identity is a crucial aspect of practice and it is regarded as a foundation for decision making.

Any conceptualisation of professional identity needs to incorporate Wenger's (1998) dimensions because they capture how identity and practice mirror each other (Botha & Onwu, 2013). Because Wenger's dimensions of identity relate to the concept of professional identity, they can be helpful in thinking about the re-conceptualisation of the professional identity as a developing practice of professional teachers. As noted by Izadinia (2013), professional identities are closely intertwined to developing the practice of professionals. In addition, the dimensions classify identity as negotiated experiences, as community membership and as a learning trajectory to be at the core of professional identity construction. The development of professional identity is responsible for how we think about ourselves, and a lack of identity subsequently endangers our interests or even our physical being as our behaviour originates from identity (Chikoko, 2015).

In summary, the definition of identity essentially involves definitions surrounding the person and her or his experiences as a member of a social community. According to Castañeda (2011:18), "identity in personal terms implies psychological, affective, and cognitive notions. The sociological dimension of identity includes external forces that range from the social, political, and economics". Although these two viewpoints have been tackled independently by psychologists and sociologists, it is hard to establish exactly where the person ends and the social structure starts. The attention must be on the course of their mutual constitution. Identity links communal structures with individual action. By implication, the prediction of behaviour requires an analysis of the relationship between the self and the social structure. The notion of identity used in this study privileges the social perspective of the person. Identity is argued to develop as a result of becoming a member of a community. There is a deep relationship between identity and practice (cf. Marañón & Pera, 2015). We primarily describe 'who we are?' in terms of how we associate with other members and how we negotiate our interaction in the community (Vignoles, 2017). As it is my aim to explore identity in relation to teachers' professional construction, the following sections of this literature review focuses on the construction of identity in the field of education.

2.3 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Identities commonly develop in social interactions with others (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Chikoko, 2015; Koen, Van Vianen, Klehe & Zikic, 2016). People's social relationships can, for example, affect the construction, choice, and preservation of possible selves. Furthermore, identity construction is central to psychosocial performance and the responsibility towards social roles, which permits people to have a sense of belonging and capability within society. Identity construction results from exploring several life experiences and possibilities. Through these experiences and knowledge gained from these life explorations, individuals can make informed decisions regarding their identity (Ben-Peretz, Kleeman, Reichenberg & Shimoni, 2010; Wallace, 2017). Constructing identity relies significantly on humans' capability for spontaneous self-awareness. Spontaneous self-awareness entails a process of familiarising, elevating and refining the current identity, while making room for a new identity as a result of new work, roles or responsibilities (Koen *et al.*, 2016). Work is the essential element of our identity because a major part of our identity is defined by what we do (Wallace, 2017). Work can therefore have severe consequences on the mental health and interests of individuals.

Identity changes as individuals participate in different activities and events, or as they enact their roles as members of the community (Powell, 2015). Consequently, individuals construct an identity that is most suitable for the role and position that they are holding. Literature on identity construction postulates that events and activities help people to consider identity change and support the formation of new identities (Izadinia, 2013; Chikoko, 2015; Powell, 2015; Vignoles, 2017). During such changes, people frequently develop multiple temporary constructions of possible new identities, which may stay temporary until they have learnt from experience and refined these possible new identities. It is the succeeding possible selves that "drive identity construction and serve as a future, goal-oriented component of the self-concept" (Koen *et al.*, 2016:660). The ability to form a new identity makes it easier for individuals to adapt to situations of change and to have a sense of belonging. The core of identity construction subsequently lies with the ability to connect the space between one's present and one's anticipated identity. According to Koen *et al.* (2016), the bridging of such a gap can be realised by strategies such as desired job, identifying and copying role models, exploring with new behaviours, and assessing improvement towards the desired identity. In the case of teacher identity construction, Lamote and Engels (2010:5) depict this construction as "a process of continually acquiring and redefining an identity that is socially legitimated". For teachers this is mediated by their own experiences in

schools and the experiences they acquire when they interact with others outside schools. In this regard, Sachs (2001) emphasises that identity construction is a central feature to the practice of teacher education.

Identity construction is not a simple or normal process and can pose different challenges for individuals (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Koen *et al.*, 2016). During the process of identity construction, individuals need to balance their lives and differentiate their paths from that of others. Most of the time when individuals reach a certain age, they move out of their family homes, and sometimes even out of the communities they grew up in. Since they can no longer completely rely on their old friends and family, they are left to deal with life changes with partial pre-established support, which can lead to broad changes in identity (Ben-Peretz *et al.*, 2010). Identity construction can be influenced by a various factors, such as cognitive, language, scholastic and sociocultural influences (Lamote & Engels, 2010). Also, the concept of *identity construction* is interpreted in many ways, both in daily lives and in psychological and educational theories. The factors that influence identity construction are discussed below.

2.3.1 Factors influencing identity construction

Different aspects shape people's identities. The aspects that have an influence on identity construction can include the people we associate ourselves with, the way we view things and the choices we make (Lamote & Engels, 2010; Wallace, 2017). According to Ben-Peretz *et al.* (2010:115), identity refers to "what makes us who we are and what grounds our actions". Our future relies on how we understand the aspects of identity and the choices we make every day. Family, traditions, friends, personal comforts and background are all factors that are likely to help the construction of a person's identity (Koen *et al.*, 2016; Wallace, 2017). In the process of growing up some factors may have more influence than others. For instance, family and traditions may influence a person's sense of responsibility, principles, morals, taste in music, humour, sport etc. Neighbours, friends and communities may also influence the way a person chooses to dress, the way he or she talks and his or her preferred social activities (Lamote & Engels, 2010).

Personal choices and individual preference is what actually set people apart. A person's identity is defined by what motivates and guides him or her, why they prefer to be who they are, and what makes them unique (cf. 2.2.1). The construction of identity is a self-motivated and multifaceted process which occurs in response to the difficulties people experience, and the developments they

undergo due to internal and external factors (Ben-Peretz *et al.*, 2010). The identity construction process can be influenced by various factors such as social associations and interactions within sociocultural and historical contexts, including traditions and educational background (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Ben-Peretz *et al.*, 2010; Chikoko, 2015). For the purpose of this chapter, I consider three factors to have an influence on identity construction, namely *family, language* and *social influences*. These factors are discussed below.

2.3.1.1 Family and identity construction

An individual's different involvements and encountered experiences throughout his or her life can play a vital role in shaping a unique personality (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Wallace, 2017). The notion of identity is associated with complexities that can influence the overall character. Throughout an individual's lifecycle, many experiences may require a modification of the person's sense of self. Physical features are inherited from one's family and forms identity from birth (Tsakissiris, 2015; Wallace, 2017). Family is the first social group that one becomes part of, but unfortunately one cannot choose one's family. As such, family shapes one's identity from the beginning (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). As a member of a family unit, a child's identity will be shaped by the parents' morals and ethics, whether right or wrong (Wallace, 2017). For example, if a baby is born into a family that loves and supports rugby, the baby's life might be destined to revolve around rugby. The adults in our early years are the most influential factors on how we learn to identify ourselves. People's standards and culture develop from family and are passed from one generation to the next (Tsakissiris, 2015).

The compelling need to belong to a family is the key factor that influences identity construction. Although belonging to a family has both benefits and drawbacks, it may be difficult to determine the relative importance of personal choice and nature in shaping the identity. The desire to belong remains an essential component of our humanity. People make positive or negative sacrifices in order to belong to a family (Reiche, Harzing & Pudelko, 2015). Someone might want to become a teacher, but because the family favours the profession of a doctor, he or she will have to make a sacrifice for the sake of acquiescing to the wishes of the family. It might also be that a person who grows up in a family of doctors, might make certain sacrifices in order to uphold the name of the family as a 'doctor's family'. The adult figures in families can therefore positively or negatively affect identity. In many cases, children are expected to construct an identity that is to the benefit of the family. Family communication is vital in many aspects of an individual's development

(Tsakissiris, 2015).

The way in which family members relate to one another is possibly the most significant and constant factor in the construction of identity (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014). In this regard, Wallace (2017:8) is of the view that

[i]ndividuals who come from mainly functional families will experience positive individual impacts, including higher self-esteem and positive coping strategies that will allow them to successfully navigate identity that is successful.

Within mutually dependent relationships, communication is essential in the instruction, change, and definition of the family's current reality. According to the family systems theory, families have an inter-reliant structure in which there are patterns, restrictions and regulations that shape the system (Lamote & Engels, 2010). Families can play their role in shaping and developing the identities of their children, but during the phase of secondary school education, there is enormous pressure to fit into a social group. Peers can become gradually influential and the desire to belong to certain groups can overcome the values taught by families (Reiche *et al.*, 2015; Tsakissiris, 2015; Wallace, 2017).

2.3.1.2 Language and identity construction

Language has a very important social purpose because it is mainly used for communication (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Many languages are spoken around the world, and if it is not spoken or understood by the individual, language can have a negative impact when it becomes a communication barrier between people (Reiche *et al.*, 2015; Tsakissiris, 2015). People are often judged because they are not fluent in a specific language, or if they have a different pronunciation, or use a different vocabulary (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). For an example, a Xhosa speaking teacher from the Eastern Cape might be ridiculed when taking a teaching position in the Free State, where Sesotho is the dominant language. He or she, in most cases, will be made fun of by the children and will be judged by colleagues for having a different accent and for speaking a different language. In order to conform to the new working environment, the teacher will have to change his or her language. When someone is afraid to look or be different from others, or to stand out from others, he or she will change and adapt to the language spoken in the immediate community (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014). Language subsequently plays an important role when someone wants to experience a sense of belonging, especially when in a new physical environment. The fear of being looked down upon by others for speaking a different language or for speaking a language

with a different accent can make people to change how they speak. When a person changes how he or she speaks the person's identity also changes (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Wallace, 2017).

Language is one part of identity that sets people apart. People have different ways of communicating, which grounds identity in terms of language (Reiche *et al.*, 2015; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Language plays a critical role in how identities are constructed based on languages spoken in different countries or places, vernaculars, accents and terminology used in each country (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Reiche *et al.*, 2015; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). By implication, language influences and plays a significant role in our racial and collective identity. The scholar Benjamin Whorf (cited in Wallace, 2017:9), notes that "language shapes thoughts and emotions, determining one's perception of reality". Language expresses many aspects of a person's identity. By being able to speak a specific language an individual can fit into a group. Language provides the most natural representation of community and personal identity. The connection between language and the many aspects of life is very significant to our identity as it shows how we work together and relate with others. Racial and community identity plays a significant role in the way in which language haven influence on the insight and the role of home language. Language is a well-known and obvious feature of community life, and to choose one language over another provides an instant and commonly recognised symbol of identity (Reiche *et al.*, 2015). The language people use when narrating their stories and experiences is a vital tool for communicating thoughts and ideas, and also for identity construction (Somers & Gibson, 1993).

2.3.1.3 Social influences on identity construction

As mentioned, identity is something we all acquire and develop throughout our life cycles (cf. 2.2.1). Many factors influence the construction of an identity. Everyday activities and interactions between people and objects contribute to how our identity is constructed (Lamote & Engels, 2010; Chong *et al.*, 2015; Chikoko, 2015). Society plays a significant role in who and what we become. Our relationships with people have a vast impact on the choices we make in our lives. In sociologically oriented literature, identity alludes to the number of meanings an individual links to him or herself and by others within social relationships (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Chikoko, 2015).

Wenger (1998:188) proposes that identities are created amid the "tension between our investment in the various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that

matter in those contexts". As a result, identity construction can be observed as a twofold process - a process of *identification* and a process of the *negotiation of meanings*. By *identification*, Wenger (1998) means the investment of the self in building associations with others in a community, and how an individual identifies them. Everything we do and everyone we encounter influence how our identity is constructed. In this sense, identity is basically constructed through the things we interact with and all our experiences in a social context. Our experiences of new things and the meeting of new people are continuous, and consequently we will always be adding onto our identity. The way we interact with other people or our exposure to media characterises our identity. Identification is therefore both relational and practical. Wenger (1998) explains *negotiation of meanings* as the perception that people create of themselves and others. This is done in terms of conceptual social categories, and these perceptions become part of people's self-concept as it helps to characterise the group to which a person belongs. There is subsequently a dynamic interaction between identity construction and community, and therefore they influence each other jointly. The meaning individuals give to symbols in society when interacting with the cultural and social contexts shapes their identity.

2.3.2 Narrative identity construction

From the previous discussion it is clear that identity and identity construction can be conceptualised in different ways, making the concepts difficult to pin down (Vignoles, 2017). Although there are many theories on identity construction, my interest, given the aim of my study (cf. 1.3), centres on narrative identity construction. In this regard, I refer to the fact that many scholars link identity construction with narratives. Somers (1994) indicates that people construct identity by locating themselves within a repertoire of stories based on their experiences. As noted by Tsakissiris (2015), many identity theories allow for the examination of the relationships that exist between social identities, organisational expectations and experiences shared through stories by individuals. While stories assist individuals to make sense of the world, narrative theorists study how people make sense of their stories (cf. Somers & Gibson, 1993). Accordingly, narrative identity theory denotes that people construct their identity by incorporating their life experiences, apparent present-day and imagined future into a personalised, developing story of the self. The latter provides the individual with a sense of harmony and intention in life (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

People construct identity through narrated stories about their life experiences. These stories guide

action, and people construct identities by locating themselves within a repertoire of stories based on their experiences (Somers & Gibson, 1993). McAdams and McLean (2013:234) wrote that “[n]arrative identity is a special kind of story, a story about how I came to be the person I am becoming”. Narratives can also differ in terms of age and experience. Personal experience is the main factor from which identity is constructed, so *what* people say and *how* they say it determine *who* they are and *where* they stand (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Narrative constructs can also depend on the place where people live or have lived. Place is a major factor in how people can narrate their stories, and this can have a positive or negative impact on their identity. If a child grows up in a place clouded with negative events, he or she is more likely to narrate negative stories which in turn will have a negative impact on his or her identity construction.

From a theoretical perspective, Somers’s *Narrative Identity Theory* can be used as an analytic frame to understand identity construction. The study of identity construction touches on the area of ontology that is a theory of being, and epistemology that comprises the standards people use to learn about the world. In this regard, ontology and epistemology posit that it is through narratives that people come to know, understand and make sense of the world and it is through narratives that they establish their social identities (cf. Somers, 1994). It is important to understand identity construction as a process of narrative positioning for this study, because it opens up an understanding of teachers as vigorous agents in their own lives and the construction of teacher identity as a vibrant and varying activity (Sjoreide, 2006).

2.4 TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Professional identity refers to how individuals identify and categorise themselves within their working environment and how they share and communicate with others (Billett, Harteis & Gruber, 2014). Professional identity includes a perception of the individual’s association with the people and the central circulation of work, how the individual experiences the society he or she works and lives in, as well as the role and the position he or she is holding in the society (Lamote & Engels, 2010). Furthermore, Havnes and Semby (2014) highlight that people find their professional identity through the roles they play in their professional community, and the impact of the culture of the community in which he or she works. Professional identity incorporates both the personal and professional contexts, and develops through the individual’s attentiveness and enthusiasm to adapt to possible changes in the community.

According to Beijaard *et al.* (2004), teachers' professional identity is portrayed in various ways within teaching and teacher education. While some scholars use the concept of teacher identity in relation to teachers' notions and images of self, others emphasise teachers' roles and responsibilities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Caza & Creary, 2016; Miscenko & Day, 2016). Literature on professional teacher identity draws from educational, psychological and sociological paradigms of teaching, and the concept of professional teacher identity has been developed as an established autonomous theoretical construct. Havnes and Semby (2014) indicate that teachers' professional identity entails cognitive, psychological and sociological perspectives. In this regard, teachers construct their identity through interaction with other colleagues, learners and the community at large (sociological perspective), but articulate their professional identity in their perceptions of who they are and the type of teachers they want to be, and this entails a cognitive psychological perspective (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004). Professional teacher identity is consequently classified as the insights that teachers have regarding themselves as teachers (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Chikoko, 2015; Tsakissiris, 2015). In this study, I give preference to the term "professional teacher identity" over the more simplistic "teacher identity" in order to align with contemporary research on teachers' work identity. The notion of professional identity subsequently lies at the centre of this study because it is acknowledged as the method for the identity construction of teachers.

In the area of teaching and teacher education, the notion of professional identity has been defined as the basis for teachers' professional development. Beijaard *et al.* (2004) indicate that professional identity affects teachers' conceptions of their competencies and capabilities to adjust to changes and their inspiration to grow themselves as professional teachers. Isotalo (2017) emphasises that a narrative approach to professional identity acknowledges a teacher's self-perception as the essential aspect of professional identity. A narrative approach draws together the view that teachers perceive themselves and their profession in relation to others and to their life history and experiences. Havnes and Semby (2014) write that the construction of professional identity begins when the individual makes the choice of a profession, and this identity is strengthened by the training that one acquires in preparation for that profession. The next step, namely the transition from college or university to the working environment, gives the option for finding one's role as a professional, and adapting to the profession. The process of professional identity development has to be done more than once in a lifetime due to, for example, changing policies or when changing profession (Lamote & Engels, 2010; Day & Gu, 2007).

Teachers' professional identity is gradually receiving attention in terms of issues of teacher training and teacher development. Professional identity "is seen to be at the centre of the teaching profession as it provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act', and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society" (Chikoko, 2015:1). How teachers categorise themselves as professionals is linked to the qualities they should have as teachers. For teachers to be thriving in their work, they need to not only identify themselves as teachers, but to appreciate their position, and the requirements and expectations of their professional identity (cf. Sachs, 2001; Hong, 2010; Canrinus *et al.*, 2011; Chikoko, 2015). Wenger's dimensions of identity (1998) are useful for reconceptualising the professional identity of teachers. The professional development of teachers can be viewed as connected to these five dimensions, although two of the five dimensions are more relevant when conceptualising teachers' professional identity. These are identity as community membership and as learning trajectory. Developing the practice of teaching is closely connected to professional identity and it is therefore assumed that there is a deep link between identity and practice (cf. 2.2.3).

2.4.1 Teacher professional identity construction

Teachers' identity is difficult to explain and interpret. It is much more than merely who teachers believe they are. However, a conceptualisation of teachers' identity from different perspectives has some ordinary elements which indicate that teachers' identity is created by various individual and background factors that work together in a mutual and vibrant way (cf. Castañeda, 2011; Havnes & Semby, 2014; Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Chikoko, 2015). Through these factors, identity is constantly reformulated over the life span of the individual. Professional teacher identity begins before individuals become teachers, and its development is considered as a critical aspect of the learning process to develop into a teacher. Such development is a result of social interaction within a dynamic and diverse workplace. Havnes and Semby (2014), highlight that professional identity is a part of an individual's decision where professional life and immediate community build a connection. In the case of teacher professionals, the regulatory educational authorities, individual schools and working cultures play a vital part in professional identity construction. To become a teacher is not an easy process, but is a challenging process that many pre-service teachers might never even have thought of. Teachers enter the teaching profession with their own personal histories that inform their values about teaching and what the work of teachers entails (Koen *et al.*, 2016; Day & Gu, 2007). The way in which teachers manage the process of constructing their professional teaching identity is entangled with their life histories, their

personal school experiences and their training as teachers (Castañeda, 2011). Day and Gu (2007:427; 429), highlight that while schools can be perceived as the “primary site for teachers’ professional learning”, the development of a sense of positive professional identity can be closely linked with the “emotional arenas of classroom life”. Teachers’ moral and job satisfaction feed into the development of a professional teacher identity, and a subsequent sense of commitment.

Professional teacher identity centres on how teachers classify themselves or are classified by others in terms of their virtues (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014). Chikoko (2015) asserts that it is important to concentrate on how teachers prepare themselves for the teaching profession. It has been previously indicated that when defining identity, both individual and background factors interact together throughout the individual’s lifetime. The construction of a professional identity is subsequently a dynamic process which is often negotiated through a rich and complex set of relationships in practice (Chong *et al.*, 2011). When developing a professional identity it is important to strike a balance between individual views and experiences, and the professional expectations of what it means to be a teacher (Beltman *et al.*, 2015). A study by Smit and Fritz (in Wallace, 2017), reveals that external expectations and pressures coming from society affect the development of professional teacher identity. Teachers incorporate their historical experiences with professional expectations, and adjust their attitudes in response to the behaviour of others. When teachers navigate between possibly conflicting environments, confusion can occur and cause a division between their expectations and reality. This can often leave teachers confused and impact negatively on their professional identity (Beltman *et al.*, 2015). To become a teacher means to be seen by oneself and by others - in this manner one attains and redefines an identity that is considered as legitimate on a social level (Daniels, 2015).

The construction of professional teachers’ identity can also be influenced by policies. Chikoko (2015:30) indicates that “teachers construct professional identities in response to policy documents”. They compare their preferred teacher identities to that suggested in the educational policy documents (Bosso, 2017; Jansen, 2001). For example, the 2015 *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification* requires South African teachers to be knowledgeable in seven identified roles (cf. 1.2). In most cases teachers end up performing their roles by simply copying the roles, without genuinely understanding what they are doing (Bosso, 2017). The uncertainty and constant educational restructuring has an impact on the construction of teachers’ professional identity, and is neither easy nor uncomplicated. There are inconsistencies between how teachers

define their identity as projected by systems, and individual teachers themselves (Isotalo, 2017).

2.4.2 Importance of teachers' professional identity

Hammerness, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009:184) make the following statement:

[d]eveloping an identity as a teacher is an important part of securing teachers' commitment to their work and adherence to professional norms ... the identities teachers develop shape their dispositions, where they place their effort, whether and how they seek out professional development opportunities, and what obligations they see as intrinsic to their role.

Teachers' professional identity is considered an important and significant factor that teachers use to describe, validate and make sense of themselves in relation to others and the world in general (Lamonte & Engels, 2010; Chikoko, 2015). As noted by Wallace (2017), professional identity can be a crucial element in teachers' professional lives. Teachers' professional identity is classified as a fundamental component in the socio-cultural and socio-political background of their professional development. Professional identity is therefore important in the framework of teacher development and teacher education programmes, and must employ the notion of professional identity in developing pre-service teachers. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) indicate that professional teacher identity can be used as a measure for teacher learning and development. Through understanding the construction of professional teacher identity and how it is mediated, it becomes possible to categorise the professional learning and developmental needs of teachers. Professional teacher identity is a foundation for promoting a transformative vision for education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Wallace, 2017).

In line with quality and innovation, professional teachers' identity affects the way in which they perform their roles, and also affects their response towards educational change (Jansen, 2001; Beijaard *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, teachers' professional identity has an influence on teachers' performance and learner achievement. It is therefore imperative to pay attention to identity as it is crucial to the practice of teaching (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004; Lamote & Engels, 2010). Accordingly, Ben-Peretz *et al.* (2010) are of the view that professional knowledge and special skills are required for teachers to function well within the scope of the profession. The construction of a strong professional teacher identity can contribute to an increase in the productivity of the professional. Professional teacher identity is fundamental to the teaching profession, as it contributes to

improved recruitment and the stabilisation of the teaching profession. The relationship between professional teacher identity and “how teachers do their work, makes teaching not only a technical procedure but also a complex, personal and social process that involves the whole person” (Chikoko, 2015:6).

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter the concepts *identity*, *identity construction* and *teachers' professional identity* were unpacked. Although the notion of identity has been described as a multifarious concept which is difficult to pin down, it was possible to define it as the fundamental concept that links social structures with individual actions. Identity as discussed in this study honours the common perspective of the person, and develops as a result of becoming a member of a community. Identity construction is foregrounded as central to psychosocial functioning and an obligation to social roles, and its construction is regarded as a vibrant and multifaceted process in which individuals experience regular struggles and change due to both external and internal factors. Factors which could have an impact on identity construction were indicated as *family*, *language* and *social influences*. With regard to teacher professional identity, it was highlighted that teachers construct their identities through their interaction with other stakeholders in the workplace, and also through their narrated stories about their life experiences. Teachers articulate their professional identity in terms of their perceptions of themselves and their understanding of the type of teacher they would like to be. It is concluded that teachers' insights on their own professional identity affect their effectiveness and professional development, including their capability and enthusiasm to perform and to be good teachers. In the next chapter I undertake, against the backdrop of an exposition of the research design, an analysis of education policies and other related documents with the aim to portray the image policy construct of South African teachers.

CHAPTER 3: POLICY IMAGE OF SOUTH AFRICAN TEACHERS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, a review of literature was undertaken to gain a conceptual understanding of the concepts *identity*, *identity construction* and *teachers' professional identity*. Identity has been defined as a multifarious concept and people continue to construct and reconstruct their identity throughout their life. Identity construction remains important to teacher education because teachers' professional identity is a fundamental component in their professional development. It is against the background of this conceptualised understanding that I will analyse the way in which a particular image of the South African teacher is portrayed in education policies and other related documents (cf. 1.3.2). Since the adoption of a constructional democracy, the newly democratic government had to introduce new policies and teachers were expected to implement them. However, the constant change of education policies complicates the roles and responsibilities of teachers and increases the demands in taking up of these roles and responsibilities.

While education policy documents contain particular images of the idealised teacher (Jansen, 2001), teachers have a particular image and understanding of their own professional image. The objective of this chapter is to analyse policy documents in order to foreground the policy image of South African teachers. It is my contention that the data generated through document analysis would, on the one hand, provide me with empirical knowledge regarding the policy image of South African teachers, and on the other hand, enable me to juxtapose the policy image with teachers' narrative construction of their professional identities. By implication, the document analysis presented in this chapter serves as a meaningful data set for the empirical work presented in the next chapter.

In this chapter, I first elaborate on document analysis as a method by indicating how it is applicable to this study. This exposition of document analysis is followed by the framework of analysis that was used for analysing the relevant documents in this study. The bulk of the chapter consists of the analysis of the documents, the findings that developed from the analysis, and the ensuing discussion.

3.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In Chapter 1, I indicated that a qualitative approach and a subsequent qualitative research design informed this study (cf. 1.6.1). As a qualitative approach depends on linguistic data instead of numerical data, I opted for document analysis to assist in answering the research question: *what image is portrayed of the South African teacher in education policy and other related documents?* (cf. 1.2.2). Informed by interpretivism as the guiding paradigm (cf. 1.5), I was interested to interpret written text in the South African policy context. The central focus of this chapter is therefore to analyse relevant education policies and related documents in order to explore the policy image of South African teachers. Document analysis as a methodological process was to study and assess documents with the aim to produce meaning and develop empirical knowledge about the policy image of South African teachers. Documents analysis requires the researcher to work with multiple sources of information in order to provide for sufficient support (Nieuwenhuis, 2017b). As such, I worked with different education policies and related documents (cf. 3.2.2). It is my contention that drawing on multiple sources or documents for this study, rich data enabled accurate conclusions, while at the same time safeguard the quality of data and ensure the credibility of the study.

Analysing documents in this study was of great importance since the process is cost-effective, especially if the documents are readily available. As the researcher, I was in the position to easily access education policies and related documents from my workplace (school), and I also had access to documents of the Department of Education. Since the study also involved narrative interviews (cf. 1.6.3), document analysis was regarded as imperative to provide a broad coverage of teachers' policy image in terms of continuous policy changes. Tracing changes that have been implemented assisted me in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the policy image of South African teachers. As I worked with documents related to the issues of teachers' professional identity, document analysis in this study was appropriate for realising my second objective, namely to foreground how education policies and related official documents portray a particular image of South African teachers (cf. 1.3.2).

3.2.1 Framework for analysis

Identity and its construction is dynamic and shifting as people can change over time and as their perspective changes (cf. 2.3). This usually leads to the development of multiple identities. In the case of the teacher, there might be a core identity and multiple forms of this identity (sub-

identities) as the person operates across different contexts (Wallace, 2017). Teachers construct their professional identities in response to policy documents (Jansen, 2001) to be *inter alia* a mentor, social worker, counsellor, leader and assessor. As such, different sub-identities can originate from education policies. By implication, teacher professional identity is *inter alia*, informed by education policies.

In qualitative research, decisions about the process of data analysis play an important role in strengthening the credibility of the research findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2017c). Decisions must be taken about how raw data will be transformed into themes and categories, and ultimately into a final description (Fouche, De Vos & Schurink, 2018). Within the context of my study, and in order to make sense and gain an understanding of textual data from education policies and related documents, I used hermeneutical analysis. As the data was in textual form as policy stipulations, and subsequently transcribed from education policy documents, a hermeneutic analysis was thought to bring meaning to the data. Hermeneutic analysis permits the researcher to elicit an in-depth understanding and meaning of the content that is being researched to make sense of the bigger picture (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). Hermeneutic analysis centres on the development of an organising system, and by implication, the purpose of such an organising system is to identify predominant themes through which textual data can be meaningfully organised, interpreted, and presented. By using a hermeneutic analysis, the content of the data for this study was analysed in terms of categories and themes that describe the policy image of South African teachers. The analysis of textual data was done in a systematic and orderly manner to enable the easy discovery of information in the data set (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2017c). In the diagram below (cf. Figure 3.1), I give a visual presentation of the steps I followed in my document analysis:

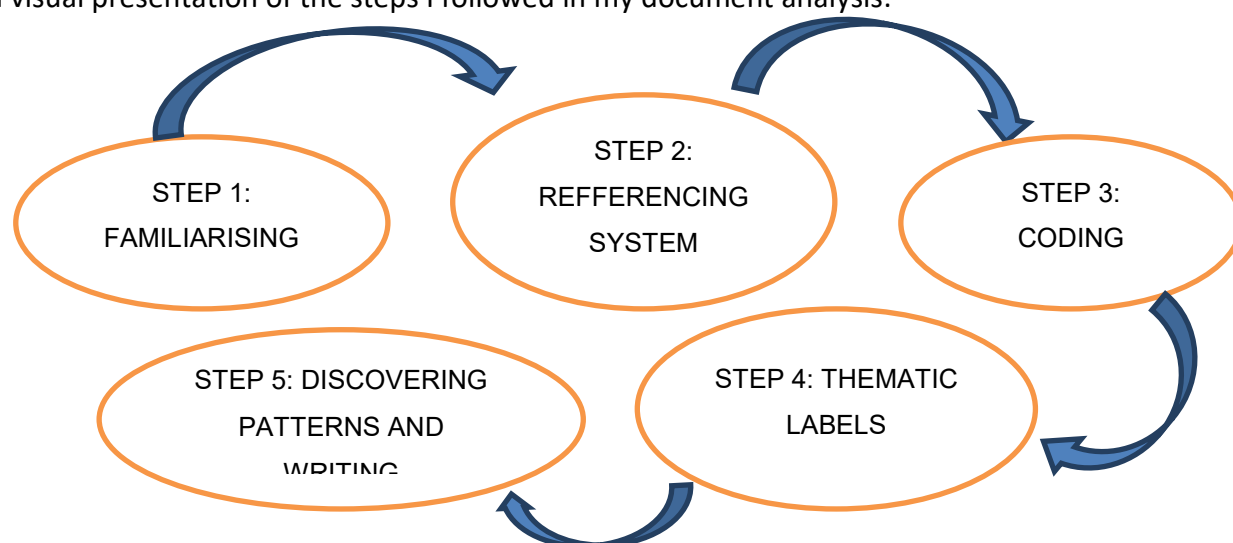


Figure 3.1: Steps taken in the document analysis

The first step I took was to read the documents several times so that I could become familiar with the data (cf. Step 1). The documents were then organised in chronological order. Since good analysis depends on how the researcher understands data (Nieuwenhuis, 2017c), organising the documents helped me to familiarise myself with them. The second step I took was to develop a *referencing system* (cf. Step 2). A reference system assisted me to locate specific units of text. During this step, I drew up a table in which I briefly discussed the documents in terms of background and significance for this study (see Table 3.1). The referencing system also enabled me to differentiate between the documents and to start with *data coding* (cf. Step 3). In this third step, I was guided by the objective to identify, retrieve and generate all the data that can be associated with teacher identity. In this step, I *coded* data to provide meaning to the sections for easy interpretation. I also took note of the fact that a hermeneutic analysis can refer to the decreasing of data and the sense-making effort by trying to identify core reliabilities and meanings (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). After coding, I began with the categorising of the codes into a system of *themes* (cf. Step 4). During this step, I attached labels to text so as to group and compare the similarities or related information from the documents. To help me make sense of the data, I started to search for *patterns*, which emerged from the multifaceted links among several aspects of the generated data (cf. Step 5). The patterns assisted me to consider what is really important and meaningful regarding the policy image of South African teachers, as portrayed in the data. This entire process of analysis constituted images which I used to write up the findings of my document analysis. The steps of a hermeneutical analysis enabled me to familiarise myself with the documents and to organise and code the data into themes.

3.2.2 Documents analysed

Education policy documents pertain to a government's laws and rules for the governing of the education system (cf. Turnbull, 2014). By implication, policy documents provide details of the government's policy obligations towards the effective operation of the education system. As noted by Frolova (2014), a country's policy commitment can be brought to the fore through the analysis of factors such as national socio-economic development initiatives, policies and provisions. Laws guide the world we live in, and law in the education system, are a complex issue, and the scope of the system adds to its complexity. In formal education, order and harmony are essential for the normal processes and operations of the education system (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001). Education forms a crucial part of the public service sector, and in South Africa the public service sector is hierarchically structured and bureaucratically controlled. Public office bearers in

the administration derive their right to act in a particular capacity from laws that are passed, either by parliament or by provincial legislatures. In terms of the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996), the most important provision regulating the function of the public service is Section 195(1), which states that “public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution”. This provision should be read along with Section 22 (RSA, 1996), according to which every citizen has the

[f]reedom of trade, occupation and profession. Every citizen has the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession freely. The practice of a trade, occupation or profession may be regulated by law.

Arguably, it can be assumed that after being appointed, a teacher exercises the right to work by performing duties in the professional field as agreed to in the employment contract. Although teachers have the right to choose and practice the teaching profession, the profession is regulated by an array of education policies and related documents, albeit in alignment with the democratic principles and values enshrined in the *Constitution*.

Since the first democratic election in South Africa, the education sector has experienced major changes, ranging from the re-organisation of the national education department to the restructuring of the provincial education departments (Frolova, 2014; RSA DoE, 1995). The transformative mission is outlined in Chapter 3, Section 13 of *White Paper on Education and Training* (RSA DoE, 1995):

[i]t is now the joint responsibility of all South Africans who have a stake in the education and training system to help build a just, equitable, and high quality system for all the citizens, with a common culture of disciplined commitment to learning and teaching.

Policy changes were introduced to unify the education system, to address past imbalances and to create an education system for the future. These policies have had a direct impact on teaching and learning, and contribute to the policy image of teachers. In order to explore this image, I analysed the following documents:

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996);
- *Employment of Educators Act 76* (1998);
- *Code of Professional Ethics in South African Council for Educators Act 31* (2000);
- *The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification* (2015); and
- *Personnel Administrative Measures* (2016).

In Table 3.1 below, I give an exposition of the education policies in terms of their background and their relevance for this study.

Table 3.1: Basic policy framework for teacher image

Document	Focus of the document	The value of the document for teacher image
<i>Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)</i> (<i>Constitution</i>)	Section 2 of the <i>Constitution</i> (RSA 1996) stipulates the supremacy of the document and indicates that “any law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled”.	Based on the supremacy of the <i>Constitution</i> , all education-related acts and policies are required to be aligned with it and its enshrined values. It can therefore be assumed that the policy image of teachers must be aligned with and reflect the vision and values of the Constitution.
<i>Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998</i> (<i>EEA</i>)	The application of <i>EEA</i> is stipulated in Section 2, according to which all provisions shall apply in respect of the employment of educators at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) public schools; (b) further education and training institutions; (c) departmental offices; and (d) adult basic education centres. 	<i>EEA</i> provides for the employment of teachers by the state and for the regulation of conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge. The inclusion of this document in the study is vital because it regulates the terms and conditions for teachers, and shapes, by implication, the identity of teachers through such terms and conditions.
<i>Code of Professional Ethics in the South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2000</i> (<i>SACE</i>)	“ <i>SACE</i> is the professional council for teachers and its purpose is to improve the status of the teaching profession through appropriate registration, the management of professional development and the infusion of the Code of Professional Ethics for all teachers” (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 2). This act fulfils its constitutional duty in terms of Section 22 of the <i>Constitution</i> (RSA, 1996) according to which <p style="text-align: center;">Every citizen has the right to choose their occupation or profession freely. The practice of a trade, occupation or profession may be regulated by law.</p>	I deem the inclusion of this document important as it regulates the teaching profession in the South African context. This document portrays a particular image of the South African teacher as it outlines the professional code of ethics for teacher conduct. <i>SACE</i> aims to ensure professional behaviour by teachers and the upholding of human rights.
<i>Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification (2015)</i> (<i>MRTEQ</i>)	This policy is used by the DHET to evaluate qualification programmes for teachers at public universities for approval and inclusion in the Programme and Qualifications Mix (PQM). In order to enable the registration and funding for the programmes, “it is also used by the CHE and the HEQC to inform their teacher education accreditation and quality assurance processes” (RSA DHET, 2015:Section 1.13).	The primary effect of <i>MRTEQ</i> is to advance the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of teachers and of education. The document outlines in seven collective roles of South African teachers, which could be understood “as everyday functions of the collective of all educators at a school” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A). These roles portray a particular image of teachers as they are meant to serve, as a description of what it means to be a competent teacher.
<i>Personnel Administrative Measures (2016)</i> (<i>PAM</i>)	<i>PAM</i> outlines in detail the terms and conditions of employment for teachers employed by the state. The terms and conditions are aligned with Section 4 of <i>EEA</i> that refers to salaries and other conditions of service for educators.	Through the exposition of the duties and responsibilities of teachers, a particular image of the ideal teacher for employment in South African schools is foregrounded.

3.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In this section, I present the findings and discussion of my document analysis. As indicated in Section 3.2.1, I used a hermeneutic analysis to bring meaning to the data generated through document analysis. The findings emerged from an organising system that enabled the analysis of the textual data in terms of categories and themes that describe the policy image of South African teachers. During the hermeneutic analysis, I identified the various images of South African teachers, namely teachers as *managers* and *organisers* who act as *reflective practitioners* and serves as *role models*. As individuals, teachers are required to be *caregivers*, *redeemers* and *sorcerers*. From the analysis, however, it became clear that these images seem to be embedded in the seven collective roles as outlined in *MRTEQ* (2015). As explained in Chapter 1 (cf. 1.2), the different roles of teachers were first refined in the *Norms and Standards for Educators* of 2000, and later included as an appendix in the *MRTEQ* document, which replaced the NSE. I have opted to use the *MRTEQ* (2015) because it is the latest document on the seven collective roles. The roles are *specialist in a phase, subject discipline or practice; learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; assessor; and community, citizenship and pastoral role*. I subsequently decided to present my findings in alignment with the seven roles, albeit in a combined form, namely the teacher as *learning mediator and specialist; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; interpreter and designer of learning programmes and assessor; leader, administrator and manager*. I conclude my findings with reference to the teacher's *community, citizenship and pastoral role*.

My decision to draw strongly on *MRTEQ* and to use this document as a point of departure in my presentation of the findings was informed by the status the document enjoys within the South African education policy framework. As a policy document, *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Section 1.12) provides

a set of minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications ... aimed at ensuring that the higher education system produces teachers of high quality, in line with the needs of the country.

By providing collective roles for teachers in a school, the document foregrounds a particular image of the ideal teacher. While teachers are expected to carry out the roles “appropriate to their specific position in the school, all classroom teachers will develop in the seven roles as appropriate

to their practice” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A). By implication, the seven roles serve, on the one hand, as a key standard for the development and acknowledgment of teacher qualifications and learning programmes in schools. On the other hand, these roles can be regarded as useful tools to assess teachers’ development and the ability to contribute positively to the collective work of teaching learners in a school at different stages of his or her career. Although my analysis is primarily informed by the 2015 version of *MRTEQ*, I also draw the attention to some changes as seen in the October 2018 version of the current draft version of *MRTEQ*. In particular, I refer in my presentation of the findings to Appendix C of the 2015 document and the revised Appendix C of the 2018 draft. In the former, reference is made to the basic competencies for newly qualified teachers, while the 2018 draft refers to the *SACE* professional teaching standards for new teacher graduates. In addition, it is important to note that although I analysed specific documents, I also complement my discussion of the findings with other official documents which I consider to be important, such as the

- *Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices in Schools*(1996);
- *National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for Learners and Educators in Public Schools, and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions* (1999);
- *Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy* (2001);
- *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education; Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*(2001);
- *National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*(2012a);
- *SACE Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPDT) Management Handbook* (2013);and
- *Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018b*.

In the subsequent sections, I present and discuss the findings from the document analysis, with the aim to foreground the way in which images of teachers are portrayed in education-related policy documents.

3.3.1 Learning mediator and specialist

Changes and reforms in education rely solely on teachers, and as such the key to improvement in education rests on the shoulders of teachers (cf. 1.1). South African teachers have collective roles that they are expected to carry out in the classroom and school, such as being a *learning mediator* and *specialist in a phase, subject discipline or practice*. According to *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Learning mediator*), South African teachers must be able to

mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners (including those with barriers to learning), construct learning environments that are

appropriately contextualised and inspirational and communicate effectively, showing recognition of, and respect for the differences among learners.

While teachers are expected to acknowledge different needs in their classroom contexts, they also have to be responsive to diversity as they must “demonstrate sound knowledge of subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching in a South African context” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Learning mediator*). In order to mediate learning within a diverse context, teachers are required to be a specialist in the phase and/or subject discipline that they teach.

In the South Africa, teachers in the foundation phase (Grades R-3) are required to teach Home Language, First Additional Language, Mathematics and Life Skills. Foundation phase teachers require extensive and specialised knowledge of early childhood learning to teach reading, writing and numeracy (RSA DHET, 2015:Section 12.10). Intermediate phase teachers must be able to teach from Grades 4 to 6, and specialise in the teaching of two languages (comprising Home Language teaching in one of the official languages and First Additional English Language), as well as Mathematics and at least one of the following subjects: Science and Technology, Life Skills and Social Sciences. Senior phase and Further Education and Training teachers teach Grades 7 to 9 and Grades 10 to 12 respectively. These teachers are expected to be specialists in one or two subjects from the four subject domains which comprise Humanities, Science and Technology, Languages and Business and Management (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix D).

The teacher is therefore required to mediate learning through his or her specialised skills and knowledge in a particular phase. *MRTEQ* gives a more encompassing exposition of what is required from the South African teacher in order to have gained a well-developed understanding of his or her specialisation. As stated in Appendix A (RSA DHET, 2015:*Specialist in a phase, subject discipline or practice*), the teacher’s practice must be

well grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods and procedures relevant to the phase, subject, discipline or practice. The educator will know about different approaches to teaching and learning (and, where appropriate, research and management), and how these may be used in ways which are appropriate for the learners and the context.

In Section 29, the *Constitution* (RSA, 1996) protects the right

- (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
- (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

By implication, it can be assumed that everyone has the right to an education offered by a teacher that is a specialist in his or her phase and/or subject, and who has the required knowledge and skills to effectively mediate learning. The literature review also foregrounded that teachers are expected to present concepts that have been thought through. While knowledge and special skills are required for teachers to function effectively within the teaching profession, it has been noted that teachers' professional identity has an influence on their own performance and on student achievement (cf. 2.4.2). In acknowledgement of the fundamental role of teachers, *SACE* (RSA DBE, 2000:Section 2.1) emphasises that

[t]he educators who are registered or provisionally registered with the South African Council for Educators must acknowledge the noble calling of their profession to educate and train the learners of our country.

In addition, the *EEA* (RSA DoE, 1998:Section 7(1)(a)) underscores the importance of teachers' ability to effectively mediate learning as a specialist by linking the appointment of teachers with their ability:

[i]n the making of any appointment or the filling of any post on any educator establishment under this Act due regard shall be had to equality, equity and the other democratic values and principles which are contemplated in section 195(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), and which include the *ability* [my emphasis] of the candidate.

The literature review reveals that the primary role of teachers is to teach learners, and in order to excel in their work, they are required to identify themselves as teachers, and to develop an understanding of their position as teachers (cf. 2.4). In addition, they must know and understand the requirements and expectations of their professional identity as stipulated in education policy documents (cf. 2.4). The notion of the South African teacher as specialist who is able to mediate learning is well-established in *MRTEQ*. In Appendix C, *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015) highlights various basic competencies expected from newly qualified teachers. Some of these align directly with the role of the teacher as learning mediator and specialist. Newly qualified teachers are expected to "have sound subject knowledge" (cf. sub-section 1), must know "how to teach their subject(s)" (cf. sub-section 2), know "how to communicate effectively in general, as well as in relation to their

subject(s), in order to mediate learning” (cf. sub-section 4) and must be “knowledgeable about the school curriculum and be able to unpack its specialised content” (cf. sub-section 6). While perceived as the basic competencies of newly qualified teachers, one can assume that within the context of the teaching profession, these basic competencies must develop into well-established competencies of teacher professionals.

In addition to teachers being required to have a deep understanding of and how to teach their subject(s), they need to “acknowledge[s] the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realise his or her potentialities” (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 3.2). This requirement highlighted in *SACE* is also underscored in *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015). While newly qualified teachers “must understand diversity in the South African context in order to teach in a manner that includes all learners” (cf. Appendix C, sub-section 7), all teachers are required to “construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualised and inspirational and communicate effectively, showing recognition of, and respect for the differences among learners” (cf. Appendix A, *Learning mediator*). As a consequence, a ‘one-size fits it all’ approach to teaching is problematic. Being a learning mediator and specialist require effective teaching across diverse contexts. The requirement for teachers to be able to teach across diverse contexts is by implication supported by one of the general aims of *CAPS* (RSA DBE, 2012b:Section 1.3(b)):

equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country.

South African teachers must therefore be conversant with the structural and cultural barriers embedded in the school that can hamper learner achievement. While inequalities in the South African education system largely contribute to the performance of teachers, and also learner achievement, the apartheid legacy of different educational opportunities continues to affect children who find themselves in schools characterised by overcrowded classrooms, crumbling infrastructure, and relatively poor educational outcomes (RSA DBE, 2018; McKeever, 2017; Burger, 2011). The inequalities in the education system are a violation of the “democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom” (RSA, 1996:Section 7(1)).

In addition to sound knowledge and skills regarding his or her subject(s), the teacher must therefore also be able to employ teaching strategies to reduce educational inequalities. A conducive learning environment can only be ensured if the teacher acknowledges and respects

the differences among learners, and is able to act on such acknowledgement by constructing appropriately contextualised learning environments to address exclusion and underachievement. In the South African context, teaching is regarded as a noble profession. As learning mediators and specialists in their specific phases and subject(s), teachers are expected to adhere to professional teaching standards. *PAM* (RSA DBE, 2016:Section A.4.2.5) states with regard to the workload of teachers that during the formal school day all teachers “shall, during his/her official duty, give his/her full attention to the duties entrusted to him/her”. Teachers are not only expected to mediate learning in their classrooms, but teaching and learning should contribute to the academic and social development of learners. If this is not the case,

[t]he employer may, having due regard to the applicable provisions of the Labour Relations Act, discharge an educator from service on account of unfitness for the duties attached to the educator’s post or incapacity to carry out those duties efficiently (RSA DBE, 1998:Section 11).

South African teachers are expected to “do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession” (RSA DoE, 2000: Section 2.4). By implication, South African teachers must exercise their professional duties as learning mediators who have the required knowledge and skills to “know who their learners are and how they learn; they must understand their [learners’] individual needs and tailor their teaching accordingly” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 3).

3.3.2 Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner

Constant changes in policies and curricula complicate the task of teachers (cf. 1.2). In the previous section, I indicated that the image of the ideal teacher portrays a person who uses specialised skills and knowledge to mediate learning (cf. 3.3.1). However, in order for teachers to be specialists in their particular phases or subject(s), they must also “keep abreast of educational trends and developments” (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 7.3). Thus, within the context of changing demands and reforms, including the requirement of being specialists, South African teachers are constantly required to develop professionally. Within a dynamic context and in order to adhere to high standards, teachers must constantly adapt their professional roles and re-modify their professional identity (Izadinia, 2013). It is in this regard, that *MRTEQ* foregrounds the expectation of South African teachers to

achieve ongoing personal, academic, occupational and professional growth, through pursuing reflective study and research in their chosen field, in broader professional

and educational matters and in other related fields (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner*).

Teachers are subsequently expected to be scholars, researchers and lifelong learners.

The image of the South African teacher as a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner is supported in various official documents and is often couched against the background of the dynamic demands and expectations of the teaching profession. In the *Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018 (TALIS)* (RSA DBE, 2018b:Foreword), Angie Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education, emphasises that 21st century teachers “are faced with a pressing challenge of preparing learners adequately with skills and knowledge for them to be active and contributing citizens of a Fourth Industrial Revolution”. This reality holds certain implications for the South African teachers and the development of their professional identity. In particular, it is stated that

[i]n the South African context, issues of a developmental state, scarcity of skills, and fiscal constraints contemporise an identity and practice, yet require innovative, high quality, and advanced knowledge workers, who are capable of mediating teaching, and stimulating learning within changing environments (RSA DBE, 2018b:Foreword).

As active lifelong learners, South African teachers are expected to “to remain informed of current developments in educational thinking and curriculum development” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.4.3). The ongoing development of the teaching profession requires teachers to stay abreast of the curriculum, teaching methods and assessment aligned to diverse work environments (RSA DBE, 2018b; RSA DoE, 2000).

PAM (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.1.6) also indirectly foregrounds the importance of teachers as lifelong learners, as teachers are expected “to recognise learning as an active process and be prepared to use a variety of strategies to meet the outcomes of the curriculum”. Education is essential for human, social and economic development, and it is therefore regarded as a key factor in developing individual and collective well-being, and in achieving sustainable development (McKeever, 2017). In order to incorporate learning as a continuous, lifelong process interwoven with the changing needs of the South African landscape,

[f]ormal, qualification-based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) must [therefore] provide teachers with opportunities to strengthen or supplement existing roles, or develop new specialisations and interests and, in general, improve their capacity to engage with, support and assist other educators, as well as support staff,

learners and parents – not only at classroom and school level, but also in the community and in a wider context (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 13.1).

The ability to adapt and to remain flexible is regarded as one of the most crucial qualities for teachers who find themselves in an ever-changing world. In this regard, the *SACE Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPDT) Management Handbook* (RSA DBE, 2013:4) indicates that

like all professionals, teachers need to grow their knowledge and skills throughout their careers. Like all professions, teaching requires deep knowledge which is continuously updated and widened, and it involves complex skills that need to be continually adapted to new circumstances.

In order for teachers to become better at their jobs, specifically within the context of a dynamic profession, and for schools to become better sites of teaching and learning, teachers are required to understand teaching as a “complex activity that is premised upon the acquisition, integration and application of different types of knowledge practices or learning” (RSA DHET, 2015:Section 3.1). For teachers to contribute towards the ongoing development of the teaching profession, they need to embark on lifelong learning. Teachers are expected “to participate in departmental committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update one’s professional views/standards” (RSA DHET, 2015:Section 3.1; RSA DoE, 2000). Teachers’ willingness to learn is an important prerequisite for taking up an active role in developing a culture of curiosity and a desire for learners to keep on learning. South African teachers’ role as scholars, researchers and lifelong learners seems to be premised on the need for teachers to

continuously renew their commitment to their profession, to express their pride in its ideals of service, their dedication to our children’s development and their determination to contribute to a just and thriving nation (RSA DBE, 2013:4).

I agree with Bernadine (2019:1) that “professional development is the cornerstone for quality education”. For South African teachers to become and remain specialists in their particular phases or subject(s), they therefore have to be scholars, researchers and lifelong learners. Teachers are the force that drives the education system, and their professional development will feed into the quality of their teaching, which in turn will contribute towards the quality of learners’ performance and achievement.

3.3.3 *Interpreter and designer of learning programmes, and assessor*

The education profession gives teachers the opportunity to take care of children and their growing minds to develop a variety of important lifelong skills and knowledge (cf. 2.4.2). However, in order for teaching professionals to engage in teaching “premised upon the acquisition, integration and application of different types of knowledge practices or learning” (RSA DHET, 2015:Section 3.1), the teacher must be competent to mediate learning through the use of specialised skills and knowledge acquired through on-going research and lifelong learning (cf. 3.3.1 and 3.3.2). It is within the context of this image that South African teachers are expected “to plan, co-ordinate, control, administer, evaluate and report on learners’ academic progress” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.1.5). This expectation foregrounds another role of South African teachers, namely that of *interpreter and designer of learning programmes*. Teachers are regarded as “frontline actors in improving learning outcomes” (RSA DBE, 2013:1), and in this regard, *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials*) explains the requirement of South African teachers to

understand and interpret provided learning programmes, design original learning programmes, identify the requirements for a *specific context* [my emphasis] of learning and select and prepare *suitable* [my emphasis] textual and visual resources for learning.

This requirement seems to be a prerequisite for teachers “to engage in class teaching which will foster a purposeful progression in learning and which is consistent with the learning areas and programmes of subjects and grades as determined” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.1.1). In terms of the *National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* (RSA DBE, 2012a), all subjects in all grades have a specific, complete and brief policy document that prescribes what teachers must teach and how they must assess. However, the interpretation and design of learning programmes go beyond the mere facilitation of prescribed pacesetters and teaching plans in subject policy documents. The use of words such as ‘specific context’ and ‘suitable’ is significant in the equation, holds certain implications for teachers. Teachers must know how to interpret the exiting and approved learning programmes in light of the phase in which they are teaching. Context can be classified as two-fold, namely the social context and learner specific needs.

The requirement for teachers to interpret and (re)design exiting learning programmes coincides with the basic competencies of newly qualified teachers. According to *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET,

2015:Appendix C, sub-section 3), newly qualified teachers must “know who their learners are and how they learn; they must understand their individual needs and tailor their teaching accordingly”. By implication, teachers must first have knowledge of their learners and the way in which they learn, in order to appropriately mould their teaching. As a specialist, the teacher must be “able to unpack its [school curriculum] specialised content, as well as being able to use available resources appropriately, so as to *plan* and *design* [my emphasis] suitable learning programmes” (cf. sub-section 6). These competencies are subsequently supportive of the role of the teacher as a designer of learning programmes that are “sensitive to the differing needs of both the subject and the learners” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials*). In addition, South African teachers must also be able to “manage classrooms effectively across diverse contexts in order to ensure a conducive learning environment” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 8). The skill to manage across different contexts implies that South African teachers must be able to (re)design learning programmes that are inclusive of all learners (cf. sub-section 7). Such inclusivity can be realised when teachers “acknowledge the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realise his or her potentialities” (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 3.2). An indiscriminate and uncritical use of the prescribed content and teaching plans in CAPS documents would in principle, violate the role of the teacher as an interpreter and designer of learning programmes for inclusive and conducive teaching and learning. As an interpreter and designer of learning programmes, teachers are expected to “make judgements that are conceptually informed, responsive to learners and contextually appropriate” (RSA DHET, 2018:Appendix C, sub-section 5).

The role of the teacher as interpreter and designer of learning programmes holds certain implications for the assumption that “[t]eaching involves organising, monitoring and assessing learning” (RSA DHET, 2018:Appendix C, sub-section 9). *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A: *Assessor*) foregrounds the expectation of South African teachers to “understand that assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate it into this process”. While newly qualified teachers must be able to “access learners in reliable and varied ways, as well as being able to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 9), teachers in general are required to

design and manage both formative and summative assessments in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of the learning and meet the requirements of

accrediting bodies. The educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment results (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Assessor*).

Arguably, when considering the notion of appropriateness and the requirement for teachers to “interpret and use assessment results to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmes”(cf. Appendix A, *Assessor*), it can be accepted that teachers’ ability to interpret and design learning programmes stands central to quality assessment. As noted and in drawing on Appendix C of *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015), quality teaching and learning remain dependent on teachers’ ability to design suitable learning programmes for teaching across diverse contexts in conducive learning environments, while simultaneously assessing learners in reliable ways and using assessment results towards the improvement of teaching and learning. The intersection between the various roles seems to align with the corporate plan of the DBE “to ensure that all South Africans receive flexible lifelong learning and education and training of high quality” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section A5.1.1).

A teacher’s role as assessor is very important because assessments make provision for the inclusion of all learners, and should assist all learners in achieving the intended outcomes. In terms of the *NPPPR* (RSA DBE, 2012a), assessment is a continuous designed process of gathering and interpreting information, as well as assessing the performance of learners. It includes four steps, namely the regeneration of evidence of attainment, the checking of evidence, recording the findings, and the use of the information to assist the learner’s development. Assessment subsequently aims to improve the process of teaching and learning. South African teachers are required to assess learners internally based on the requirements stated in the policy document *NPPPR* and “to record and report learners’ performance in terms of the achievement descriptors” (RSA DBE, 2016: Section 3.5.3). The teacher’s role as assessor is supported in several official documents. Regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning, assessment should be integrated in teaching and learning, instead of being done separately.

I argue however, that the teacher’s role as assessor cannot be detached from the other roles that have been discussed up to this point. The literature review reveals that the principal role of teachers is to teach learners, and they must do so by being a learning mediator and specialist who is able to use various strategies and resources appropriate to teaching in the South African context (cf. 3.3.1). By implication, they must have a sound knowledge of subject content. However, teachers face serious challenges in adequately preparing learners with the knowledge and skills for

them to be active and to be able to cope even after schooling. They should therefore continuously grow their knowledge and skills to continuously develop (RSA DBE, 2018: Foreword). Due to the constant changes and review of policies, teachers are expected to present concepts that are thoroughly researched and appear to have been fully thought through. Teachers must make connections between what learners already know and the new content that is being taught, and build a foundation for what they are yet to learn. This will require them to constantly improve their professional identities by being scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, who will be able to cope with the constant changes and demands (cf. 3.3.2). Teaching constitutes a complex context in which teachers create knowledge-rich learning opportunities for their learners in their classroom spaces. It is within these spaces that teachers assess learners and determine if they are coping. Teachers as assessors therefore use assessment as an instrument to afford learners opportunities to demonstrate not only what they have learnt, but also what they can do with the acquired knowledge. Learner assessment is closely linked to the teachers' power and ability to interpret and design learning programmes and materials (cf. 3.3.3). It can be noted that assessment addresses barriers to learning, and should accommodate all learners. Teachers must be able "to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning" for all learners (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 9).

3.3.4 Leader, administrator and manager

The policy image of South African teachers is extremely dynamic when it comes to specific roles and competencies, and requires teachers to continually extend their professional development (cf. 1.2; 3.3.2). While recognising the centrality of teaching in the profession, teachers are expected to extend their speciality of influence beyond teaching to include "supervisory and management functions" (RSA DBE, 2016: Section A.4.1.2.1). In this regard, *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*) expects teachers to take up responsibilities that pertain to their role as *leaders, administrators and managers*. *MRTEQ* provides a closer description, and states that the South African teacher must be able to

make decisions appropriate to his/her level, manage learning in the classroom, carry out classroom administrative duties efficiently and participate in school decision-making structures. These competences will be performed in ways which are democratic, which support learners and colleagues and which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*).

In alignment with *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*), the teacher is expected to “make decisions appropriate to his/her level”. Portrayed as ‘ultimate’ decision-makers where teaching and learning is concerned, teachers are expected

to engage in class teaching, including the academic, administrative, educational and disciplinary aspects and to organise extra and co-curricular activities so as to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 2).

The South African education system is a complex venture which requires different decision-making processes regarding different issues and educational problems (McKeever, 2017). In the previous section (cf. 3.3.3) I discussed roles pertaining to the interpretation and the design of learning programmes, and the assessing of learners (cf. 3.3.3). On the one hand, these roles relate to activities that teachers are expected to carry out on a daily basis. On the other hand, these roles require teachers to constantly make decisions as leaders, administrators and managers of effective teaching and learning in their classroom spaces. In this regard, literature suggests that

teachers are the custodians of instruction, implementers of school policies and co organizers for school activities. Further, the decisions made in schools affect them and as professionals and specialists in different subject areas, they are better suited to make the correct decisions having in mind what is required of them as teachers (Mualuko in Gemechu, 2014:2).

The direct relationship between teachers’ specialised knowledge and decision-making is highlighted by *SACE’s* professional teaching standards (RSA DBE, 2018:6) in that teachers “need to consider the knowledge of the subjects they teach, and the learners with which they work, to decide how best to enable learning within the context in which they work”. As teachers are in the first instance responsible for teaching and learning in their classroom spaces, their decisions must be beneficial to their learners, hence the expectation to “make judgements that are conceptually informed, responsive to learners and contextually appropriate” (RSA DHET, 2018:Appendix C, sub-section 5). Contextually appropriate decisions are important as the learning must be mediated across diverse contexts, irrespective of *inter alia*, learners’ socio-economic background, race and gender (cf. 3.3.1). Contextual appropriateness is also supported by the *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education; Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (White Paper 6)* (RSA DoE, 2001b:16) as teachers are required to “acknowledge and respect differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status”.

On a more practical note, policy documents highlight various expectations regarding teachers' responsibility to "manage learning in the classroom" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*). To manage learning in the classroom, the teacher must be in class, busy with teaching-related activities during scheduled teaching times as per policy requirements (RSA DBE, 2017). In this regard, *PAM* (RSA DBE, 2016:Section A.4.1.2.1) states that during the formal school day, including time outside the formal school day, teachers are expected to cover duties such as "administration, supervisory and management functions... planning, preparation and evaluation". Teachers are also required "to control and co-ordinate stock and equipment which is used and required" and "to recognise that learning is an active process and be prepared to use a variety of strategies to meet the outcomes of the curriculum" (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.3.2 and 3.1.6). However, it can be assumed that decision-making is possibly the central quality that teachers should possess when it comes to teaching and learning. Moreover and as noted, teachers must present content knowledge to learners in a theoretically sound manner, and develop tasks that give them the chance to apply their new knowledge and skills (cf. 3.3.1). The management of learning also requires teachers to establish "class routines to make the most of the available teaching and learning time" (RSA DBE, 2018:sub-section 4.2). By implication and for teachers to play a leading role in the management of learning, they must "prepare lessons taking into account orientation, regional courses, new approaches, techniques, evaluation, aids, etc. in their field" (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.13). In addition, teachers must "co-operate with colleagues of all grades in order to maintain a good teaching standard and progress among learners and to foster administrative efficiency within the school" (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.5.1).

In addition to the management of teaching and learning, the teacher must "participate in school decision-making structures" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*). Teachers' role as manager and administrator is therefore extended beyond teaching and learning responsibilities. It is anticipated that teachers will take part in decision-making structures such as the "school's governing body if elected to do so" (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.4.4), "...departmental committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update one's professional views/standards" (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.5.4), and "to maintain contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisations" (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.5.5). *SACE's* professional teaching standards (RSA DBE, 2018:sub-section 2.3) foreground the expectation of teachers to "involve themselves in ongoing personal, academic and professional growth through

reflection, study, reading, and research". While this expectation strongly alludes to the teacher's role as scholar and lifelong learner (cf. 3.3.2), such involvement is important in enabling them to make informed decisions. In this regard, *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Section13.1) indicates that

[a]s teachers grow in their careers and become more experienced, they are expected to make increasingly greater contributions to the collective expression of the roles in the school, both quantitatively in relation to the range of roles that they contribute to, and qualitatively in relation to the kind of competences they are able to display in relation to the different roles.

The diversity of roles ensures that teachers build the traditions of their schools, improves learners' achievement, and encourage positively practice among their colleagues. As a result, *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*) requires teachers to perform their leadership, administrative and managerial roles "in ways which are democratic, which support learners and colleagues and which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs". Educational policies portray teachers as transformative intellectuals who are tasked with promoting the constitutional values of deep democracy and the rule of law (cf. 1.2). While the *Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy (The Manifesto)* (RSA DoE, 2001a:4) states that "teachers and administrators must recognise their responsibility in setting an example", *SACE* (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 2.3) compels teachers to "acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa". Central to this exemplary leadership role of the teacher, is the requirement to "respect the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners" (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 3.1). Although various national education policies could be cited as examples of embedded references to teachers' roles, I quote from the *Regulations to prohibit Initiation Practices (The Regulations)* (RSA DoE, 1996:Section 6.3) to foreground teachers' role as custodians of learners' rights:

every educator has a duty to control the actions of learners when such actions may inflict harm to others or to the learner, or violate the rights of other learners or educators. Educators must take reasonable measures where necessary to prevent a learner from harming himself or herself or others.

From the above exposition, it can be deduced that on the one hand, teachers must be role models of constitutional values, and on the other hand, they must "strive to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South

Africa” (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 3.3). As such, *SACE* (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 2.5) requires teachers to “act in a proper and becoming way such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute” and must “use proper procedures to address issues of professional incompetence or misbehaviour” (cf. Section 6.3). It is therefore important for teachers to “use fair and consistently applied rules to promote respectful behaviour with all members of the school community” (RSA DBE, 2018:sub-section 4.3). According to *The Manifesto* (RSA DoE, 2001a:12), “education is the key because it empowers us to exercise our democratic rights, and shape our destiny, by giving us the tools to participate in public life, to think critically, and to act responsibly”. The teaching profession subsequently requires teachers to “find, develop or modify carefully chosen physical, graphic, digital and text-based resources to enhance learning” (RSA DBE, 2018:sub-section 9.4). It is within this context that teachers must perform their leadership, administrative and managerial roles “in ways which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs” (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*). Responsiveness to changing circumstance alludes to the dynamic nature of South African education and the ability of teachers to work in dynamic contexts. In order to strengthen their abilities in terms of this role, they must “collaborate with others to support teaching, learning and their professional development” (RSA DHET, 2018:Appendix C, sub-section 2) and “participate in professional development activities organised by their subject associations, professional learning communities (PLCs) and teacher unions” (RSA DBE, 2018:sub-section 2.4). As a collective, teachers’ participation in decision-making at various levels of the school should always be aimed at the well-being of learners and the smooth functioning of the broader school community.

3.3.5 Community, citizenship and pastoral roles

Teaching is a noble profession and the collective roles of South African teachers also go beyond the actual teaching in their classroom spaces, as explored in sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3. Teachers are further expected to be leaders and managers (cf. 3.3.4) who must *inter alia*, be able “to cater for the educational and general welfare of all learners in his/her care” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.2.2). In this section I place the emphasis on the expected personality traits of teachers as foregrounded in education policies and other education related documents.

The teaching profession requires teachers to comply with a high standard of professional ethics, and to act ethically in all situations. In this regard, *SACE* (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 2.2) compels teachers to “acknowledge that the attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training and conduct

of the teaching profession determine the quality of education in this country". In order to ensure good quality teaching and learning, teachers must act with a conscious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards. *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 10) expects newly qualified teachers to "have a positive work ethic, display appropriate values and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession". While education policies established for teachers' standards of conduct require teachers to display behaviour that is reflective of moral virtues such as being fair, kind and respectful, *EEA* (RSA DoE, 1998) outlines serious misconduct which can lead to the dismissal of teachers. The 2018 draft *MRTEQ* document (RSA DHET, 2018:Appendix C, sub-section 1) highlights ethical teaching as one of *SACE's* professional teaching standards and claims that "[e]thical teaching is based on a commitment to the learning and wellbeing of all children". Quality teaching and learning subsequently remain dependent on teachers' ability and ethical commitment to the teaching profession. In alignment with *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*), teachers must "demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner, and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow-educators". In striving to create a learning environment that enables the full potential of all learners, it remains the ethical responsibility of teachers "to teach in a manner that includes all learners" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 7). Teachers' community, citizenship and pastoral roles require them to "practice and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*).

While teachers are compelled to ensure that every child can learn in a conducive environment by developing an accommodating and empowering environment, they must "uphold the Constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*). The *Constitution* (RSA, 1996: Section1) clearly states that the vision for South Africa is founded on

- (a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.
- (b) Non-racialism and non-sexism.

The Manifesto (RSA DoE, 2001a:12) quotes Kate O'Regan's statement that the *Constitution*

is a call to action to all South Africans to seek to build a just and free democratic society in which the potential of each person is freed. The importance of meeting this call is therefore of particular importance to educators.

Teachers subsequently have a central role to play in creating a harmonious society that promotes dignity, respect, equality, tolerance, and the development of human rights and freedoms (cf. 1.2). In particular, they have to adhere to professional teaching standards to “acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa” (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 2.3), by behaving “in a way that enhances the dignity and status of the teaching profession and that does not bring the profession into disrepute” (Section 7.2). South African teachers are subsequently tasked with promoting the constitutional values of deep democracy and the rule of law.

While the inculcation of constitutional values is very important for the advancement of a South African identity, teachers are expected to “enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa” (RSA DoE, 2000: Section 3.3). However, “values cannot be legislated if they are imposed. They would remain rootless, and lifeless. Vital, durable values grow from dialogue and discussion and lived experience” (RSA DoE, 2001a:17). It is for this reason that *The Manifesto* (RSA DoE, 2001a: Educational strategies) outlines sixteen education strategies for instilling democratic values in the youth:

nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools; role modelling: promoting commitment as well as competence among educators; ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think; infusing the classroom with a culture of human rights; making arts and culture part of the curriculum; putting history back into the curriculum; introducing religion education into schools; making multilingualism happen; using sport to shape social bonds and nurture nation building at schools; ensuring equal access to education; promoting anti-racism in schools; freeing the potential of girls as well as boys; dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility; ethics and the environment and nurturing the new patriotism, or affirming our common citizenship.

A critical consideration of the abovementioned strategies foregrounds certain implications for teachers’ community, citizenship and pastoral roles. Teachers have to role model their

commitment to the teaching profession, but also their competence. Competence in this regard can relate to their ability to mediate learning as specialists of their subjects or phases (cf. 3.3.1), but also their competence to role model and prompt democratic principles in their classroom spaces. Role models show children how to live with honesty, confidence, optimism, purpose and sympathy, and, by implication, play an important role in a child's positive growth (Mitchell, 2017). Role modelling and the cultivation of human rights, equality and non-discrimination are clearly required from South African teachers. Teachers are trusted to "promote social justice and the redress of inequalities within their educational institutions and society more broadly" (RSA DHET, 2015: Appendix C, sub-section 4; cf. 3.3.3). In addition, RSA DoE (2001b:24) indicates that

many learners experience barriers to learning or drop out primarily because of the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs typically through inaccessible physical plants, curricula, assessment, learning materials and instructional methodologies.

Newly qualified teachers are required to recognise diversity in the South African context in order to teach in an inclusive approach and "be able to identify learning or social problems and work in partnership with professional service providers to address these" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 7). As such, teachers are required to "promote social justice and the redress of inequalities within their educational institutions and society more broadly" (RSA DHET, 2015: Appendix C, sub-section 4). By implication, a teacher must "conduct him/herself in a manner that does not show disrespect to the values, customs and norms of the community" and "recognises that an educational institution serves the community, and therefore acknowledges that there will be differing customs, codes and beliefs in the community" (RSA DoE, 2000: Section 5.1 and 5.2). This expectation aligns with *MRTEQ's* statement (RSA DHET, 2015: Appendix A, *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*) that

the educator will develop supportive relationships with parents and other key persons and organisations, based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues.

While teachers are required to have a critical understanding of community, they have to take up a citizen role in nurturing nation building, the nurturing of patriotism and the affirmation of a common citizenship (RSA DoE, 2001a). Arguably, this role is complemented by teachers' ability to model and inculcate constitutional values.

The Regulations (RSA DoE,1996:Section 6.5) state that “an educator at the school has the same rights and obligations as a parent to protect, control and discipline a learner according to the Code of Conduct during the time the learner is in attendance at the school, or at any school function, school excursion or school related activity”. Teachers’ pastoral role therefore compels them to take responsibility for the psychological, mental and physical well-being of their learners, an accountability known as ‘in loco parentis’ (cf. 1.1). Section 3.4 of *The Regulations* (RSA DoE,1996:Section 3.4) gives a more encompassing description of the teacher’s pastoral role:

every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. All appropriate social and educational measures must be taken to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of any person [the teachers] who acts in loco parentis.

This quotation aligns with Mampane’s observation (2018) that teachers assume the role of parents and perform legal responsibilities in line with the Bill of Rights embedded in the South African *Constitution*. By implication, teachers should be able to foresee possible dangers and take sensible steps to protect learners, as reasonable parents or guardians would do. While *MRTEQ* (RSA DHET, 2015: Appendix A: *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*) highlights the expectation of teachers to “develop supportive relationships with parents”, *SACE* (RSA DoE, 2000: Section 4.2) emphasises that teachers must “do what is practically possible to keep parents adequately and timeously informed about the well-being and progress of the learner”.

MRTEQ (RSA DHET, 2015: Appendix C: *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*) identifies HIV/AIDS education as one of the crucial dimensions of the teacher’s pastoral role. The importance of this dimension and teachers’ role is underscored in the *National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for Learners and Educators in Public Schools, and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions(HIV/AIDS Policy)* (RSA DoE, 1999:sub-section 2.10.3): “all educators should be trained to give guidance on HIV/AIDS. Educators should respect their position of trust and the constitutional rights of all learners and students in the context of HIV/AIDS”. While the *HIV/AIDS Policy* (RSA DoE, 1999:sub-section 2.1) states that “[m]ore and more children who acquire HIV prenatally will, with adequate medical care, reach school-going age and attend school”, *Stats SA* (RSA DSSA, 2019:6) indicates that “the total number of persons living with HIV in South Africa increased from an estimated 4, 64 million in 2002 to 7, 97 million by 2019”. It is within this context that *White Paper 6*(RSA DoE, 2001b:sub-section 10) has significance for South African teachers

who must acknowledge and respect “differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases”. As such, teachers do much more than teaching - they contribute to each aspect of society, and their influence touches everything around them. Teachers must therefore also “assist the principal in overseeing learner counselling and guidance, careers, discipline and the general welfare of all learners” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.2.3) and “maintain contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisations” (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 3.5.5).

The above exposition of the policy image of the South African teacher indicates that education policies and education-related documents foreground various roles. It is important, however, to take note of an important competence required of teachers, namely to

be able to reflect critically on their own practice, in theoretically informed ways and in conjunction with their professional community of colleagues in order to constantly improve and adapt to evolving circumstances (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, subsection 11).

As reflective practitioners, it is imperative for teachers to build an understanding of different professional standards, grasp the connection between such standards in increasingly sophisticated ways, and adapt to evolving circumstances (RSA DBE, 2017). It is through reflection that teachers remain mindful of their collective roles to ensure the harmonious operation of the educational institution, even in challenging school contexts.

3.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Professional identity refers to how individuals identify and categorise themselves within their working environment and how they share and communicate with others (cf. 2.4.2). As such, teachers use their professional identity to describe, substantiate and make sense of themselves in relation to others and the world at large. Most qualified teachers begin their teaching career with specific and idealised images of the teaching profession, and of themselves as teachers (cf. 1.1). The teaching profession is, however, regulated by an array of education policies and related documents (cf. 3.2.2). It can subsequently be accepted that South African teachers must be conversant with their roles and responsibilities as stipulated in these documents. Such conversancy is imperative, as the literature indicates that teachers construct their professional identities in response to policy documents (cf. 2.4.1). By implication, it can be assumed that

education policies provide a framework for the construction of teachers' professional identity. As such, it can be assumed that a policy framework will be informed by the policy image foregrounded in such policies. Subsequently, for teachers to thrive in their work, they must not only classify themselves as teachers, but such a classification must be based on their understanding of policy requirements and expectations. Professional teacher identity is the foundation for promoting a richer, more transformative image for education. Teachers must therefore "do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession" (RSA DoE, 2000: Section 2.4).

In this chapter, I presented my findings from the analysis of various policies and education-related documents. In drawing on my understanding of the role of policy in the development of teacher identity, I perceived the exposition of the collective roles (cf. 3.3.1 – 3.3.5) as a 'policy framework' for professional identity construction. Thus, teachers' perceptions of their professional roles and responsibilities must be aligned with the collective roles as embedded in education policy documents. Given the link between policy images of teachers and teachers' professional identity, I now consider the implications of the collective roles for teacher identity construction.

In order for teachers to assume their primary role as mediators of learning, they must have clear knowledge of their subject, know how to teach their subject(s), and know how to communicate well in their subject(s) (cf. 3.3.1). Identity construction entails decisions-making based on the exploration of experiences and knowledge (cf. 2.3). For teachers to construct an identity that is most suitable for their primary role, they need to be well informed, have knowledge, skills, principles, values, approaches, and strategies relevant to their professional practice. The policy image of South African teachers indicate that they must be able to apply different approaches to teaching and learning (cf. 3.3.1), they must be able to interpret and design learning programmes, and use assessment results towards the improvement of teaching and learning (cf. 3.3.3). They also have to manage their classroom spaces and contribute to the functioning of the broader school community (cf. 3.3.4). Teachers' professional identity should therefore be infused with specialised skills to enable them to effectively function within the profession as mediators of learning, teaching specialist and as leaders, managers and administrators. However, teachers' identity construction is also influenced by the community of practice, which they enter at the start of their teaching career. Teachers learn and construct identities as they become part of the school

community through common engagement, a joint endeavour and a shared repertoire (cf. 2.2.3). It is in this regard that it can be accepted that participation constitutes identity construction.

It should, however, also be noted that identity construction is, *inter alia*, influenced by socio-cultural factors and language (cf. 2.3). Teacher identity construction can never be divorced from the socio-cultural contexts in which teaching and learning take place. It should therefore also be shaped by sensitivity towards the diverse socio-cultural circumstances of South African learners. The findings of the document analysis specifically highlighted the requirement of teachers to respond to differentiated learner needs in order to teach across diverse contexts in an inclusive manner (cf. 3.3.1). For teachers to excel in the profession they must have knowledge of the structural and cultural factors that impede effective learning, they must comprehend the implications of diversity for their classroom teaching, and adopt a language (discourse) of inclusivity. If teacher identity is about the teacher's ideas of how to be and how to act, then it can be assumed that South African teachers must be able to construct contextualised learning environments based on the recognition of and respect for differences among learners.

The construction of a professional teacher identity begins when the individual makes the choice for the teaching profession. This identity is strengthened by the teacher education the individual receives in preparation for the profession (cf. 2.4). Professional identity construction is, however, an active process of construction, reconstruction and on-going construction, which entails the negotiation of relationships in practice (cf. 2.4.1). Although teachers attain the compulsory levels knowledge and skills through teacher education, their professional identity continues to be shaped and reshaped as they mediate their professional learning and developmental needs. As highlighted in the exposition of the findings of the document analysis, teachers are compelled to constantly develop professionally, adjust their professional roles, and re-modify their professional identity within the dynamic contexts that they find themselves (cf. 3.3.2). Framed within the policy image of South African teachers, teachers must identify themselves as professional teachers who are willing to remain informed of educational developments, including curriculum development, often within a context of uncertainty and multiple phases of educational restructuring (cf. 2.4.1; 3.3.2). South African teachers are subsequently required to identify themselves as lifelong learners who are willing to engage in activities aimed at ongoing personal, academic and professional growth (cf. 3.3.2). The construction of teacher identity needs to incorporate the ability to adapt

and remain flexible in an ever-changing profession. The construction of a strong professional teacher identity can contribute to an increase in the productivity of the teaching profession.

South African teachers are expected to comply with professional ethics, and the construction of ideas of how to act and how to understand their work should be informed by a constructive work ethic and conduct based on correct values. The way in which teachers perceive themselves as professionals and their subsequent behaviour, should benefit, enhance and develop the teaching profession (cf. 3.3.5). In drawing on the policy image foregrounded in Section 3.3.5, it can be assumed that central to teachers' professional identity, should be an obligation to the profession, the comfort of all children and a willingness to contribute towards the creation of a peaceful society that promotes, *inter alia*, respect, dignity, tolerance, equality and human rights. The notion of teacher professional identity is subsequently associated with complexities that can influence the character building of the individual teacher, that of the learners with whom she or he works, and can contribute towards the development of a more just society (cf. 2.3.1.1).

Professional identity refers to teacher's conceptions of their competencies and abilities to adapt to the actual teaching environment. Subsequently, teachers must incorporate personal and professional contexts and the eagerness to adapt to possible changes in the profession into their professional identity. The collective roles of South African teachers not only foreground the complexity of teacher identity, but allude to the extent to which such an identity entails an entanglement of different images and expectations. Although the collective roles of teachers were discussed separately, it can be assumed that these roles coincide with and complement one another as they influence teachers' views of what it means to be a teacher in the South African education context.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, selected education policies and other education-related documents were analysed to foreground the policy image of South African teachers. Against an exposition of document analysis as a research method (cf. 3.2), I gave an exposition of the framework I used for the analysis of the documents (cf. 3.2.1). Informed by a hermeneutic approach to document analysis, I constructed a basic policy framework, which served as a platform for my initial thinking about the policy image of teachers (cf. 3.2.2). I presented the findings of the analysis in alignment with the collective roles of teachers highlighted in *MRTEQ* (2015). As explained, the decision to foreground

the collective roles was informed by this document's status as the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications (cf. 3.3). I subsequently worked with the assumption that as these roles constitute the expectations of qualified teachers, they can be perceived as the framework for teacher identity construction. Given the connection between the policy images of teachers and teacher professional identity, I concluded this chapter with the implications of the collective roles for teacher identity construction (cf. 3.4).

Teachers are key elements in the education process and while policy presents an image of teachers on paper, it is important to understand how teachers attain and refine a professional identity within the framework of the South African education setting. To explore the alignment between the policy image of teachers and their professional identity, I place the focus in the next chapter on teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity.

CHAPTER 4: TEACHERS' NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, selected education policies and other education-related documents were analysed to foreground the policy image of South African teachers. Although various policy images of teachers were identified, it became clear that these images seem to be embedded in the seven collective roles that are outlined in *MRTEQ* (2015). The findings were therefore presented in alignment with the collective roles, and it can be noted that “the notion of teacher roles continues to be a useful tool to assist in the design of learning programmes which, in turn, will result in the development of teachers who are able to contribute to the collective work of educating children in a school at different stages of their careers”(RSA DHET, 2015:Section 2.4). It is against this background of the policy images of South African teachers, that I now put my focus on how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities (cf. 1.2.3).

Most qualified teachers begin their teaching career with vivid mental images of teaching, and themselves as teachers. The first images, which mainly develop during teachers' schooling experiences, are vital in determining their attitudes towards teaching, the way they understand teaching, their professional beliefs and the way they perform in classroom (cf. 1.1). Literature indicates that when teachers begin their teaching career, they enter a community of practice that has an influence on their identity construction (Hong, 2010; Izadinia, 2013 and Chikoko, 2015). Through mutual engagement in the school community, teachers start to learn and form their professional identity through mutual engagement (cf. 2.2.3). The objective of this chapter is to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities (cf. 1.3.3). It was my contention that the narrative interviews would allow me to obtain first-hand information from the participants by successively asking open and direct questions during my contact with them. Moreover, I was able to gather not only hard and factual data, but also to generate passionate data from the stories narrated by my participants (cf. 1.6.2.3).

In this chapter, I first discuss narrative interviews as a method, and its applicability to this study. The discussion of narrative interviews is followed by an exposition of the steps taken to analyse the interviews. The bulk of the chapter consists of the presentation of the findings that emerged

from the analysis of the narratives. The findings and their discussion centre on themes that emanated as part of the analysis process of the participants' narratives.

4.2 Narrative interviews

In alignment with a qualitative research approach and my interest in narrative inquiry (cf. 1.6.1), I premised my study on the assumption that the research participants' narrative construction of their professional identity could shed light on how such identity aligns or misaligns with the policy image of teachers. My choice of research method was informed by a consideration of what would be most suitable to enable me to pursue my research aim, and to eventually answer the research question: *how do teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities?* (cf. 1.6.2). In line with the ontological belief that my study comprised people's individual experiences of the world, I opted for narrative interviews as a suitable data generation method for this study. Consequently, the central focus of this chapter is to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities. Given the nature of the study, namely to explore and understand teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity, I used narrative interviews to see the world from the eyes of my participants. Encouraging the participants to narrate how they construct their professional identity based on their subjective knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences, allowed for the generation of first-hand information from the participants (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2017b). Narrative interviews enabled me to have one-to-one contact sessions with the participants. It placed me in a position to obtain in-depth feedback about the attitudes of teachers towards their identity construction (cf. 1.6.2.3).

After I was granted official permission from the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State (cf. Appendix A) and the Free State Department of Basic Education (cf. Appendix B) to conduct this study, I set up an appointment with the principals of the selected schools. After explaining the aim and potential value of my study, I was invited to a staff meeting at the schools to brief the teachers about my study and select teachers who were willing to participate in the study. I then set up an introductory meeting with the participants to explain and discuss issues of confidentiality, the importance of written consent (cf. Appendix C) and how the interviews would be conducted. The date, place and time of the interviews were agreed on, and the participants showed interest and eagerness to participate in the study. To enable the participants to incorporate their life experiences and their teaching experiences into an internalised, evolving story of the self, I used certain prompts (cf. Appendix D). The prompts

centred on their own stories regarding how they have been constructing and reconstructing their teacher identity from the time they started their teaching career to current factors influencing this (re)construction. They were prompted to continue their stories by reflecting on their understanding of policy expectations, and to summarise their stories by comparing their expectations of the profession with their own perceptions and understanding of their professional identity. The length of the interviews varied between one hour and 20 minutes, and three hours. In Appendix D, I give a summary of the duration of the interviews. During the interviews, I ensured that I adhered to the ethical requirements of the University of the Free State Degree Guide (2015). All interviewees were treated with respect and I listened to their stories without interrupting them.

4.2.1 Description of site and participants

As mentioned, this qualitative study was grounded in an interpretivist paradigm and informed by a narrative identity theory. I decided that a qualitative study would give me the best opportunity to attain the aim of the study. A technique that is normally used in qualitative research is purposive participant selection, where participants are purposively selected based on their particular qualities and characteristics (cf. 1.6.3). I selected ten participants from four high schools based on their individual teaching experience. These ranged from one to ten years teaching experience, eleven to eighteen years teaching experience, and as nineteen and beyond teaching experience. My decision for selecting teachers according to their years of experience was because teachers have the qualities and characteristics that could contribute towards answering my research question. Since the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, the new democratic government had to introduce new policies, and teachers are expected to implement them. However, the constant change of education policies complicate the roles and responsibilities of teachers, and increase the demands set on them to take up such roles and responsibilities (cf. 3.1). I subsequently worked with the assumption that, given the various changes in the South African education landscape, teaching experience can have an influence on the way in which teachers have been constructing and reconstructing their professional identities. In order to ensure equal representation, I selected both female and male teachers from different ethnic groups, and different post levels. Given the history of South Africa, it was important to select participants from different ethnic groups to enable me to gather diverse perspectives on the construction of professional teacher identity, which in turn, enabled me to gain deep insight into the phenomenon of narrative professional identity construction. My participant selection was based on convenience selection (cf.

Nieuwenhuis, 2017b), as all the selected participants within close vicinity from where I reside. Accessibility was not a problem and since I did not have to travel far, the study was also cost effective.

Table 4.1 below shows the location of the schools, and diversity of the participants in terms of ethnicity and gender. Six males and four females participated in the study. Five participants were from schools in Bloemfontein, three from Botshabelo and two from Thaba 'Nchu. I regarded ten participants as a manageable number and sufficient for providing a thick description. I wanted to avoid data overload and a complicated process of analysis, which can easily be the case with a large number of participants (cf. Chikoko, 2015). The ages of the participants ranged from young to older, with the youngest being 24 years and oldest being 54 years. In drawing on Chikoko's statement (2015:81) that "[d]iversity in the form of gender, age, language, race, class can yield different interpretations and framings of the profession", my participant selection contributed towards generating differences and broad perspectives on how teachers construct their professional identity.

Table 4.1: Biographical data of the participants

PSEUDONYMS	ETHNIC GROUP	GENDER	AGE	LOCATION	YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	POST LEVEL
Anna	White	F	27	Bloemfontein	5	1
Thabo	Black	M	24	Bloemfontein	1	1
George	Coloured	M	54	Bloemfontein	31	1
Nelly	White	F	30	Bloemfontein	7	1
John	White	M	27	Bloemfontein	4	1
Mpho	Black	F	47	Botshabelo	25	3
Ntswaki	Black	F	49	Botshabelo	22	1
Pule	Black	M	45	Botshabelo	21	2
Tseko	Black	M	52	Thaba 'Nchu	28	3
Sello	Black	M	31	Thaba 'Nchu	5	1

4.2.2 Steps taken to analyse the narrative interviews

Identity changes as individuals participate in different activities and events, or as they act as members of the community throughout the lifespan. Identity is not static or fixed, and is forever re-established, negotiated and repeatedly reshaped throughout the life of an individual (Powell,

2015). Personal and social identities are actively developing and changing. In this regard, South African teachers are required develop professionally and to continually construct their professional identities (cf. 3.3.2). This requirement is the result of changing demands and reforms, and the expectation of South African teachers to take up various roles (cf. RSA DHET, 2015: Appendix A). Teachers are subsequently expected to construct an identity that is most suitable for their current role and position (cf. 2.3). Accordingly, identity in practice consists of stories by individuals, based on their participation in communities and their subsequent lived experiences produced through such participation (Wenger, 1998). Within the context of my study, and in order to make sense and gain an understanding of the data generated through narrative interviews, I used narrative analysis to bring meaning to the data. I decided to use narrative analysis because it provides a richer and detailed glimpse into the participants' narrated experience through shared stories based on their lived experience (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2017c).

Qualitative data analysis is the process where the generated data is converted into a final description, themes and categories (cf. 1.6.4). Narrative analysis helps to contextualise data through the stories that participants tell and remember, and "gives the dimension of realism, authenticity, humanity, personality, emotions, views and values in a situation" (Chikoko, 2015:91; cf. also Nieuwenhuis, 2017c). I opted for a narrative thematic analysis, which involves summarising the data in terms of common words, phrases, themes or patterns. The narrative thematic analysis process I used consisted of five steps. In the diagram below (cf. Figure 3.2), I give a visual presentation of the steps I followed when I analysed the data generated through the narrative interviews.

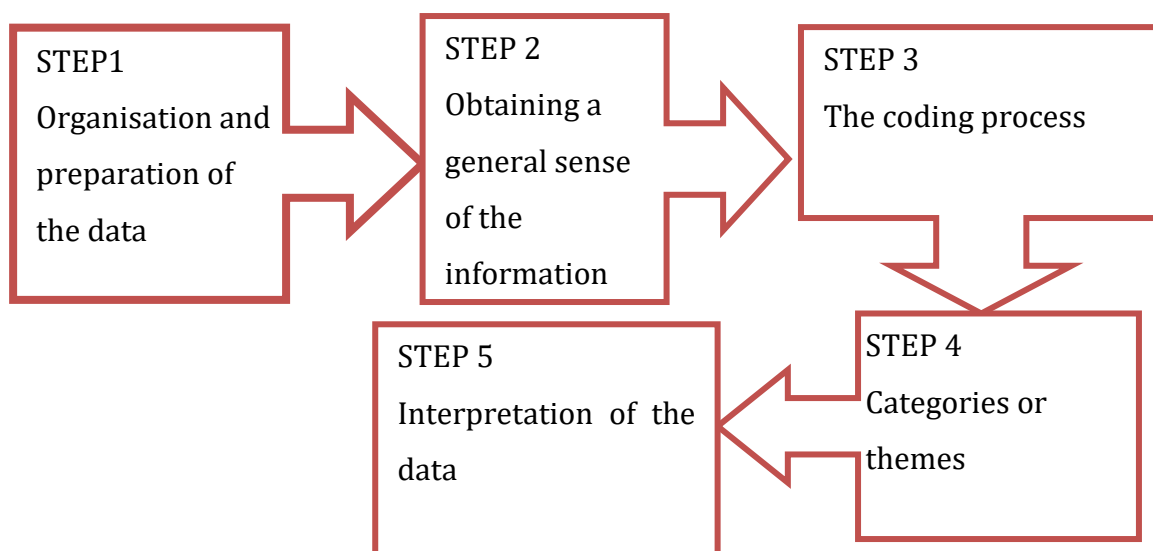


Figure 4.1: Steps taken in the narrative analysis (adapted from Chikoko, 2015).

The first step in the process of analysing the data was the *organisation and preparation of the data* (cf. Step 1). Data was organised into stories for each participant. Organising the narratives to make up a story for each participant helped me to become familiar with the data. This was important because, as noted by Nieuwenhuis (2017c), a good analysis depends on an understanding of the data. During this step, I transcribed the audio-recordings immediately or shortly after the narrative interviews. I subsequently transcribed and summarised each participant's narrative in his or her own words. To avoid bias, all non-verbal cues, laughter and gestures were also written down, and not only those that seemed relevant or interesting to the study. The participants were given pseudonyms or fictitious names (cf. Table 4.1), and nothing that could potentially make them identifiable, was included in the document. After having my data typed and sorted, I started the process of *getting to know the data and making sense of it*. In this step (cf. Step 2), I read the transcribed data and listened to the recorded interviews several times. I also kept a reflective journal, which assisted me to critically consider ideas and insights as patterns emerged from the data (cf. Pandey & Pandey, 2015). As I wrote my impressions in my journal, I gradually built reflective notes about what I have learned from the data. I tried to conduct this process with integrity by continuously recognising and acknowledging the participants' different teaching experiences and knowledge.

The *coding process* was the third step in which the data was coded manually (cf. Step 3). I chose to complete my data analysis manually, even though there are qualitative analysis software programs available. Nieuwenhuis (2017c:116) defines coding as the

process of reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units ... as marking the segments of data symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names ... enables the researcher to quickly retrieve and collect all the text and other data they have associated with some thematic idea.

I revised and re-read the transcribed narratives again and highlighted all recurring words, ideas, and patterns I found striking and relevant for the study. Guided by the objective of the chapter, I retrieved and generated all the codes that could be associated with teachers' construction of their professional identity. I coded repetitive words and key words with the aim to cluster and compare trajectories for an easy interpretation of the data (cf. 1.6.4).

After coding the first transcript, I began to categorise codes into a system by constructing a master code list that assisted me in *making sense of the data* (cf. Step 4). By implication, creating categories is an important feature of analysing qualitative data (Nieuwenhuis, 2017c). Codes were placed into consistent categories and for this study, the codes were condensed into five major categories or themes, namely:

- a) the impact of constant changes within the teaching profession;
- b) entry, requirements and pathways in the teaching profession;
- c) the influence of socio-economic factors;
- d) roles and responsibilities; and
- e) informative and constructive developmental workshops and training.

The main aim of qualitative research and data analysis is to penetrate to the core of the subject under study (Chikoko, 2015). The last step of my narrative analysis was therefore the *interpretation of data* (cf. Step 5). As noted by Pandey and Pandey (2015), this step is not necessarily a separate step as it can be done at the same time as the coding and categorising steps. During this step, I studied the categories and their corresponding codes to determine if there were any overarching themes or theories that provided insight on how teachers construct their professional identity. The literature foregrounds the multifarious nature of identity (cf. 2.2.2). Although identity is constantly being constructed and reconstructed, the changing of core identities remains a labour-intensive and long term process. By implication, professional teacher identity is complex. It is formed in multiple contexts and shaped through interactive everyday activities. Consequently, most qualified teachers begin their teaching careers with numerous images of the teaching profession, and more specifically, of themselves as teachers (cf. 1.1). The teaching profession requires teachers to comply with a high standard of professional ethics, and to act ethically in all situations. In order to ensure good quality teaching and learning, teachers must act with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards (cf. 3.3.5). Literature also indicates that teachers construct their professional identities in response to policy documents (cf. 2.4.1). Similarly, it can be assumed that education policies provide a framework for teachers to construct their own professional identity, albeit informed by the policy image foregrounded in such policies (cf. 3.3.5). So for teachers to construct an identity that is most suitable for their primary role, they need to be conversant with *inter alia*, the knowledge, skills, methods and procedures relevant to their professional practice (cf. 3.4). Considering the complexity of the construction of teacher identity as fore-grounded in the literature (cf. Chapter 2) and the

document analysis (cf. Chapter 3), it can be argued that a number of factors work together to influence the identities that teachers construct for themselves. It is for this reason that I regard the five main themes listed earlier as the overarching themes that constitute how teachers construct their professional identity. The five steps of narrative analysis subsequently enabled me to have a better understanding of how teachers construct their professional identity.

Against the foregoing exposition, it should be reiterated that this study, and by implication the analysis of data, was couched in an interpretivist paradigm (cf. 1.5). Premised on the assumption that all meaningful communication in research are a form of story-telling, interpretivism guided my interpretation and understanding of how teachers construct their teacher identity as active agents. The steps taken in the narrative analysis were subsequently premised on the ontological and epistemological assumptions that teachers come to know, understand and make sense of their professional identities through the narratives they construct in their professional world (cf. Somers, 1994).

4.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, I present the findings and discussion of my narrative interviews. As indicated in Section 4.2.2, I used narrative analysis to bring meaning to the data generated through narrative interviews. In presenting and discussing the findings of my study about how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identity, I assumed that all meaningful communication in research is a form of story-telling and that the manner in which people reply in a given situation depends mainly on their past experiences and circumstances (cf. 1.5). This study was informed by the ontological assumption that social reality can be understood through words created by the mind and within the levels of individual experiences (cf. Maree, 2017). I subsequently accepted that teachers construct their professional identity differently due to varying knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences (cf. Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). Teachers' professional identity is believed to be shaped by many factors such as their educational beliefs; job satisfaction, professional commitment, self-efficacy, and motivation (cf. 2.4.1). The findings in this section subsequently stem from teachers' ongoing interaction in their working environments, changes in the education system, and changes in their level of motivation. These constructs represent the teachers' personal view of themselves as professionals.

During the narrative analysis, I highlighted five themes to explore how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities, namely

- a) the impact of constant changes within the teaching profession;
- b) entry, requirements and pathways in teaching profession;
- c) the influence of socio-economic factors;
- d) roles and responsibilities; and
- e) informative and constructive developmental workshops and training.

In the following sections, I use these themes to present and discuss the findings from the narrative interviews. The aim of the presentation is to foreground the way in which teachers narrate the construction of their professional identity. In line with the research methodology, the teachers' stories are in quotes and in italics, as taken verbatim from the narrative interviews. The prompts that were used during the interviews are highlighted in red.

4.3.1 The impact of constant changes within the teaching profession

A person's identity changes as individuals participate in different activities and events, through their actions as members of communities. Literature on identity construction postulates that events and activities help individuals to see the need for identity change, and encourage the formation of identity (Izadinia, 2013; Chikoko, 2015; Powell, 2015; Vignoles, 2017). During such times of change, people frequently develop multiple temporary constructions of possible new identities, which may remain provisional until they have been refined with experience. Consequently, in the area of teaching and teacher education, the notion of professional identity has been defined as the basis for teachers' professional development (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004). Professional identity affects teachers' conceptions of their competencies and capabilities to adapt to change, and their motivation to develop themselves as professional teachers (cf. 2.4). In South Africa, since the abolition of apartheid, the new democratic government introduced new policies which teachers have to implement. However, constant changes in education policies complicate the roles and responsibilities of teachers and increase the demands in taking up their expected roles and responsibilities. During the interviews, the effects of constant changes within the teaching profession frequently emerged from the responses of teachers to my prompt

Tell your story about the construction and reconstruction of your professional teacher identity with regards to what you think the influences are on the construction and reconstruction of your professional identity.

In their narratives, the participants mentioned their knowledge and understanding from their schooling experiences and teaching experiences, which they felt had an impact on the construction and reconstruction of their professional identity. They also indicated that their tasks as teachers are becoming more complex and demanding because of the constant reforms and associated changes such as curriculum reforms, changes in the school, and changes in the community. The findings reveal that teachers are of the view that the constant changes within the teaching profession complicate their roles and responsibilities. For the participants who have more than twenty years teaching experience, it was emotional and tense for them when they narrated how all these challenges are affecting their professional teaching identity. The changes and reforms in South African schools included the de-categorisation of schools between 2013 and 2015, and schools changed from primary, intermediate and secondary schools to primary and high schools (Chikoko, 2015). The participants indicated that this de-categorisation affected them because they had to start teaching different grades than was the case previously. In formal education, order and harmony are essential for the normal processes and operations of the education system (cf. 3.2.2). However, for three participants, teaching has not been a normal process, as they had to continuously change to teaching other grades and subjects. They indicated that 'normal processes' exist only on paper. For Tseko, moving from teaching Grades 10 and 12 to teaching Grades 8 and 9 changed his teaching life as he was confronted with challenges of having to teach younger children:

You know [hhhhm] teaching used to be fun and all when I started my teaching career, I was happy and enjoyed coming to school. But since the year 2000, things started changing; we were introduced to this and that. I started feeling like I was thrown into the deep end and that I had to sink or swim.

George shared similar sentiments when he recalled how hard it was for him to adapt to all the changes that had been happening. He indicated that:

I always think that in school any change must first take into account of the needs and interests of children or learners as well as the capabilities of teachers. But here is not the case. In 2013 or 14, I was diagnosed with depression; I couldn't cope with all the challenges ... I was on the verge of resigning, but I love teaching. As you can see me, I am not okay. Most of my mates have taken early retirement, because they couldn't cope with these changes ... Today you are teaching Grade 11 when you are getting used to teaching the grade, tomorrow you are instructed to go teach another grade.

The construction of identity is dynamic and shifting, as people can change from moment to moment and from context to context. Within the context of the teaching profession, South African teachers are expected to adhere to certain professional teaching standards, even when they have to deal with changes in their professional contexts. As stipulated in *PAM*, all teachers shall, during his/her official duty, give his/her full attention to the duties entrusted to him/her" (RSA DBE, 2016:Section A.4.2.5). By implication, South African teachers are expected to "do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession" (RSA DoE, 2000: Section 2.4). On the one hand, teachers are expected to exercise their professional duties, while on the other hand, their disappointment in the profession has an impact on their professional experience. Mpho, who has 25 years of teaching experience, narrates her own perception on the factors that influence the construction and reconstruction of her professional identity, and she articulated her disappointment in the education system:

I started my teaching career in intermediate school ... I was teaching standard 3, 4 and 5[now known as Grade 5, 6 and 7]. I was then asked to teach Grade 8 and 9 ... Then during 2010, there was a shortage of teachers in one secondary school, I was then instructed to go there and teach Maths for Grade 10 and 11. Currently I'm back teaching Grade 8 to 12, interchangeably ... so in this profession you can't be settled in teaching a particular grade and this affects your whole being ... it affects you mentally, emotionally and physically.

The literature indicates that South African teachers are expected to exercise their professional duties as learning mediators who have the necessary knowledge and skills to "know who their learners are and how they learn; they must understand their [learners'] individual needs and tailor their teaching accordingly" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 3). However, being a learning mediator in a context of regular curricular changes seems to be difficult. The participants' referenced constant changes in the curriculum system and its influence on their classroom practice, as reasons for having to reconstruct their professional identities. Curriculum changes in South Africa first involved the post-apartheid government's introduction of *Curriculum 2005* to improve the quality of education (cf. Jansen, 2001). This curriculum was based on the philosophy of outcomes-based education, and the teachers at the time were unfamiliar with this. In 2002, *Curriculum 2005* was revised as the *National Curriculum Statement (NCS)*, which in turn was changed to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)* in 2004. Another curriculum

revision resulted in the current *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)* in 2011 (cf. 1.2).

With regards to these curriculum changes, the participants indicated that it is hard for them to keep up to date with the required specialised knowledge and skills that the system expects them to have. The findings revealed that in order for teachers to cope, they must be flexible. The participants indicated that classrooms are their primary space in which they validate their professional identities. Moreover, a professional identity serves as a source for teachers to anchor their ideas, principles and commitments to aspects of classroom practice and the curriculum. However, the continuous changes in curriculum have a massive influence on how teachers construct their professional identity. Nelly highlighted that

I think that I have a pretty strong grasp of the content that I'm supposed to be teaching ... but yeah ... I'm not teaching it. Can you imagine how frustrating it is to teach something that you must learn with learners ... I know somehow as a teacher I'm supposed to be a lifelong learner, but this is too much ... teaching Social Sciences has never been easy for me. When I was at the university my major subjects were business studies ... I struggled a lot to find a permanent job ... so I took everything that came my way.

In similar manner, Pule indicated his experience of change at the school:

I believe that knowledge of the subject is central to my practice and how I view my role as a teacher ... unfortunately, I had to find a way and adapt from being a geography teacher to being also a social sciences teacher ... social sciences consists of two discipline ... history and geography ... and I specialised in geography.

While Thabo believed that *"university learning helps teachers to be confident and innovate in their teaching style, and know how to apply new ways and techniques in their teaching ... and adapt and to grow as a teacher of a particular subject (s)"*, Ntswaki seemed to be frustrated with the teaching context. She has constantly *"found the new curriculum difficult to interpret according to the recommended protocols in the policy documents"*. Although she felt that the policy documents were partially helpful, she continued her story by stating that:

I feel like the curriculum changes every year ... This is sooo confusing ... You find something that works and the next year you are made to readjust because of something else ... I don't feel like I teach any way similar to the way that I was taught.

MRTEQ (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A) stipulates that South African teachers are expected to have a well-developed understanding of their specialisation, and their practice must be “well grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods and procedures ... know about different approaches to teaching and learning ... and how these may be used in ways which are appropriate for the learners and the context”. In addition, teachers are required to “demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs” (RSA DHET, 2015: Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*). While the policy image of teachers foregrounds the teacher as a specialist who possesses the necessary knowledge and skills for quality teaching, the findings revealed a somewhat different reality. It seems that even if the teachers have the required knowledge and skills, school realities do not necessarily allow them to use this specialised knowledge and skills. Rather, it seems as if teachers teach in accordance with the schools' needs and not according to their specialisations. The participants were of the view that the changes that have occurred in curricula since they started with their teaching career, led to new challenges. Thabo indicated that “*I majored with Physical Sciences, but I am teaching Natural Sciences ... I was told it's the same stream...*”. Wallace (2017), states that work is the essential element of our identity, because a major part of our identity is defined by what we do for a living. Having to teach without the necessary specialised knowledge can de-stabilise personally embedded views regarding the profession, and will require new interpretations and adjustments that will impact on the reconstruction of a professional identity.

4.3.2 Entry, requirements and pathways in teaching profession

Constant changes within the teaching profession do not end with curriculum changes and the de-categorisation of schools. In reflecting on the history of South Africa, it can be noted that during apartheid, teachers' professional identity was reduced to that of state functionaries. However, since the abolition of apartheid in 1994, teachers have had the remarkable opportunity of in a new set of policies and reshaping new identities (Francis & Le Roux, 2011).The *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE) (2000) was the first formal policy in terms of academic qualifications for teachers. In 2015, the *NSE* was substituted by *MRTEQ*, which requires

all teacher education programmes to address ... the poor content and conceptual knowledge found amongst teachers, as well as the legacies of apartheid, by incorporating situational and contextual elements that assist teachers in developing competencies that enable them to deal with diversity and transformation (RSA DHET, 2015:Section 2).

MRTEQ's vision for teachers who have good content and conceptual knowledge, and are able to incorporate situational and contextual elements to teach in a diverse context, constitute the entry, requirements and pathways in the teaching profession. By implication, the expectations spelt out for qualified teachers have placed them in a position to consider what is of value to them as teacher professionals, and how to re-construct their professional identities according to their expectations. The findings confirmed the perception foreground in the literature, namely that teaching is a career that requires from teachers the ability to adapt and remain flexible in an ever-changing world (cf. 3.3.2). In this regard, most participants indicated that at the beginning of their teaching career, they were optimistic and positive about their entry into the profession. They entered the teaching profession with a sense of wanting to be a good teacher and a willingness to take up a variety of roles they thought were crucial to play as teachers. In response to the prompt

tell your story about the construction and reconstruction of your professional teacher identity with regards to your perceived professional identity when you started your teaching career,

the participants indicated how the entry, requirements and the pathways in the teaching profession contribute to the construction of their professional identity. Literature indicates that most qualified teachers develop their first image of their future role as a teacher during their own experiences as learners at school (cf. 1.1). School experience and teacher education play a vital role in determining teachers' attitudes towards teaching, the way they understand teaching, their professional beliefs and the way they perform in their classrooms.

The findings revealed that the participants who have more than 20 years of teaching experience, found the entry into, requirements and pathways more confusing than recently qualified colleagues, and they often struggle to cope. Some participants indicated that they had started their teaching career with a Junior Diploma, and in terms of the newly academic qualifications for teachers, they had to continue improving their qualifications. The participants indicated that they had to upgrade their qualifications to have the required subject content knowledge base, educational theory, and methodology that will enable them to demonstrate competence and responsibility as academically and professionally qualified teachers. Upgrading is therefore required to match the current requirements, and as some participants had to upgrade their qualifications, their perceived identity of teaching has changed drastically. Mpho started her teaching career 25 years ago with only standard ten. She completed her teaching diploma at a later stage. Tseko who has been teaching for twenty eight years, indicated that his entry into the

teaching profession was not complicated: *"I didn't struggle to start my teaching career, I only had my teaching diploma and I was asked if I am a citizen of Bophuthatswana ... then I got the job ..."* Pule started his teaching career 21 years ago as a teacher for Biblical studies: *"... you see my father was a pastor, and I was an obedient learner while I was at school ... so I was recruited to come to school and to teach Biblical studies ..."*. George has been a teacher for 31 years and started his teaching career with only a Junior Certificate. He noted that *"back then, to become a teacher was not complicated as it is now ... for someone to become a teacher, good morals were also considered as a requirement..."*.

George continued his story by comparing what it meant to be a teacher back then compared to now. He said:

When I started my teaching, I thought teachers were special people who are supposed to be respected by learners as they give them knowledge and skills that they don't have. I joined teaching because I thought teachers were capable of building learners to become better when they grow up ... not what is currently happening now. I feel like now everyone can be a teacher as long as he or she has qualifications, this profession is no longer respected ... displaying of good morals were also considered for a pathway to higher positions.

For Ntswaki, a teacher with 22 years of teaching experience, the new requirements have forced her to upgrade her qualification:

I started my teaching career in 1997 ... teaching Grade two with a teaching diploma and I went back to university to upgrade my qualifications in 2006 to do Bachelor of Education because it was like we were going to be kicked out of the system [laughing] ... for me when I started teaching, I can say qualifications were not considered like the way they are being considered now ... pathways were not complicated as they are now, some people occupied high positions because of experience ... morals and principles were used as preferences for hiring a teacher ... As a female teacher it was a taboo to fall pregnant if you weren't married as teachers were trusted to be role models.

Anna, Sello and John who respectively only started their teaching careers five and four years ago, indicated that initially they thought that to be a teacher and be able to occupy higher positions, he

or she needed to obtain tertiary qualifications. The participants highlighted that they thought teaching was easy and depended on the type of qualifications that were obtained. Anna said:

My prior perception of professional identity was, with my qualifications I can change the world and make difference ... [laughing] I thought I can inspire my learners ... never [clapping hands] ... I only realised later that teaching is not all about the tertiary qualifications ... it's more than what meets the eye ... I have learned that if I want to succeed in this profession I must change the ways. The profession of teaching is about qualifications and having special personal qualities.

Sello feels that teachers come across various challenges while performing their role as teachers and that there is more to the profession than teaching itself. The social status accorded to a teacher depends on the value of his or her performance in school and behaviour outside the school environment. Sello continued his story by stating that:

*As a teacher I must present lessons in the classroom to my learners, not only through the subjects allocated to me ... but most of the time through the kind of a teacher that I am ... There are important stakeholders in the school community, and they all have expectations that I must fulfil ... most of the time I find myself in awkward positions because of this expectations. While I was teaching in ***school, I used to walk to school with no one expecting me to greet them, but in this school I have been confronted many times by parents saying I don't behave like a teacher because I pass without greeting them [laughing].*

The diversity of roles ensures that teachers build the traditions of their schools, improve learners' achievement, and encourage positive practices among their colleagues (cf. 3.3.2). In this regard, John said he had to adopt a set of values and principles for his professional work. He stated that:

I had to learn how to be a team member ... how to be optimistic and kind ... There are things that I had to reflect back and change ... looking presentable ... having respect for everyone ... conducting myself in a professional manner. To use a language that is professional to the learners and to the colleagues ... when it comes to the use of language it was a bit challenging because I teach learners who are from different ethnic groups. I grew up in an Afrikaans speaking community ... [smiling] ... so here in school I had to use English ... it was difficult because I have my own first language, they also have their own language ... and the medium of

instruction is English ... I had to find the balance between three languages ... so I'm now grateful because I also had to learn how to speak Sotho.

Subsequently, language plays an important role when someone wants to experience a sense of belonging, especially when he or she has just arrived in a new place (cf. 2.3.1.2). Similarly, there is a dynamic interaction between identity construction and community as they equally influence each other. The meaning individuals give to symbols in society when interacting with the cultural and social contexts shape their identity (cf. 2.3.1.3). John further stated that “... *I even had to learn few things about their culture ... teaching has exposed me to things I never thought I will be exposed to...*”. Thabo, who is still new in the teaching profession, thinks his positive experiences with learners and colleagues give him a broad understanding and appreciation of what his professional role as a teacher should be and how it should be sustained. He indicated that, as young as he is,

I am starting to think my qualifications alone are not enough. Yes, we had more than enough time to engage with the real world while I was doing my teaching practical's ... sometimes I wish someone could have whispered something in my ears about the realities happening in this field ... [laughing] ... The issues that I need to work on and improve ... I am starting to learn how to be presentable, like wearing a tie [laughing] just to please the community here and to preserve my status as a professional teacher ... I have a tendency of not being punctual many times and this are some of the things that I think should be classified as requirements to enter the teaching profession.

The findings revealed that teachers who have 20 or more years teaching experience perceived morals, values and good personal qualities as the preferred characteristics or requirements to enter the teaching profession. The participants who have ten years or less teaching experience thought before entering the teaching profession, that having good qualifications was the only thing that they needed to enter the profession. However, after entering the profession they realised that in order for a teacher to be successful, he or she needs to combine their qualification with good morals, values and good personal characteristics. The findings also revealed that the role of teachers is not specific, and that the teaching profession arises from complicated pathways.

The findings in sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 revealed how the construction of professional identity is influenced by the constant changes in the teaching profession. Teachers have to continuously reconstruct their identities to match the expectations of the profession due to changes in their teaching contexts and also in the education system (cf. 4.3.1). The findings also revealed that the participants had different perceptions when they started their teaching career regarding entry into the profession, its requirements and pathways (cf. 4.3.2). However, due to the constant changes within the teaching profession, they had to reconstruct their professional identity by complying with and improving on their qualifications in order to fulfil the requirements of the current system. Upgrading qualifications seems to be important in ensuring that the deliverables in the teaching profession are met and satisfied. In their narratives, the participants indicated how their pre-conceived ideas on the teaching profession have changed and how they have come to realise that the teaching profession is constantly evolving. In order for them to meet the new and constantly changing demands within the profession, the participants have noticed that in addition to their academic qualifications, they also needed to improve on their good personal qualities and traits such as being responsible, optimistic, kind, respectful, tolerant, tranquil and assertive. These findings concur with the idea that South African teachers are regarded as “frontline actors in improving learning outcomes” (RSA DBE, 2013:1), and they are expected to “do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession” (RSA DoE, 2000: Section 2.4). Furthermore, *SACE* (RSA DoE, 2000:Section 2.2) compels teachers to “acknowledge that the attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training and conduct of the teaching profession determine the quality of education in this country”. However, it can be noted that there seems to be a misalignment between the policy requirement of teachers to hold specialised qualifications and the teaching realities at schools.

4.3.3 Effects of socio-economic and social factors on the construction of professional identity

The participants indicated that they must cater for the needs of all learners, assist with how they interact and relate with others, perform pastoral duties and attend to learners' individual differences. They further indicated that they must also take into consideration the educational and financial status of the community. In this regard, *PAM* expects South African teachers “to cater for the educational and general welfare of all learners in his/her care” (RSA DBE, 2016: Section3.2.2). Mpho highlighted:

My perceived professional identity when I started teaching is ... I didn't think it was this difficult [silence] ... When you are in the field you learn so many things that you must adjust and you have to consider ... I never thought I can be this compassionate, caring and supporting ... in this school I work with learners who come from poor backgrounds... challenges that I come across on a daily basis changed my perceived professional identity of a teacher.

Mpho further indicated:

Most of my learners comes from child-headed families, some are being abused...teenage pregnancy is high ... there are more challenges that one comes across in teaching and as a teacher I must always make the best out of every situation.

In a similar manner, Ntswaki said:

Teaching is not a walk in the park ... teaching is challenging ... on top of teaching I have learned that I must also promote respect for human life and be concerned about the well-being of others, particularly my learners and I must have an aspiration to improve my less fortunate learners ... as most learners come from poor families ...

The ability to form a new identity makes it easier for individuals to adapt in situations of change and to have a sense of belonging (cf. 2.3). Like Ntswaki, Anna narrated her personal attributes of her professional identity. She believes that these make her successful and help her to cope as a teacher. Anna mentioned compassion and kindness to describe how she has change within the teaching profession. She implied that as a teacher, she must have a caring attitude towards other people. Anna cited:

Since I started working in this school I have learned that learners come from different background, and I must place value on respecting my learners and their cultures which they brought to the classroom as individuals ... I have learned to be caring, compassionate and kind towards all my learners ... to be honest with you my learners here have different challenges and if you are not compassionate you will not manage ... remember teaching is a noble profession ... say for an example, there is this one learner that you know he or she is an A student, then suddenly his or her performance drops, as a teacher you are expected to find out what is wrong with the learner and how you can assist. At the end of the day if that learner fails, you

are the one who is going to account. But if you are a caring teacher you will be able to find out and assist that learner.

Anna's narratives concur with the statement that indicates that South African teachers are expected to exercise their professional duties as learning mediators who have the necessary knowledge and skills to "know who their learners are and how they learn; they must understand their [learners'] individual needs and tailor their teaching accordingly" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 3). Pule also emphasised the importance of a teacher who is kind and caring as an essential characteristic of teacher professionalism, particularly in the rural school setting where he is working. He felt that his caring and kind character for all learners has allowed him to cope and manage within the teaching environment: "... I have come across learners who come to school with empty stomachs ... learners who come to school with torn uniforms ... learners who were abused and other learners who use drugs and alcohol...and as a teacher I had to step in ...". Similarly, Nelly said:

You become conscious ... as young as I was when I started my teaching career [laughing] and I'm still young ... I had to become a parent to many learners in this school - a nurse, a psychologist, a sister or a shoulder to cry on. I had to be a motivational speaker, a problem solver ... you know as a teacher these learners become so much dependent on you. I have most learners who comes from broken families, and some even resort to using drugs ... as a teacher on top of my teaching I had to go all out to assist them ...

By implication, teachers find their professional identity through the roles they play in their professional community and the impact of the culture of this community has (cf. 2.4). John indicated that having time alone to evaluate his life since he became a teacher, made him realise that "... being a teacher is all about being devoted to the profession itself, and take into consideration the community that you are working at...and as a teacher I always strive to bringing in changes in this community...". He also alluded to the notion that community plays a critical role in shaping the life of a young person's academic success. Since he became a teacher, he realised the influence of community on school achievement: "... I must bring change in class or school and the community at large...". Pule said:

... at times as a teacher you must be strong, working in this school has taught me how to be considerate and selfless... working in this community is challenging and frustrating ... there are some learners who doesn't take their school work serious,

you will give them assignments or projects and they will never do their work. When you call their parents that is when you will realise why learners don't do their work. Some parents will tell you they have never been to school ... most parents here have that I don't care attitude when you called them to school to discuss the work or progress of their children ... but at some point you can't blame ...

The findings seem to align with the literature, that for an individual to be a full member of a community, he or she needs the capability to act and work within the demands of the community (cf. 2.2.3). The participants narrated their experiences in teaching children who come from poor communities as one of the factors that contributed to who they are and how they view their professional identity. The findings revealed how working in a poor community impacted on teachers' personal identities. Pule said:

*As you know this school is a ***school and learners needs many resources or material ... in order for them to acquire necessary skills, unfortunately having all the necessary tools and equipment is a serious challenge ... as a teacher I have learned how to be flexible, approach people for assistance and buying some other things from my own pocket ... [laughing] as a teacher you cannot use a lack of certain resource or material as an excuse when learners fail or didn't do their activities.*

Ntswaki indicated that “... sometimes it is hard to punish a learner for not doing his or her school work because ... for example you give learners a project ... after class some learners will come to you crying [hmmmm] ... telling how they won't be able to do their project because they will not afford to buy the required material for project as their parents don't have money ...”. She further said: “I have cried myself to sleep because of the stories that my learners tell me on a daily basis...”. Sello also indicated how he has used his own resources to help learners: “... here sometimes if you want your work to be done you must go all out ... if it means bringing sugar from your home just for learners to do their practical task you must do it, or else you will wait until...”. He further stated that “... the other sad part about working in this school is having learners who are bright, but only lacks emotional and financial support from their families...”.

The findings in this section revealed that to teach and facilitate learning, teachers must also cater for the emotional well-being and physical appearance of the learners. This is in alignment with MRTEQ's requirement that teachers must “demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner, and respond to the educational and other needs of

learners and fellow educators" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix A, *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*). The findings also concur with MRTEQ's expectation that teachers must "be able to identify learning or social problems and work in partnership with professional service providers to address these" (RSA DHET, 2015:Appendix C, sub-section 7). Teachers are subsequently required to have a critical understanding of community. They have to take up a citizen role in nurturing nation building, the nurturing of patriotism and the affirmation of a common citizenship (cf. RSA DoE, 2001a). These findings confirm Wenger's idea (1998) that individual experiences serve as the strongest factor that shapes one's identity in practice. People are most likely to define who they are based on what they have experienced and how other people treat them, including how people perceive their participation in the community.

4.3.4 Roles and responsibilities

In the last few years there have been a number of changes in the education system of South Africa. Teachers also encounter many challenges while performing their role as teachers. The findings in the previous sections indicated that the profession cannot be reduced to teaching only - teachers have to take on other roles as well (cf. 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). The narratives highlighted that in addition to teaching and the facilitation of learning, teachers must attend to learners' emotional well-being. Over the past few years, the roles, duties and responsibilities of teachers have changed and broadened to such an extent that teachers had to redefine their professional profiles (Chong *et al.*, 2011). The participants indicated that they sometimes feel heavily burdened with many roles and responsibilities. Their narratives revealed that they no longer knew their primary roles and responsibilities as a teacher. As George indicated: "... *when you are a teacher you are viewed or considered as someone who has super powers ...*".

One central theme that emerged from the narratives was the erosion of teaching time. The teachers indicated that they spent most of their time doing things that are not in line with the scope of their roles and responsibilities. The policy image of South African teachers is extremely dynamic when it comes to their specific roles and competencies. Teachers are required to extend their speciality of influence beyond teaching to

engage in class teaching, including the academic, administrative, educational and disciplinary aspects and to organise extra and co-curricular activities so as to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner (RSA DBE, 2016:Section 2).

In this regard, Anna said: *"... I know somehow it is stated that as a teacher there are seven roles that I must fulfil ... but some of the things there doesn't make sense ... they are too much ... as teachers we are overburdened ... teaching time decreases each and every day ..."*. Thabo indicated:

When I started my teaching career I thought the teaching career is all about teaching learners, completing the syllabus, give learners assessment ... Then get my salary [laughing] ... here you work, you do things that you were not taught at university ... you engage in activities that are not related to teaching ... sometimes I feel like maybe it's because I am still young, so everyone takes advantage of that.

Tseko and John felt that most of the roles and responsibilities in the education system are being shifted to them as teachers. Tseko said: *"... if everyone was doing his or her role in this field, we were all going to do just fine..."*, while John was of the view that *"... in this school or I can say in this country, teachers are regarded as jack of all trades [laughing] ..."*. The findings revealed that the tasks of teachers in present-day South Africa are more complex and demanding because of the extra roles and responsibilities they are required to do during the formal school day, whether in a classroom teaching learners, during official working hours, or even outside the formal school day. In response to the prompt

illuminate your understanding of what policy expects from a teacher as a professional by reflecting on your practice as a professional in relation to the policy expectations,

Anna mentioned that *"... what policy expects and what is realistically happening is impractical ..."*

Pule said: *"... as of lately, I don't know exactly what is it that is expected from me as a teacher, I think as teachers now we are just like any general worker who is not sure about his or her duties ..."* According to MRTEQ, teachers are also expected to be leaders, administrators and managers (cf. 3.3.4), who are able to

make decisions appropriate to his/her level, manage learning in the classroom, carry out classroom administrative duties efficiently and participate in school decision-making structures. These competences will be performed in ways which are democratic, which support learners and colleagues and which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs (RSA DHET, 2015 Appendix A, *Leader, administrator and manager*).

However, the participants felt overwhelmed with this collective role. Thabo indicated that

We are expected to teach learners and making sure they pass yes, that's the thing that I know, and thought I'm here for ... even though I'm not familiar with the

policies. We don't have sufficient time to focus on teaching, in this school we have intercom, and while you are busy performing your primary role you will be called through intercom to staffroom and be asked to do something else ... Policy expects us to teach but the disruption is too much. I sometimes spend 60% of the time doing unnecessary paperwork ...

Ntswaki shared the same sentiment as Thabo and indicated: "... sometimes I fail to understand if I am a teacher or an administrator in this school "heh ra di tlatsa dipampiri tse ngata" [we complete more papers] ... we are always being asked to complete papers...of which most of the time it's a repetition of one thing ...". George also alleged:

... the amount of paperwork and admin work that we are expected to do here is burdensome ... today you are asked to profile learners ... tomorrow you will also be asked again to profile learners the only difference will be different templates ... I don't understand as to what is the role of administration clerks ... this is very exhausting.

Some participants indicated that even the School Management Team (SMT) and departmental officials shift some of the roles that they as management are supposed to do, to the teachers. They are just instructed to do a lot of paperwork without taking into consideration their roles as teachers. Nelly identified some of the documents which the teachers are expected to complete, and stated that this is an unnecessary waste of time:

After marking examination, you must do error analysis ... analysis of results ... there is also subject improvement plans, school improvement plans ... all these documents they are just wasting our time as teachers, as I believe the SMT can use my error analysis and do all these documents instead of wasting teachers' time ... on top of these documents, I must also mark class register, profile learners ... have lists of vulnerable learners, lists of learners who need this and that.

In similar manner, Mpho highlighted:

On top of dealing with my file as a teacher in which I must have things such as teaching plans, assessment plans, pace setters, lesson plans, recording sheets and other documents. I must also do with unnecessary documents that SMT can do on their own as they have fewer periods compared to us ...

Literature indicates that teachers have to perform various roles which lead to them having to experiment with their roles and reconstruct their teacher identities in accordance with the contexts in which they find themselves (cf. 1.2). It is within these contexts that teachers have to play a central role in creating a harmonious society that promotes dignity, respect, equality, tolerance, and the development of human rights and freedoms. In this regard, the participants indicated that some of the policy requirements complicate the development of their professional identity, and make them feel uncomfortable at work. This discomfort is despite the stipulation in *The Regulations* that

an educator at the school has the same rights and obligations as a parent to protect, control and discipline a learner according to the Code of Conduct during the time the learner is in attendance at the school, or at any school function, school excursion or school related activity (RSA DoE, 1996:Section 6.5).

The findings revealed that participants feel overburdened with all of these responsibilities. They are of the view that the other stakeholders expect them to be the ones disciplining the learners. They also indicated that in some instances they have to deal with cases such as family disputes, fights in the community, and alleged theft by learners that happened in the community after school hours. In this regard, Sello said:

... when I was a child I was ... we were naughty like children but had respect for adults, but here [clapping hands] instead of focusing on teaching, I spent some of my times dealing with unruly learners. There are learners who are ill-discipline ... sometimes I feel like parents as well as the community don't play their roles accordingly ... I regard myself as a source of knowledge and skills ... not all these other roles that I am expected to fulfil ...

George was of the view that the education system should change and re-adopt some of the old practices in the education system:

I think we must go back to the old system of teaching because what policy expects us to do is not realistic with the situation that we are facing ... instead of focusing on teaching we spend more time reprimanding learners ... SGBs must take centre part and tighten the school policies as much as the department is constantly tightening the regulations for teachers ... If we can go back and include Christianity in the education system, I think things can be better. We need religious education back.

Assemblies must be brought back, in this school we last had assembly three years ago.

Anna, Pule and Tseko highlighted that as much as they must accept that the learners are not from the same generation as they are, they cannot ignore the fact that most of the learners are ill-disciplined and display unruly behaviour. While Tseko said that “... *in this school you will find learners who are neglected by their parents - as a result they become ill-disciplined because they do not have guidance at home ...*”. Anna blamed the community and other sectors such as the South African Police Service and Social Welfare:

... on top of teaching I must always guard learners I must always make sure that they do not bring dangerous weapons to school or illegal substances ... we have reported incidents of drugs abuse in this school but nothing is being done ... even when we ask police officials to randomly visit school and do the searches they will tell you about the procedures ... we refer learners to the department of social welfare don't assist learners in time ... and all these come back to teachers, you will have to deal with these learners ... hence, I am saying policy expects too much from teachers, the roles that we must fulfil are many and impractical ...

Pule shared her experience:

... as a teacher, I know I am responsible for the general discipline matters of learners in school, but here as a teacher, I am also responsible for the discipline of learners even beyond the school ... members of the community and parents have shifted the responsibility of instilling morals and values to children to teachers alone.

Thabo who is still new to the profession, reflected on his experience regarding the abuse of illegal substances by learners:

... I have seen learners smoking drugs and when you engage with them you will find that it is so easy for them to access the drugs in their communities ... after using those drugs it becomes my responsibility to run after them, to call their parents who are of no use ... even the disciplinary measures in this school I feel like are not being implemented accordingly. I think the School Governing Body should be more involved in assisting teachers to bring discipline ...

South African teachers are tasked with promoting the constitutional values of deep democracy and the rule of law (cf. 3.3.5). They do much more than teaching, as they contribute to each aspect of society. Their influence touches all around them. However, the findings revealed that the

participants are of the view that they spend a vast amount of time performing roles that should be shared between teachers, parents and the community at large. They also indicated that the SGB, SMT and other stakeholders should take responsibility for their roles and ease the burden on teachers. The findings revealed that what policy expects from teachers is impractical, and some of the responsibilities that teachers are expected to undertake are at times beyond their immediate responsibilities.

4.3.5 Informative and constructive developmental workshops and training

The participants indicated that in order for them to be good teachers who excel in their work, they would like the Department of Education to conduct informative and constructive developmental workshops and training on a regular basis. The findings revealed that most participants felt left behind when it comes to issues regarding policies that regulate the teaching profession (amendments and reviews), their roles and responsibilities, the use of technological devices, and related changes in their working environments and in the profession. They indicated that they are expected to do many things such as caring for or dealing with pregnant learners, and counselling and supporting learners who have diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and epilepsy. They are further expected to ensure the safety of learners, make sure learners don't bring dangerous weapons to school and are not using illegal substances. As teachers, they are also required to do background checks on learners, especially of those who are misbehaving. Teachers are expected to do all of these things without being properly trained or having attending informative workshops. As a result, many teachers feel incompetent when it comes to fulfilling these roles. Tseko stated that *"since I became a teacher a lot of things have changed and continue to change ... unfortunately I only become aware of them way later ..."*. Ntswaki said:

Our roles and responsibilities changes every day, but we are not being well trained. I am left behind in most things. If you don't network with other teachers or if I was not in social media groups believe me I was going to fail as a teacher. Although learning from social media groups and from other people who are not qualified has its own challenges, but at least it helps me to stay informed. Our Department needs to improve when it comes to that issue. They must not give us policies without conducting informative training and workshops.

In the *Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018* (RSA DBE, 2018:Foreword), it is emphasised that 21st century teachers “are faced with a pressing challenge of preparing learners adequately with skills and knowledge for them to be active and contributing citizens of a Fourth Industrial Revolution”. This reality holds certain implications for South African teachers, and by implication, for the development of their professional identity (cf. 3.3.2). In this regard, George, Sello and Mpho complained about challenges related to the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). SA-SAMS is a computer application that poses a challenge, especially for teachers who are not computer literate. George said: “... *as of now, I am expected to punch learners' marks in SA-SAMS and I have never been to a training or workshop for SA-SAMS ...*”.

Mpho also indicated that

... as teachers, now we must be computer literate, we must be technologically advanced ... as at the end of every term you must enter marks on SA-SAMS and that system is complicated and frustrating. I have never been to any training or workshop for that. Our Department must do something about this issue; it's frustrating and causes unnecessary tensions between us and management.

Sello voiced his opinion:

... after entering learners' marks on the recording sheet after marking, you must also enter them in computer ... using a system called SA-SAMS ... [clapping hands] at the end of every quarter it is cases after cases in this school, as the management of school will put the time frame for submitting of marks and issuing reports. If you are computer illiterate and don't know how SA-SAMS operates, you will also feel sad and incompetent as a teacher.

The ongoing development of teaching as a profession requires teachers to stay abreast with curriculum frameworks, new approaches, teaching methods and assessment aligned to standards in diverse work environments (RSA DBE, 2018; RSA DoE, 2000). However, the findings also revealed that most participants are not well conversant with education policies and associated requirements. Anna said:

We just use policies for the sake of using policies. Hence it is so difficult for us to implement them because we are not well conversant with them. The one that are known I think they are not realistic. More still needs to be done when it comes to

policies, we must be well trained. I think the Department of Education must have annual workshops for capacitating of teachers when it comes to education policies.

Thabo also indicated that:

Since I became a teacher, I have never been to any capacitating or induction workshop. Yet I am expected to be familiar with new methods and approaches. Some of the things I learn them from media ... it is so disappointing to see someone who is young as I am being clueless when it comes to policies. I am honestly not well informed. I just do things because I see my colleagues do them. Who knows maybe that is the reason why most teachers leave this profession before their retirement age. I think if I can undergo workshops and training I can be a better teacher than I am now.

While John and Pule were of the same view as Anna and Thabo, they highlighted that in order for teachers to be efficient and effective in their work, they must attend informative workshops and training to learn more about new ideas, strategies and approaches. Accordingly, teachers are expected "to participate in departmental committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update one's professional views/standards" (RSA DHET, 2015: Section 3.1; RSA DoE, 2000). Pule said:

At the beginning of every year we attend start-up workshops, but I have never been to any informative workshops. They are just a waste of time. Instead of learning something I end up being more confused. We need workshops that will develop us, and help to improve in our fields of specialisations ... I believe a real teacher does not just inform learners they transform them with specialised skills and knowledge, and they can only do that if they are well trained by universities and the Department of Education.

John highlighted:

South Africa has competent teachers. I think universities play their roles even though there is still much that needs to be done. Especially when it comes to relevant policies, they must have a specific module that will deal with all policies not selected ones. I have attended too many fruitless workshops organised by the Department of Education each year. Those workshops waste our time that is my view. And instead of us being well developed we become more frustrated and confused. We just need workshops and trainings that are relevant to field of our

specialisations as well as the department in general. Lack of knowledge sometimes frustrates us and leaves us not knowing who we are and what to do when it comes to our work.

The findings from the narratives revealed that based on teachers' experiences and daily challenges, participants see the need and they are willing and keen to undergo informative training and workshops on a regular basis. This willingness seems to be in alignment with the expectation from *MRTEQ* that teachers must understand teaching as a "complex activity that is premised upon the acquisition, integration and application of different types of knowledge practices or learning" (RSA DHET, 2015: Section 3.1). However, the findings also revealed that teachers are frustrated with workshops that do not address their specific needs. There subsequently seems to be a disjunction between policy expectations, teachers' willingness and the inability to provide meaningful and relevant workshops that will empower teachers to "remain informed of current developments in educational thinking and curriculum development" (RSA DBE, 2016: Section 3.4.3).

4.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I explored the data which was generated through narrative interviews. The purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identities (cf. 1.3.3). The construction of teachers' professional identities seemed to emerge from constant changes within the teaching profession; entry, requirements and pathways in the teaching profession; socio-economic and social factors; the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders; and the need for informative and constructive developmental workshops and training.

These findings suggest that the contexts and contents of the participants' work environments and their daily experiences contribute to how they construct their professional identities. The construction of professional identity is therefore not predominantly informed by the policy image of the ideal teacher as portrayed in policy documents. The participants are of the view that constant changes in the teaching profession require them to re-think their professional identity, as their roles and responsibilities are being complicated and challenged (cf. 4.3.1). They indicated that sometimes they feel heavily burdened with various responsibilities (cf. 4.3.4), including taking care of learners' needs and their well-being (cf. 4.3.3). Due to constant changes in the profession,

they have had to reconstruct their professional identity in order to comply with the policies that regulate the profession. Some teachers were required to upgrade their qualifications in order to fulfil the requirements to comply with the current system (cf. 4.3.2). The findings further revealed that based on their experiences and daily challenges, they see the need for and they are willing and keen to undergo informative training and workshops on a regular basis. Within the context of changing demands and reforms, South African teachers are constantly required to develop professionally and to re-modify their professional identity. It should, however, be noted that given the differences in terms of their workplaces, schooling experiences and teaching experiences, ages and gender, the participants also differed regarding what they focused on in narrating their professional identity. The findings from this chapter are related to the seven collective roles (cf. RSA DHET, 2015), and allude to both an alignment and misalignment between policy image and the teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity.

I conclude that once they have entered the profession, teachers come across many difficulties and challenges that they did not expect to encounter while studying to be teachers. The findings indicated that curriculum reform initiatives led to confusion and a sense of unsettledness, because the training they received to enable the adaption to new changes, is often perceived as not sufficient. As teachers have to constantly experiment with different roles, they have difficulty in constructing a strong and positive professional teacher identity, often causing them to experience both empowerment and disempowerment. They struggle with the development of their professional identities because while trying to comply with policy expectations, teachers tend to experience conflict between their professional identities and personal identities.

In the next chapter, I make comments and suggestions regarding the alignment between the policy image of teachers and the narrative construction of their professional identity.

CHAPTER 5: COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND REFLECTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' own narrative construction of their professional identity. As such, all chapters in this study contributed to the realisation of this aim. The purpose of this chapter is to draw on my entire study to make comments and suggestions regarding the alignment between the policy image of teachers and the narrative construction of teachers' professional identity (cf. 1.3.4). However, before I comment and make suggestions, I will first give a concise overview of how my study unfolded, and a brief overview of the research findings. I conclude this chapter with a reflection on my research, and comment on my personal and scholarly growth during this research endeavour.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 served as a general orientation to this study and included the background to the study, the research question and subsidiary questions, the aim and objectives, and the rationale for the study. In addition to Chapter 1, this research report unfolded through three consecutive chapters.

In Chapter 2, a literature review was undertaken to gain academic insights and a conceptual understanding of essential concepts, which constituted the backdrop of my study. The aim of the literature review was to convey academic perceptions into a conceptual understanding of identity, identity construction and teacher professional identity. This conceptual orientation of my study foregrounded, on the one hand, the concepts that formed an integral part of my research, and on the other hand, helped to contextualise my study as a focus on teacher professional identity. I further worked with the premise that a conceptual understanding of these concepts would be imperative for the interpretation of the data that I generated through document analysis (cf. Chapter 3) and narrative interviews (cf. Chapter 4).

To foreground the policy image of South African teachers, a document analysis of education policies and related education documents was undertaken in Chapter 3. Policy documents contain powerful images of what is perceived as the ideal teacher, and it was my contention that the data generated through document analysis would serve two purposes. Firstly, document analysis provided me with empirical knowledge regarding the policy image of South African teachers, and

secondly it enabled me to juxtapose the policy image with teachers' narrative construction of their professional identities. By implication, the document analysis presented in Chapter 3 served as a meaningful database for the interpretation of the findings regarding teachers' narratives presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 entailed the findings and discussion of the analysis of the data generated through the narrative interviews. The aim of this chapter was to gain an understanding of how teachers themselves narrate the construction of their professional identity. The interconnection between the preceding chapters and their informative role for this empirical research, finds realisation in this chapter. The literature review and document analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, provided particular insight into issues related to teachers' professional identity and the policy image of South African teachers. Accordingly, the knowledge and understanding gained from these two chapters informed the interpretation of the narrative interviews.

Chapters 3 and 4 played an important role in answering the two critical sub-questions regarding the policy image of South African teachers (cf. 1.2.3), and the way in which teachers construct their teacher identity (cf. 1.2.4). By implication, both chapters enabled the answering of the main research question: *what is the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity?* In drawing on the findings depicted in the two chapters, it became clear that there are many complexities involved in the construction of professional teacher identity. Education policies and education-related documents expect teachers to play different roles on a daily basis, which in turn impact on their professional identity formation (cf. *MRTEQ*, 2015). Furthermore, the findings provided some insight into how teachers' beliefs, qualifications, school environment, roles and responsibilities can influence their practice, both positively and negatively. Of significance, is the acknowledgment of the school environment, the school culture and traditions, and how such factors impact on the construction of teachers' professional identity (cf. 4.3). The literature indicated that the construction of identity is dynamic and shifting, as people can change from moment to moment and from context to context (cf. 2.2.1). Thus, constant changes in policies and curricula complicate the task of teachers (cf. 4.3.1) and it is against this background that South African teachers are expected to be *Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner* (cf. 3.3.2). The findings imply that the quality of teacher professional development is crucial to the construction of teacher professional identity and the

ways in which teachers function in any given school setting where changes are constantly taking place.

According to Wenger (1998), identity is brought about by investing in the community of practice (profession). By implication, teachers find their professional identity through the roles they play in their professional community (cf. 4.3.4). As individuals, teachers are required to be *caregivers*, *redeemers* and *sorcerers* (cf. 3.3), and must be able “to cater for the educational and general welfare of all learners in his/her care” (RSA DBE, 2016: Section 3.2.2). The findings bring to light the influence of what teachers learn from their respective institutions of higher learning on their emerging professional teacher identity. However, teacher identity is also influenced by teachers’ values, beliefs and emotions. As such, the findings bring to the fore the need for teachers to, on the one hand, assess the values and beliefs they bring to the teaching profession and, on the other hand, to consider the policy expectations within the teaching profession.

The preceding exposition of the logical sequence of the chapters illustrates how the unfolding of this study gradually led to this final chapter. In this chapter, I comment on and make suggestions regarding the alignment between the policy image of South African teachers and the narrative construction of their professional teacher identity.

5.3 COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on my understanding of teacher professional identity and its construction (cf. Chapter 2), the policy image of South African teachers (cf. Chapter 3) and teachers’ narratives of the construction of their professional identity (cf. Chapter 4), I make the following three suggestions:

- consideration of teachers’ specialised knowledge;
- the acknowledgement of school realities and teacher participation; and
- strengthening the partnership between higher education institutions and the Department of Basic Education.

5.3.1 Consideration of teachers’ specialised knowledge

This study underlines the importance of personal identity in becoming a teacher. Becoming a teacher involves the formation of a professional teacher identity, which incorporates both personal and professional contexts. In the process of becoming teachers, they transform their personal identity into a professional identity. While teachers’ teacher education has a crucial impact on the construction of a professional identity, the latter takes shape through the individual’s preparedness and willingness to adapt to the professional community (cf. 2.4).

The findings revealed that teachers' daily realities at their workplace are often misaligned with policy expectations. According to the policy image of teachers, they are expected to be specialists in the subjects or phases that they teach, they must be able to mediate learning (cf. 3.3.1), and must be able to design learning programmes (cf. 3.3.3). The complexity of these expectations translates into teachers having to mediate learning through their specialised skills and knowledge, and their ability to prepare suitable learning resources and apply appropriate methods. They are further required to create conducive learning and teaching environments to accommodate learners, irrespective of any barriers to learning that these learners might have. As these roles are foregrounded in *MRTEQ*, which has by implication a direct bearing on teacher qualifications, it can be assumed that such responsibilities are premised on teachers' teacher education. Teachers are also required to be life-long learners (cf. 3.3.2), and on-going professional development is aimed at strengthening these responsibilities.

The findings, however, revealed that the realities in schools do not permit teachers to sufficiently take up these required roles. Despite having specialised knowledge and skills to teach a specific subject, teachers are often required to teach other grades or subjects (cf. 4.3.1). As a consequence, they find it difficult to professionally position themselves in relation to their specialised knowledge and skills. To cope, teachers have to be flexible while simultaneously finding it challenging to excel in their professional field. Teaching is the primary role of teachers, and they are entrusted with the responsibility of preparing learners with skills and knowledge to become active citizens (cf. 3.3.2). The combination of having to teach outside their field of expertise and taking up responsibility for their learners can have a negative impact on teachers' professional identity. Also, having to cope in a teaching position without the self-confidence that emanates from possessing the necessary knowledge and skills, will influence teachers' performance and learner achievement (cf. 2.4.2). The negative impact of the misalignment between policy expectations and teachers' work experience on their professional identity is so great that some teachers are wondering how they should act within their professional field – *“Can you imagine how frustrating it is to teach something that you must learn with learners”*. The narratives foregrounded feelings like *“I was thrown into the deep end”*, *“I was on the verge of resigning”*, and *“it affects you mentally, emotionally and physically”* (cf. 4.3.1). Teachers observe colleagues opting for early retirement, and changes in the curriculum leave them frustrated, as one of the participants said: *“I feel like the curriculum changes every year”*. By implication, teachers find it challenging to construct an identity that is most suitable for their roles as learning

mediators and designers of learning programmes in relation to their specialised knowledge and skills. While they might be well informed about the knowledge, skills and strategies relevant to their particular field of specialisation, teaching realities often unsettle their professional identity – *“when you are getting used to teaching the grade, tomorrow you are instructed to go teach another grade”*, *“I majored with Physical Sciences, but I am teaching Natural Sciences”*.

In light of the misalignment between policy expectations and teachers’ experiences of their teaching realities, I suggest that schools must utilise teachers according to their specialised knowledge and skills. In this regard, I want to echo the words of one of the participants, namely that schools *“must first take into account the needs and interests of children or learners, as well as the capabilities of teachers”*. Teachers are required by policy to be specialists in their subjects or phases, to be able to mediate learning and design and to interpret learning programmes (cf. 3.3.1 - 3.3.3). By implication, it can be accepted that teachers construct their professional identity in response to policy requirements. However, the construction of professional identity remains dependent on the extent to which teachers assume these roles effectively if placed in a position to do so. During their teacher education, teachers acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve the intended outcomes of the curriculum. While teachers are required to stay abreast with changes in the education landscape through *inter alia*, life-long learning and professional development, they seem to feel overwhelmed by curriculum changes - *“I found the new curriculum difficult to interpret according to the recommended protocols in the policy documents”*. Having to adjust teaching and learning to align with the curriculum, and having to do so without the necessary specialised knowledge and skills, can de-stabilise personal views regarding the profession, have a negative impact on professional identity, and be detrimental to effective teaching and learning. The *South African Constitution* protects the right to basic education (cf. RSA 1996: Section 29), and the Department of Basic Education has the legislative duty to ensure that all learners are taught by a specialist in his or her subject, and who has the required knowledge, skills and competencies. So for teachers to function effectively within the teaching profession and to ensure optimal learning, schools must ensure that teachers teach subjects according to their specialised knowledge and skills. Teachers’ professional identity influences their performance and learner achievement. If teachers are supported to construct their professional identity in alignment with their specialised knowledge and expertise, they will be able to respond to policy requirements, and simultaneously being motivated to thrive in their work environment.

5.3.2 Acknowledging school realities and teacher participation

Policies on paper do not always align with school realities. In the previous section, I recommended that schools utilise teachers according to their fields of expertise. However, realities such as teacher shortages and issues related to teacher retention often compel schools to require teachers to teach in relation to immediate school needs –“*there was a shortage of teachers in one secondary school, I was then instructed to go there and teach*”. Tension between policy and practice leaves the teacher stuck in the middle, and it is within this space that teachers have to construct and re-construct their professional identity.

Teachers’ professional identity is a fundamental component in their professional developments, and although various factors influence identity construction (cf. 2.4.2), policy image plays a pertinent role in such construction. While the policy image foregrounds the roles and responsibilities that teachers are required to take up (cf. 3.4), such an image often remains only on paper. It pertains to an idealised view of education that does not take the daily realities of teachers into account. In addition to their roles related to specialised teaching (cf. 5.3.1), teachers also have to get involved with the community and take up a pastoral role, while promoting democratic values and practices in the school context (cf. 3.3.5). Although the findings revealed that some participants acknowledge policy requirements, and are prepared to work hard to develop unique personal qualities (cf. 4.3.2), they feel that most of the expectations are impractical and out of their field of specialisation. The narratives tell a story of frustration and feelings of incompetence: “*I don’t know exactly what is it that is expected from me as a teacher... we are just like any general worker who is not sure about his or her duties*”, “*what policy expects and what is realistically happening is impractical*”, “*I regard myself as a source of knowledge and skills... not all these other roles that I am expected to fulfil*”. Teachers struggle with expectations related to what they perceive as unnecessary and time-consuming paperwork, having to discipline unruly learners, motivating and counselling learners from needy families, having to deal with learners who bring dangerous weapons and illegal substances to school, and caring for pregnant learners and those suffering from diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and epilepsy (cf. 4.3.4; 4.3.5). What policy expects from teachers can lead to confusion and a sense of unsettledness amongst teachers. Teachers have to continuously construct and re-construct their professional identity in the space between policy expectations and the pressure of daily school realities.

School realities have a profound influence on how teachers see themselves. Teacher professional identity is associated with complexities that can influence the character building of individual teachers. However, when teachers find themselves in a space where they start to question their on competencies and abilities, they experience difficulty in untangling their identity from feeling overwhelmed and incompetent– *“hence I am saying policy expects too much from teachers, the roles that we must fulfil are many and impractical”*. Although the media portrays anecdotal information on school realities, I suggest that the recognition of school realities should foreground and acknowledge how teachers make sense of these realities, and how they are affected by them. The findings revealed that teachers are prepared to improve their qualifications, and they are prepared to assist learners to *“always make the best of every situation”*. Although a policy framework can assist teachers with the construction of their professional identity (cf. 2.4.1; 3.2.1), it remains static on paper and sketches an idealised picture of the South African teachers. I believe that in addition to teachers’ knowledge and skills, the recognition of teaching contexts and the acknowledgement of teachers’ role in advancing education under challenging circumstances can serve as an essential impetus for teachers to refine their professional identity in terms of existing challenges. The recognition and acknowledgement of teachers in their school realities can be a way to assist teachers in translating their willingness to be good teachers into a more transformative image of themselves as teacher professionals.

In addition to the acknowledgement of teachers’ significant contribution, I also suggest that teacher participation in policy reviews and amendments should be encouraged. In South Africa, it is commonly accepted that teacher participation in policy-making is mainly confined to leaders of teacher organisations (Govender, 2008). The questions that can be raised are: *what is the nature of teachers’ involvement policy-making and can their participation have an impact on policy-making?* Teachers themselves are convinced that they have a role to play in policy-making because they are responsible for policy implementation. In this regard, Hartwell (in Govender, 2008: 70) asserts that *“failure in the implementation of policies begins with the failure in the process of policy formulation in the first instance”*. Teachers are eager for information and knowledge that will empower them to not just be better teachers, but to be acknowledged for their contribution to policy-making. I suggest that teacher unions and policy-makers should be attentive to school realities and should consider more supportive and inspiring ways to involve teachers in policy revisions. If policy-makers continue to draft policies that are impractical, and if ordinary teachers continue to be marginalised from policy-making, feelings of disempowerment

will remain, and will most probably be sustained. Teachers are the frontline actors of the education system, and their professional identity must be infused with devotion, loyalty and a sense of belonging to a noble profession.

5.3.3 Strengthening the partnership between Higher Education Institutions and the Department of Basic Education

The construction of teacher professional identity already starts with teacher education (cf. 1.1; 2.4). From their experiences in higher education, teachers draw on many forms of knowledge as they become teachers. Within the space of teacher learning, they begin to construct an image of how they perceive the teaching profession and their own future role as a teacher to be (cf. Bosso, 2017). Regarding a teacher qualification as an essential aspect of the profession, their professional identity is initially derived from seeing themselves as experts who have specialised in specific knowledge sources or subjects. However, once teachers enter the profession, they discover that there is more to the profession than just the act of teaching (cf. 4.3.3). Due to constant changes in their teaching environments, they keep constructing and re-constructing their professional identity. As such, teacher education and teachers' work experience play a vital role in determining their professional understanding of teaching, their attitudes towards teaching, and the way in which they perform in their classrooms.

The policy image of South African teachers indicates that they must be able to manage their classroom spaces and cater for the educational and general welfare of all learners in their care (cf. 3.3.4; 3.3.5). So apart from acquiring the expected qualifications (subject and grade specialisation), teachers need to have certain personality traits and comply with a high standard of professional ethics (cf. 3.3.5). The findings, however, revealed that teachers are often disillusioned when they enter the profession: *"When I started my teaching career, I thought the teaching career is all about teaching learners ... here you work, you do things that you were not taught at university", "Our roles and responsibilities changes every day, but we are not being well trained. I am left behind in most things"* (cf. 4.3.4). Teachers face many challenges that they did not expect to encounter while they were studying: *"I am starting to think my qualifications alone are not enough... sometimes I wish someone could have whispered something in my ears about the realities happening in this field"* (cf. 4.3.2). School realities require teachers to be flexible and be able to adapt to the reality in schools (cf. 4.3.2), but the narratives suggest that the transition from being a student teacher to a teacher is somewhat problematic. So while teachers experience a

misalignment between policy expectations and their teaching realities (cf. 5.3.1), many teachers, especially recent graduates, experience a gap between their teacher education and their actual teaching experiences.

It is important to note that *MRTEQ* (RSA DHE, 2015: Section 1.13)

provides a basis for the construction of core curricula for Initial Teacher Education (ITE), as well as for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programmes that accredited institutions must use in order to develop programmes leading to teacher education qualifications.

This section foregrounds the close relationship between the Department of Basic Education and institutions of higher education that are responsible for teacher education. The policy image of South African teachers stands in direct relation to their collective roles foregrounded in *MRTEQ* (cf. Chapter 4). The role of higher education institutions in preparing teachers for the profession is subsequently informed by education policy expectations regarding teachers' collective roles and responsibilities. As such, I suggest that a healthy relationship between institutions of higher education responsible for teacher education and the department of basic education can contribute towards streamlining the transition from student teacher to teacher. While the review and accreditation of teacher education qualifications is a rigorous process (RSA DHE, 2015), it has been noted in the previous section that the policy image of teachers do not account for the actual realities that teachers encounter when they enter the profession. Provincial departments of basic education have to oversee policy implementation within the context of the education challenges in their respective provinces. Sound communication between the DBE and teacher education institutions can assist the latter in developing their core curriculum, not only based on *MRTEQ*, but also in terms of school realities. As such, teacher education programmes can be revised to incorporate strategies that would empower future teachers to deal with school realities that go beyond their specialised subject knowledge and skills.

The development of professional teacher identity is an on-going process and requires teachers to interpret and reinterpret their roles as teachers. While teacher education impacts on identity construction, the work environment can enhance and/or diminish this construction. Based on the findings of this study, a misalignment between policy expectations and teachers' work environments has a constraining impact on how teachers professionally position themselves. The findings suggest that the process of becoming a teacher involves a balance between a pre-

conceived identity and a professional identity. To address the gap between the policy image of teachers and the way they construct their professional identity, I can make three suggestions. If teachers are placed in a position at school where they can mediate learning through their specialised knowledge and skills, they will excel in the profession. They will also be able to negotiate a positive identity of how they view themselves as teachers. By implication, they might become more resilient in their responses to changes in the profession. The realities of the school environment impact on working cultures, and while teachers remain bound by regulatory policies, it is crucial that school realities are acknowledged, that teachers' roles in working under challenging circumstances are recognised, and that they are given a voice. In this way, teachers can infuse their professional identity with a strong sense of recognition and value, which in turn might contribute towards the redefining of an identity that is considered as legitimate on a social level. Since teacher education plays a crucial role in the initial teacher identity construction, the partnership between higher education institutions involved in teacher education and the DBE must be strengthened. A strong partnership can assist in providing a realistic balance between policy expectations and the preparation of future teachers to position themselves in school realities that are interspersed with challenges. In this way, teacher education can contribute towards establishing a less idealistic and more realistic foundation upon which teacher professional identity can be built.

5.4 IN REFLECTION

After I decided to continue with my studies, I initially experienced anxiety about not being able to do it, and of not knowing where and how to obtain resources and much needed time. My life changed drastically in the three years of working hard as a postgraduate student and working full-time as a teacher. It was challenging to balance my studies and my work, and I had to dedicate and channel my whole being into writing my dissertation while still doing a full day's work. Despite the unimaginable exhaustion that this caused, I felt motivated, empowered, and ecstatic, because I could see the light at the end of this tunnel.

Writing the first chapter of my dissertation was the most challenging, as I was getting more eager just to present and defend my research. Throughout this entire experience, I found my positive inner-talk extremely helpful. Every time I found myself lacking in enthusiasm and motivation to get going, I told myself: "Just try to write, even if it is just a few sentences". So, that is what I did. The road to success is not easy to navigate, even for the most talented people. I struggled with this

dissertation at the worst time of my life. I fell sick on numerous occasions and lost my brother shortly after I started with my studies (may his soul continue to rest in peace). My grief caused me to temporarily lose motivation. Grief is a very uncomfortable place to get stuck in, and is easy to become trapped in that paralysing sadness. I had to convince myself many times not to give up. With the help of my supervisor, my study mate, family and colleagues, I was able to persist, work hard and complete my studies.

I enjoyed the research and writing, and found that the work was much more manageable than I thought it would be - it only needed determination and persistence. At first I struggled to find my feet, as I changed from education policy studies to education management and leadership, and then back to policy studies again. I viewed this study as a process in six parts, of which the first was *planning*, the second was about *researching*, the third related to *defending my title*, the fourth part was about *selecting and analysing documents*, the fifth aspect involved *conducting interviews* and the last part included *the actual writing*. The planning of this study was one of the most challenging aspects of my research as I tried to match my ideas of what I wanted to write about, with a relevant topic and existing information. With proper guidance from my supervisor, I was able to determine my topic, and then I began with the actual research. Conducting the narrative interviews was very challenging because I struggled to get permission from some principals. In some instances, I was happily welcomed by the interviewees to whom I had been introduced, while in a few other instances, it was a repeated case of trying to find the interviewees.

In addition to the challenges I experienced, I came to realise that my study also had certain limitations. Ten teachers participated in this study, and I only met each participant once. Narrative interviews are lengthy, and the participants need enough time to tell their stories. Although I spent a long time with each participant, more in-depth data could have been generated if the narrative interviews had stretched over more than one round with the participants. Teachers have busy schedules, and while I was already struggling with some participants using delaying tactics by changing appointment dates, I realised that a second round of interviews would not be possible to arrange. Fewer participants and more time spent with each over a more extended period of time, could have resulted in more in-depth data. Another limitation was that the study focused on only four high schools in the Motheo District. More data could have been generated if teachers from primary schools and other districts had also been involved. However, the involvement of more teachers would have required a different approach to the study. More participants could have

been included if a mixed-methods approach was used. The use of questionnaires and interviews would have yielded more data. However, since my interest was in teachers' narratives, a mixed-methods approach would not have been suitable for this particular study. A mixed-methods approach can be used in a study working with teacher professional identity, albeit informed by a different focus.

Despite the limitations of my study, I perceive the construction of a policy framework for teacher identity as one of its strengths. Teachers construct their professional identity in response to policy documents, and the policy framework provides a broad overview of how the policies intersect to present a policy image of South African teachers. The policy framework assisted me in refining the policy image, while the latter enabled me to make sense of teachers' narrative construction of their professional image. The development of the policy framework stands, to some extent, central to my study, as it contributed significantly towards the answering of my main research question. This study provides valuable insight into the teaching practices, motivations and conceptions of South African teachers about their working context. In particular, it highlights the critical misalignment between policy image and teachers' professional identity, and that this can probably be attributed to the complexity of the educational landscape. Although I was able to gain an understanding of how teachers narrate the construction of their professional identity, the findings of this study invoke several perspectives for further research. A study can be undertaken on the resilience of teachers and how they use their agency to address the misalignment between policy expectations and teachers' work realities. While my study included the broad policy image about the collective roles of teachers, several studies can, for example, be undertaken, on each one of the individual roles, or on how these roles intersect. The influence of the role(s) on teachers' professional identity can be explored, and how this identity is used to navigate teachers' practices to align with policy expectations.

My involvement with this study stretched over three years and during these years acquired valuable skills and lessons that are useful in my professional field. In retrospect, I realise how I have grown, both a student and as a young professional teacher. Working under the supervision of Dr Le Roux has taught me to be thorough, detailed and to apply more effort, commitment and determination to my studies. I now know that research and writing skills are not only valued in an academic setting, but are also beneficial in the work environment. Since I started to write my dissertation, I feel much more confident about my writing abilities and research skills, and my self-

confidence has grown in terms of my presentation skills. The study provided me with an opportunity to delve deeper into policies, and I now have a better understanding of policy, and as a result I view policies in a different light. I have gained knowledge of how policies and other related documents intersect, and how they can serve as guidelines to assist my fellow teachers and me in our thinking about and sense-making of the teaching profession. In this way, I now better understand the role of policy in the construction of professional teacher identity.

This study has provided me with the necessary boost and confidence to view my colleagues as part of a group of individuals whose roles are assisting and complementary in the teaching profession. This study has contributed positively to my role in the teachers' union to which I belong. I now understand the importance of approaching union matters not only theoretically, but also with some degree of practicality. Based on my newly acquired knowledge and my improved presentation skills, I can address teachers on union-related matters, albeit within the existing realm of policies. I think that I can now speak with a stronger voice on behalf of teachers. Overall, I feel that this dissertation has been both a valuable and enjoyable experience, and I now feel prepared and excited to write a doctoral thesis in the upcoming years!

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

As mentioned, the aim of this study was to explore the alignment between the policy image of teachers and their own narrative construction of their professional identity. The findings of this study revealed that the policy image of teachers is informed by a policy framework that depicts how various education-related documents have significance for such an image (cf. Table 3.1). Although *MRTEQ* (2015) can be regarded as the guiding policy document as it foregrounds and describes the collective roles of qualified teachers, it should be read in relation to other documents. By reading 'across' policy documents, I was able to highlight the nature of the policy image of the South African teacher (cf. Chapter 3). As my interest centred on professional identity construction, I considered the policy image, and by implication the roles associated with this image, in terms of their implications for the construction of a professional teacher identity. In this regard, the study revealed that the construction of a professional identity is informed by the extent to which teachers are familiar with their roles and responsibilities as stipulated in policy documents. Such familiarity is a prerequisite for constructing an identity that aligns with policy requirements. Although teachers might be familiar with their roles and responsibilities, the findings revealed that teachers' daily experience of the work environment forms a misalignment

between policy expectations and having to cope within a dynamic and changing educational landscape (cf. Chapter 4). Teachers often have to re-construct their professional identity as they find themselves between a space of having to perform their expected roles and a space of daily realities that challenge the fulfilment of such roles. As such, teachers often have to reconstruct who they are as teachers amid an experience of both empowerment and disempowerment. This study highlighted the complexity of professional identity construction. I conclude my study by suggesting that teachers' specialised knowledge should be acknowledged in their school contexts, school realities should be recognised and teacher participation in policy issues should be encouraged. In addition to this the partnership between teacher education institutions and the Department of Basic Education must be strengthened to assist future teachers with a more balanced view of the complexities of the educational landscape. I contend that if teachers are allowed to teach subjects according to their specialised knowledge and skills, they will be sufficiently placed to produce learners who possess the adequate skills and knowledge to become active citizens. Teachers are the custodians of education policies, and if school realities are acknowledged, and teachers become involved in policy-related issues, their frustrations, confusions, and a sense of unsettledness might be curbed. Teachers face many challenges that they had not expected to encounter while they were constructing their initial professional identity during their teacher education. Subsequently, strengthening the partnership between teacher education institutions and the Department of Basic Education can lead to teacher education programmes that are in line with both policy expectations and realities in the professional field.

In conclusion, I believe that education policies, the quality of teacher education and school realities play a significant role in the construction of teacher professional identity. It cannot be taken for granted that qualified teachers will necessarily be placed in a position to live up to policy expectations. For teachers to construct a robust professional identity that depicts a transformative image of themselves, the interplay between policy and school realities, coupled with the recognition of teachers' voices, must be acknowledged and accounted for.

REFERENCE LIST

- Al-Saadi, H. 2014. *Demystifying ontology and epistemology in research methods*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Sheffield. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260244813>
- Alshenqeeti, H. 2014. Interviewing as a data collection method: A critical review. *English Linguistics Research*, 3(1):39-45.
- Amankwaa, L. 2016. Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 23(3):121-127.
- Banda, M. & Mutambo, P.P. 2016. Sociological perspective of the role of the teacher in the 21st century. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, 3(1):162-175.
- Beauchamp, C. & Thomas, L. 2009. Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(2):175–189.
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P.C. & Verloop, N. 2004. Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20:107–128.
- Beltman, S., Glass, C., Dinham, J., Chalk, B. & Nguyen, B. 2015. Drawing identity: Beginning pre-service teachers' professional identities. *Issues in Educational Research*, 25(3):225-245. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier25/beltman.html>
- Ben-Peretz, M., Kleeman, S., Reichenberg, R. & Shimoni, S. 2010. Educators of educators: their goals, perceptions and practices. *Professional Development in Education*, 36(1-2):111-129.
- Bernadine, G.G.K. 2019. Challenges Faced by Educators in the Implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher (CPTD): Gauteng Province. *Teacher Education in the 21st Century*. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.84836>
- Bernard, H.R. 2011. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. United Kingdom: Altamira Press.
- Bertram, C. & Christiansen, I. 2017. *Understanding research: An introduction to reading research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Billett, S., Harteis, C. & Gruber, H. 2014. *International handbook of research in professional and practice-based learning*. New York London: Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg.
- Bosso, D. 2017. *Teacher morale, motivation and professional identity: insight for educational policymakers from state teachers of the year*. Springfield: National Network of State Teachers of the Year. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581425.pdf>

- Botha, M. & Onwu, G. 2013. Beginning Teachers' Professional Identity Formation in Early Science Mathematics and Technology Teaching: What Develops? *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 15(3):3-19.
- Bowen, G. 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal* 9(2):27-40.
- Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. 2005. Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies* 7(4-5):585-614.
- Burger, R. (2011). *Estimating the shape of the South African schooling-earnings profile*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Oriel College: Oxford University. <https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.617096>
- Canrinus, E.T., Helms-Lorenza, M., Beijaard, D., Buitink, J. & Hofman, A. 2011. *Profiling teachers' sense of professional identity*. Netherlands: Routledge Publishers.
- Castañeda, J.A.F. 2011. *Teacher identity construction: exploring the nature of becoming a primary school language teacher*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Columbia: University of Newcastle. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/40013454.pdf>
- Caza, B.B. & Creary, S.J. 2016. The construction of professional identity. In Wilkinson, A., Hislop, D. & Coupland, C. (Eds.). *Perspectives on contemporary professional work: Challenges and experiences*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. 259-285.
- Chase, S.E. 2005. Narrative Inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 421-434.
- Chikoko, R. 2015. *Emerging professional teacher identity of early childhood development/foundation phase pre-service teachers: an interplay of dispositions*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal. <http://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/13928>
- Chong, S., Low, E.L. & Goh, K.C. 2011. Emerging professional teacher identity of pre-service Teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(8):50-64.
- Connelly, L.M. 2016. Understanding research: trustworthiness in qualitative research. *MedSurg Nursing*, 25(6):435-436.
- Cope, D.J. 2014. Methods and meanings: credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(1):89-92.
- Creswell, J.W. 2008. *Educational research: planning, conducting, evaluating, quantitative and qualitative research*. (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

- Creswell, J.W. 2012. *Planning, conducting, and evaluating qualitative and quantitative Research*. (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Daniels, D. 2015. *Exploring novice teacher identities*. Research Report, B.Ed. Honours (Psych).South Africa: University of the Western Cape.
- Davids, N. 2018. Democratic citizenship education: an opportunity for the renegotiation of teacher identity in South African schools. *Education as Change*, 22(1):1-17.
- Day, C. & Gu, Q. 2007. Variations in the conditions for teachers' professional learning and development: sustaining commitment and effectiveness over a career. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(4):423-443.
- Esteve, J.M. 2000. The Transformation of the Teachers' Role at the End of the Twentieth Century: new challenges for the future. *Educational Review*, 52(2):197-207.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. & Alkassim, R.S. 2016. Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1):1-4.
- Fouche, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. 2018. In-depth review of literature. In DeVos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, S.B. & Deport, C.S.L. (Eds.). *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 133-141.
- Fouche, C.B., Delpont, C.S.L. & DeVos A.S. 2018. Qualitative research designs. In DeVos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. & Deport, C.S.L. (Eds.). *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 142-157.
- Fouche, C.B., DeVos A.S. & Schurink, W. 2018. Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In DeVos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. & Deport, C.S.L. (Eds.). *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 397-423.
- Francis, D. & Le Roux, A. 2011. Teaching for social justice education: the intersection between identity, critical agency, and social justice education. *South African Journal of Education*, 31:299-311.
- Frolova, I.I. 2014. Research of Corruption in the Education System. *Asian Social Sciences*, 10(20):21-27.
- Gemechu, D. 2014. *The practices of teachers' involvement in decision-making in government secondary schools of Jimma Town*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Jimma University. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/29136341.pdf>
- Govender, L.V. 2008. Teachers' participation in policy making: the case of the South African Schools Act. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis). South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand.
- Halai, A. 2006. Ethics dilemmas in qualitative research: issues and challenges. *EdQual*, 4:1-12.

- Havnes, A. & Semby, J.C. 2014. Professional Development and the Profession. In Billett, S., Harteis, C. & Gruber, H. (Eds.). *International Handbook of Research in Professional and Practice-Based Learning*. Dordrecht: Springer. 915-954.
- Henry, A. 2016. Conceptualizing teacher identity as a complex dynamic system: The inner dynamics of transformations during a practicum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 67(4):291-305.
- Hong, J.Y. 2010. Pre-service and beginning teachers' professional identity and its relation to dropping out of the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(8). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.003>
- Isotalo, S. 2017. *Teacher educators' professional identity formation in a challenging context: experience from Eritrea*. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Jyväskylä. https://jyx.jyu.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/54378/6/URN_NBN_fi_jyu-201706082749.pdf
- Izadinia, M. 2013. A review of research on student teachers' professional identity. *British Educational Research Journal*, 39(4):694–713.
- Jacklin, M.L. 2010. Working together: Librarian and student collaboration for active learning in a library e-classroom. *The Canadian Journal of Library and information Practice and Research* 5(1): 2-27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21083/partnership.v5i1.1087>
- Jansen, J.D. 2001. Image-ining teachers: Policy images and teacher identity in South African classrooms. *South African Journal of Education*, 21(4):242-246.
- Joubert, H.J & Prinsloo, I.J 2001. Education law: a practical guide for educators. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Kepalaite, A. 2013. Peculiarities of teachers' coping strategies. *Social welfare interdisciplinary approach*, 3(2):1-9.
- Kivunja, C. & Kuyini, A.B. 2017. Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(5):26-41.
- Koen, J., Van Vianen, A., Klehe, U. & Zikic, J. 2016. "A whole new future" – identity construction among disadvantaged young adults. *Career Development International*, 21(7):658-681. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CDI-02-2016-0019>
- Kornbluh, M. 2015. Combatting challenges to establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(4):397-414.

- Lamote, C. & Engels, E. 2010. The development of student teachers' professional identity. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 33(1):3-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760903457735>
- Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical research: planning and design*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Mampane, S.T. 2018. Exploring the Practice of In Loco Parentis in Public Schools. *Education in Modern Society*, 16(5):183-188.
- Marañón, A.A. & Pera, M.P.I. 2015. Theory and practice in the construction of professional identity in nursing students: A qualitative study. *Nurse Education Today*, 35(7):859-863. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2015.03.014>. Retrieved on 6 January 2019.
- Maree, K. 2017. Planning a research proposal. In Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 26-47.
- Maree, K. & Pietersen, J. 2016. Sampling. In Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 191-202.
- McAdams, D. 2018. Narrative identity: What is it? What does it do? How do you measure it? *Imagination, Cognition and Personality: Consciousness in Theory, Research, and Clinical Practice*, 37(3):359–372.
- McAdams, D. & McLean, K.C. 2013. Narrative identity. *Current directions in psychological science* 22(3):233-238.
- McKeever, M. 2017. Educational Inequality in apartheid South Africa. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61(1):114-131.
- Mead, G.H. 1934. *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mhlauli, M.B., Salani, E. & Mokotedi, R. 2015. Understanding apartheid in South Africa through the racial contract. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 5(4):203-219.
- Michael, A., Hogg, D.J., Terry, M. & White, K.M. 1995. A tale of two theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 58(4):255-269.
- Miscenko, D. & Day, D. 2016. Identity and identification at work. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 6(3):215–247.
- Mitchell, M.P. 2017. *What is role model? Five qualities that matter to youth*. <http://www.rootsofaction.com/role-model> Retrieved on 27 March 2020.
- Moran, S. 2015. Kant's conception of pedagogy. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 34(1):29–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2015.1010132>

- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2017a. Introducing qualitative research. In Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 50–69.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2017b. Qualitative research designs and data-gathering techniques. In Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 72–100.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2017c. Analysing qualitative data. In Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 104–130.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. & Weinbaum, R.K. 2017. A Framework for using qualitative comparative analysis for the review of the literature. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(2):359-372.
- Pandey, M. & Pandey, P. 2015. *Research methodology: Tools and techniques*. Romania: Bridge Center.
- Paterson, M. & Higgs, J. 2005. Using Hermeneutics as a qualitative research approach in professional practice. *The Qualitative Report*, 10(2):339-357.
- Powell, A.J. 2015. The ideal-one possibility for the future of religious identity. *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies*, 6(1):112-118.
- Rajasekar, S., Philominathan, P. & Chinnathambi, V. 2013. Research Methodology. Manuscript-online. [http://arXiv:physics/0601009v3\[physics.gen-ph\]](http://arXiv:physics/0601009v3[physics.gen-ph]) Retrieved on 26 June 2018.
- Rakotsoane, F.C.L. 2012. *Writing a Scholarly Research Proposal: A Professional step-by-step guide for beginners*. Morija: Morija Printing Works.
- Reiche, B.S., Harzing, A.W. & Pudelko, M. 2015. Why and how does shared language affect subsidiary knowledge inflows? A social identity perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 46:528–551.
- Riyanti, D. 2017. *Teacher identity development: A collective case study of English as a foreign language pre-service teachers learning to teach in an Indonesian university teacher education program*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Lincoln: University of Nebraska. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1893618233>
- Robert, D. & Shenhav, S. 2014. Fundamental assumptions in narrative analysis: mapping the field. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(38):1-17.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DBE (Department of Basic Education). 2012a. *National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

- RSA DBE (Department of Basic Education). 2012b. *National Curriculum Statement (NCS)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DBE (Department of Basic Education). 2013. *SACE Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPDT) Management Handbook*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DBE (Department of Basic Education). 2016. *Personnel Administrative Measures*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DBE (Department of Basic Education). 2018a. *South African Council for Educators Act. Professional Teaching Standards for South Africa*. Final draft. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DBE (Department of Basic Education). 2018b. *TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) 2018. South Africa Country Note*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DHET (Department of Higher Education and Training). 2015. *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DHET (Department of Higher Education and Training). 2018. *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (as revised in 2018)*. Draft document. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DoE (Department of Education). 1996. *South African Schools Act. Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices in Schools*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DoE (Department of Education). 1998. *The Employment of Educators Act*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DoE (Department of Education). 1999. *National policy on HIV/AIDS, for Learners and Educators in Public Schools, and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training institutions*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DoE (Department of Education). 2000. *South African Council for Educators Act*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DoE (Department of Education). 2001a. *Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DoE (Department of Education). 2001b. *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education; Building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DoE (Department of Education). 2007. *National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- RSA DSSA (Department of Statistics South Africa). 2019. *Statistical release: Mid-year population estimates*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

- Ryan, F., Michael, C. & Cronin, P. 2007. Step-by-step guide to critiquing research. Part 2: qualitative research. *British Journal of Nursing*, 16(12): 738-744.
- Sachs, J. 2001. Teacher professional identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 16(2):149-161.
- Saltman, K. 2010. *The gift of education: public education and venture philanthropy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schostak, J. 2006. *Interviewing and representation in qualitative research*. UK: Open University Press.
- Scotland, J. 2012. Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9):9-16.
- Shenton, A.K. 2003. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22:63–75.
- Somers, M.R. 1994. The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach. *Theory and Society*, 23:605-649.
- Somers, M.R. & Gibson, G. 1993. Reclaiming the epistemological 'other': narrative and the social construction of identity. In Calhoun, C. (Ed.). *Social theory and the politics of identity*. UK: Oxford.
- Somnath, R. 2017. *Shift in beliefs, knowledge and skills: Teachers' experiences of instructional rounds practice*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand.
- Sørenseide, G.E. 2006. Narrative construction of teacher identity: positioning and negotiation. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, 12(5):527–547.
- Southern Africa Tourism Services Association. 1997-2000. S.A Places. https://www.places.co.za/html/free_state_map.html Retrieved on 2018 October 12.
- Spector-Mersel, G. 2010. Narrative research: Time for a paradigm. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(1):204–224.
- Strydom, H. & Delport, C.S.L. 2018. Information collection: document study and secondary analysis. In DeVos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, S.B. & Deport, C.S.L. (Eds.). *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 390-396.
- Taylor, L.A. 2016. How teachers become teacher researchers: Narrative as a tool for teacher identity construction. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16: 16-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.09.008>

- The University of the Free State Master's Degree Guide. 2015. Faculty of Education Postgraduate office: University of the Free State.
- Thomas, K. 1962. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tongco, C.D. 2007. Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research & Applications*, 5(1):147-158.
- Torjman, S. 2005. *What is Policy?* Canada: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.
- Tsakissiris, J. 2015. *The role of professional identity and self-interest in career choices in the emerging ICT workforce*. Unpublished Masters' thesis. Australia: Queensland University of Technology. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/91646/>
- Turnbull, M. 2014. Education policy and social justice: The experience of South African school principals. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 42(2):97-109.
- Vargas-Hernandez, J., Noruzi, M.R. & Ali, I.F.N. 2011. What is policy, social policy and social policy changing? *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(10):287-291.
- Vignoles, V.L. 2017. Identity: Personal and social. In Deaux, K. & Snyder, M. *Oxford Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology* (2nd ed.). United Kingdom: University of Sussex.
- Voinea, M. 2014. Teachers' professional identity in the 21st century Romania. *Procedia: Social and Behavioural Sciences* 128: 361 – 365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.172>
- Wallace, B.M. 2017. The impact of family function on identity formation during emerging adulthood. Unpublished Masters' thesis. Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Wake-Forest University. https://wakespace.lib.wfu.edu/bitstream/handle/10339/82195/Wallace_wfu_0248M_11025.pdf
- Walliman, N. 2011. *Research methods: The basics*. New York: Routledge.
- Wang, C.C. & Geale, S.K. 2015. The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2(2):195-198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014>
- Weber, E. 2008. *Educational change in South Africa: Reflections on local realities, practices, and reforms*. Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Zare-ee, A. & Ghasedi, F. 2014. Professional identity construction issues in becoming an English teacher. *Procedia: Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 98(6):1991 – 1995. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.633>

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE (UFS)



Faculty of Education

22-Nov-2018

Dear **Miss Tswakae Morake**

Ethics Clearance: Exploring the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity

Principal Investigator: **Miss Tswakae Morake**

Department: **Philosophy and Policy Studies in Education Department (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2018/1519**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Prof. MM Mokhele Makgalwa
Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee

Office of the Dean: Education

T: +27 (0)51 401 3777 | F: +27 (0)86 546 1113 | E: MokheleML@ufs.ac.za
Winkie Direko Building | P.O. Box/Posbus 339 | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za



APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER - FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Enquiries: KK Motshumi
Ref: Research Permission: TJ Morake
Tel. 051 404 9283 / 9221 / 079 503 4943
Email: K.Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za



education
Department of
Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

TJ MORAKE
1676 Section H 3
BOTSHABELO
9781

083 778 7021

Dear Ms Morake

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education

1. **Topic:** Exploring the alignment between the policy image of teachers and teachers' narrative construction of their professional identity.

Schools involved: Setjhaba se Maketse, Tlotlanang, Brebner, Navalsig, Lenyora la Thuto and Albert Moroka Secondary Schools, Motheo District.

Target Population: 15 teachers teaching Grade 8 – 12, any subject.

2. **Period:** From date of signature to 30 September 2019. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours.
3. 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.
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 or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
 - 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


DR JEM SEKOLANYANE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 12/04/2019

RESEARCH APPLICATION MORAKE TJ PERMISSION EDITED 10 APRIL 2019

Strategic Planning, Policy & Research Directorate

Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Room 318, Old CNA Building, 3rd Floor, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein

Tel: (051) 404 9283 / 9221 Fax: (086) 6678 678

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

University of the Free-State
Informed Consent form

Title of the research: *Exploring the alignment between policy image of teachers and teachers’ narrative construction of their professional.*

Supervisor: Dr A. le Roux

Student: Ms Morake Tswakae Joyce

Contacts particulars: +27837787021 or email: moraketswake1676@gmail.com

Declaration by the participant

I, the participant and undersigned, ID/Passport number, Address..... hereby confirm that I got invited by Ms Morake Tswakae Joyce, a Master’s degree student at the University of Free-State, to participate in a research study on **“Exploring the alignment between policy image of teachers and teachers’ narrative construction of their professional”**. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any stage without disclosing reasons. My participation or withdrawal will not have any present or future effects on my career and there are no financial costs or benefits to be accrued to me due to my participation in or withdrawal from this research.

My identity will remain confidential in the proceedings of interview. I am free to raise questions and views without any intimidation during the interview with the researcher. My dignity will be respected throughout my participation. I understand that recordings and transcripts will be made during interview and my identity will not be revealed at any point of reporting. The researcher explained to me all the information concerning the study in the language best understood to me and no pressure was exerted by the researcher to participate.

I hereby voluntarily consent to participate in an interview for this research.

Signed aton the.....20....

Signature of participant.....

Declaration by the researcher

I, Morake Tswakae Joyce declare that I explained the information above to the participant in the language best understood to him or her. He or she was given enough time to ask questions and freely decided whether or not to participate.

Signature.....

date.....

APPENDIX D: NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

NARRATIVE INTERVIEW PROMPTS

1. Tell your story about the construction and reconstruction of your professional teacher identity with regards to the following:
 - 1.1 your perceived professional identity when you started your teaching career;
 - 1.2 how your identity has been constructed and is continuously under reconstruction; and
 - 1.3 What you think the influences are on the construction and reconstruction of your professional identity.

2. Continue your story by
 - 2.1 illuminating your understanding of what policy expects from a teacher as a professional; and
 - 2.2 reflecting on your practice as a professional in relation to the policy expectations.

3. Summarise your story by comparing the expectations of the profession with your perception and understanding of your professional identity.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PARTICIPANT PSEUDONYM	DATE	TIME	PLACE	DURATION OF INTERVIEW
Anna	28/08/2019	14:00	Bloemfontein	2 hours
Thabo	23/08/2019	12:00	Bloemfontein	1 hour and 30 minutes
George	23/08/2019	14:00	Bloemfontein	3 hours 20 minutes
Nelly	29/08/2020	15:00	Bloemfontein	1 hour 20 minutes
John	30/08/2019	14:00	Bloemfontein	2 hours 15 minutes
Mpho	29/07/2019	7:30	Botshabelo	2 hours and 45 minutes
Ntswaki	30/07/2019	14:00	Botshabelo	2 hours
Pule	06/08/2019	14:00	Botshabelo	1 hour and 30 minutes
Tseko	11/09/2019	8:00	Thaba 'Nchu	3 hours
Sello	17/09/2019	15:00	Thaba 'Nchu	2 hours

APPENDIX E: LETTER – LANGUAGE EDITOR

To whom it may concern

This is to state that the Master's thesis by Tswakae Joyce Morake titled *Exploring the Alignment between the Policy Image of Teachers and Teachers' Narrative Construction of Their Professional Identity* has been language edited by me, according to the tenets of academic discourse.



B.Bibl.; B.A. Hons. (English)

05-07-2020