

**STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TWO (2) EAST LONDON SCHOOLS  
TO ADAPT IN TIMES OF “TEACHER LOSS”: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

By

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# DECLARATION

I, Sonwabo Jimana, declare that this study is a reflection of my work and that all sources that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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S. Jimana

.....

Date

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# ABSTRACT

The issue of “teacher loss” has been reported widely as one of the biggest challenges facing schools around the globe. The international concern is that education departments have more teachers leaving than entering their systems. Evidence shows that this situation is also synonymous in South Africa and remains one of the ongoing phenomena, also noted in the provinces, including the Eastern Cape. As previous research focused on the reasons for “teacher loss”, as well as the strategies for the retention of teachers, the purpose of this study was to investigate how the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”. The implications for leadership and management in this regard were also explored.

In exploring this issue, a qualitative research approach was adopted in the form of a case study, which involved two (2) rural schools, one (1) primary and one (1) secondary school. This qualitative approach entailed semi-structured interviews involving eight (8) participants and document analysis as data collection methods for the study.

The findings reveal that there is little support that schools receive from the Department of Education in order to cope with “teacher loss”. Teachers’ limited knowledge in terms of strategies to cope with “teacher loss” results in de-motivated and stressed teachers. Several implications for leadership and management were also drawn out, including equipping school management teams with skills that can enable them to assist teachers to cope with “teacher loss”.

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# ACRONYMS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AIDS    | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome                                 |
| DBE     | Department of Basic Education                                       |
| DoE     | Department of Education   |
| ECDoE   | Eastern Cape Department of Education                                |
| ELRC    | Education Labour Relations Council                                  |
| HIV     | Human Immune Virus  |
| HOD     | Head of Division  |
| IQMS    | Integrated Quality Management System                                |
| KZN     | Kwa-Zulu Natal  |
| NAPTOSA | National Professional Teachers'<br>Organisation of South Africa     |
| OECD    | Organisation for Economic Co-operation<br>and Development           |
| PAM     | Personnel Administrative Measures                                   |
| SACE    | South African Council of Educators                                  |
| SADTU   | South African Democratic Teachers' Union                            |
| SAMP    | South African Migration Project                                     |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and<br>Cultural Organisation |

# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate how the two (2) selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”: Implications for leadership and management. This chapter firstly presents the background to this study and it presents the crisis caused by “teacher loss”, international and in South Africa. The chapter further states the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions and the research objectives. The justification, significance, delimitation and assumptions of the study are also stated in this chapter. In conclusion, this chapter provides an outline of the rest of the chapters.

“Teacher loss” is when a school loses a teacher either through attrition or mobility/migration (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Eastern Cape Department of Education, 2008; Hahs-Vaughn & Cherff, 2008). Attrition refers to change of careers, retirement, dismissal, illnesses/death, etc, whereas mobility/migration refers to transfer or movement of teachers from one school to the other, local and international (Ibid). This could be experienced either permanently or temporarily (Bennell, 2004). Furthermore, Bennell (2004) adds that it can also be either voluntary (resignation, early retirement, transfer, etc.) or involuntary (death, illness, dismissal, etc.).

Furthermore, “teacher loss” includes all permanent teachers who have left the teaching profession, or who are on leave without pay (Engler, 2008). According to Ingersol as

cited in South African Council of Educators (SACE) (2010), teachers' movement from one school to another or teacher migration is ignored by aggregated studies of "teacher loss", because these teachers are not lost to the system. However, from a school's perspective the school that is losing teachers to another school is experiencing shortage (Ibid).

This phenomenon of "teacher loss" has been noted as a global concern which may happen due to attrition, mobility, illnesses/ death, or international migration (De Villiers, 2007; Manik, 2009; Ochs, 2007). As a result, this phenomenon is one of the biggest challenges facing schools today around the globe (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2004 and Hahs Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). The international concern is that education departments have more teachers leaving than entering their systems (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). Balancing the supply of, and demand for, teachers is by no means an easy exercise (Robinson & Smithers, 2005).

The above mentioned phenomenon of "teacher loss" has also been noted in South Africa (Appleton, Bertram, Muthukrishna & Wedekind, 2006; De Villiers, 2007; Diko & Letseka, 2009; Hammett, 2008; Manik, 2009; South African Council for Educators, 2010 & Xaba, 2003). In South Africa, teachers are quitting the profession in their thousands, an alarming rate that has disturbed the government officials and prompted teacher unions to warn of disastrous consequences (Mbanjwa, 2010). As a result, Basic Education Director-General, Bobby Soobryan, expressed concern that the number of teachers who quit the profession between 2005 and 2008 was higher than the number of teachers who were trained each year (Ibid).

According to Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, South Africa lost a staggering 26 000 teachers in the three years from 2005 to 2008 (Van Wyk, 2010). The revelation comes against a background of serious fears that the country cannot train teachers fast enough to meet current demand, as teachers either head for greener pastures, retire or die (Ibid). Furthermore, Gauteng Department of Education also reported that there were more permanent teachers leaving than entering the system (Xaba, 2003). For example, the attrition rate for teachers in Gauteng Province for the year 2004 amounted to 4%.

International migration has been highlighted as one of the major contributors to high rate of “teacher loss” in developing countries, particularly South Africa (Appleton, Bertram, Muthukrishna & Wedekind, 2006; De Villiers, 2007; Diko & Letseka, 2009; Hammett, 2008; Manik, 2009 & Xaba, 2003). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004), since 1990 there has been a marked increase in the international migration of highly skilled South African professionals in three sectors: health, education and new technologies (South African Council for Educators, 2011). According to a study conducted by Commonwealth Secretariat in 2005, 50 to 80% of all highly educated citizens from several developing countries in Africa and the Caribbean live and work abroad (Manik, S., Maharaj, B., & Sookrajh, R., 2006). Manik (2009) adds that South Africa has recently emerged from isolation due to apartheid (1948-1994) and begun participating in the global labour market, but is already losing workers in critical fields, including teaching.

Moreover, Appleton, Bertram, Muthukrishna & Wedekind (2006) further state that South Africa has been a net sender of teachers and has been at the forefront of protest about

international teacher migration. For example, figures from the United Kingdom indicate that a total of 5 564 work permits in the year 2003 were given to people whose job included teaching. South Africans made up close to thirty percent (30%) of teaching permit holders; with 1 492 South Africans holding teaching permits (Morgan *et al* as cited in SACE, 2011). In comparison to other sender countries, such as Jamaica which had 523 similar permit holders, South Africa was the largest foreign provider of teaching staff in the United Kingdom (Ibid).

Appleton *et al* (2006) further report that the normal attrition rate out of the school teaching force in South Africa is 5, 5% per annum, not taking into account mortality from AIDS-related illnesses. However, Manik *et al* (2006) state that while national data on teacher migration are lacking for South Africa, figures provided by *Statistics South Africa* estimate that an average of 1 000 skilled people (including teachers) leave South Africa for other countries every month. If this estimate is correct, it translates to a yearly total of approximately 12,000 skilled professionals (including teachers) leaving South Africa to seek employment elsewhere in the world (Ibid).

The above situation presents a great loss to the country since South Africa would be funding the training of teachers who subsequently teach in other countries (Appleton *et al.*, 2006). This international recruitment would leave the country with insufficient teachers to service its own education system, and that would lead South Africa to import teachers in the future (Ibid). Ochs (2007) sees teacher migration to other countries as the exploitation of the scarce human resources of poorer countries. Waghid (2007) argues that “teacher loss” in South Africa may exacerbate conditions in poorly resourced and dysfunctional schools, undermining teaching and learning, and

threatening the long term achievement of social justice in a country struggling to emerge from decades of apartheid. Furthermore, such phenomenon creates teacher shortages in releasing countries (Luft, Patterson & Roehrig, 2003; Houchins, Cattret & Shippen, 2004) to fill gaps in the labour market in other countries (Manik, 2009; 2007). Miller, Mulvaney & Ochs (2008) further state that the recruitment of teachers from developing countries has become a popular solution to rectify a shortage of teachers in many industrial countries at the expense of developing countries.

With regard to AIDS-related illnesses, there is evidence that a large number of teachers in South Africa are lost due to HIV/AIDS (Appleton, Morgan & Sives, 2006; Clarke, Panchaud & Pillai, 2004; Science in Africa, 2002; Times LIVE, 2009 & Womens eNews, 2002). South Africa's teachers, most of whom are women, are among the casualties of the country's AIDS crisis (Govender, 2002). According to Clarke et al (2004:3), Times LIVE (2009:4), Womens eNews (2002:1), News24 (2010:1) and Kassiem (2007:1), high rate of absenteeism is mostly due to AIDS-related illnesses. Since it is very hard to find a substitute when the teacher is ill (Kassiem, 2007), healthy teachers are forced to deal with heavy workloads because of backlogs caused by their ill counterparts' absenteeism (News24, 2010). Most teachers who are HIV and AIDS victims resign from teaching and get employment in Non-Governmental Organizations where they have good medical treatment schemes (Lumadi, 2008).

Furthermore, there is evidence that teacher absenteeism contributes to high rate of "teacher loss" (Kasseim, 2007; News24, 2010; Times LIVE, 2009). In this regard, Brian Finkelstein, a clinical psychologist, reports to have attended to a number of cases where teachers were stressed and overworked, and who have left the system as a result

(Kassiem, 2007). This issue of teacher absenteeism implies that students are left stranded and are the ones who suffer the most (News24, 2010), and even worse when teachers end up being fired in some cases (Times LIVE, 2009). For Esra Ramasehla, National Professional Teachers' Organization of South Africa (NAPTOSA) president, Principals and department heads also contribute to the problem of teacher absenteeism by failing to implement leave policies (Times LIVE, 2009). These trends of "teacher loss" are also noted in the provinces, including the Eastern Cape.

Previous research revealed that teacher population in the Eastern Cape province has notable dropped over the past decade, and that it has decreased by 4,5% from 64 519 in 1999 to 59 445 in 2008 (ECDoE, 2008:11). In August 2000, the Eastern Cape had 68 863 teachers posts, of which 3 161 were vacant (Zofuka, 2007). Furthermore, teacher population in the Eastern Cape decreased from 69 620 teachers in 2009 to 69 018 teachers in 2010 and 68 499 teachers in 2011 (Department of Basic Education, 2011). These teachers are lost to, amongst other things, change of careers, migrating to other countries, retirement, death, sick leave, disciplinary hearings, etc. (ECDoE, 2008:11). Furthermore, there is evidence that a high percentage of teachers stay away from, among others, school due to illnesses (News24, 2010; Kassiem, 2007), disciplinary hearings (Times LIVE, 2009, SACE, 2009), and unhappiness at work (Buckley et al, 2004). This is despite the fact that teacher presence in class is required to enhance learner performance.

It is clear that even if there are available teachers to fill vacant posts created due to "teacher loss", this exercise does not come as easy as it may sound (Houchins et al, 2004). For example, the shortage of teachers does not automatically translate into

available jobs for newly qualified teachers (Appleton et al, 2006:10). On top of that, the government's rationalization and redeployment policy is to blame for the above situation because it catered for only teachers who were already in the system, not taking into consideration qualified teachers who were unemployed (Appleton et al, 2006). Even when these teachers eventually get employed, that is only on a temporal capacity which can only happen after 30 days (ECDoE, undated, Kassiem, 2007). Furthermore, administrative delays, where permanent posts must be advertised in bulletins issued by the DoE before they can be filled, also make it difficult for schools to fill vacant posts (Appleton et al, 2006:131).

The above situation has been shown to have negative consequences in the smooth running of schools. It has been argued that "teacher loss" brings a lot of disruption in schools (Macdonald, 1999; Shen, 1997; Xaba, 2003). Xaba (2003) further states that school is disrupted especially so when teachers leave the profession during the academic year or whilst engaged in critical projects in school. Shen (1997) sees high rates of "teacher loss" as disrupting programme continuity and planning, hindering student learning and increasing school districts' expenditures on recruiting and hiring. Appleton et al (2006:130) and Imazeki (as cited in Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008:22) add that poor teacher retention rates can ultimately lead to substantial consequences on the quality of education provided to students. This becomes worse when teachers have to leave South Africa to seek better opportunities abroad.

In addition, literature states that teacher presence in class and learner performance correlates each other, and that the absence of a teacher in class is detrimental to the learning of students (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Hammett, 2008; Houchins et al,

2004). There is, however, evidence that schools globally, and in particular, South Africa, suffer both permanent and temporary “teacher loss” (Appleton et al, 2006; De Villiers, 2007; Times LIVE, 2009). While there has been so much research on this phenomenon across the globe, more attention has been paid to the reasons for “teacher loss”, as well as the strategies for the retention of teachers (Appleton et al, 2006; De Villiers, 2007; Diko & Letseka, 2009).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

While the literature stresses the importance of a teacher’s physical presence in the classroom (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Hammett, 2008; Houchins et al, 2004), and the negative impact that teacher’s absence in the classroom has on teaching and learning (Kassiem, 2007), evidence shows that there are still schools with learners sitting in class without their teachers for a number of days. This is because of “teacher loss” due to different reasons, either temporal or permanent.

Furthermore, while evidence shows that “teacher loss” remains one of the ongoing phenomena in South Africa (Xaba, 2003), and the issue of how the affected schools adapt to “teacher loss” remains ignored. Its implications for leadership and management of schools also remain under-researched and little understood. Therefore, this study hopes to investigate how the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, and the implications thereof for leadership and management.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.3.1 The main research question**

- ✓ How do the two (2) selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”?

### **1.3.2 The sub-questions**

- ✓ What is the teachers’ conception of “teacher loss”?
- ✓ What strategies do the selected schools use to cope with teacher loss?
- ✓ What do these strategies reveal about the possibilities and limitations schools are confronted with?
- ✓ What implications does “teacher loss” have on leadership and management?

## **1.4 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

In this study, it has been assumed that:

- ✓ Strategies employed in the primary school are different from those employed in the high school.

- ✓ “Teacher loss” is perceived to bring serious implications for leadership and management of schools.
- ✓ “Teacher loss” is perceived to bring negative effects on teachers and learners.

## **1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to investigate how the two (2) selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”. The strategies that these schools used to cope with “teacher loss”, as well as the implications of “teacher loss” for leadership and management of schools were also explored.

## **1.6 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY**

The researcher, as a teacher, noticed a serious problem of schools which had a shortage of teachers due to losing some of their teachers. Some of these schools had only two (2) or three (3) teachers teaching learners from grade one (1) up to grade seven (7). This motivated the researcher to question how these schools adapted under such situations.

Furthermore, previous research seemed to put much focus on the reasons for “teacher loss”, as well as the strategies for the retention of teachers. This suggests that the issue of how schools adapt in times of “teacher loss” has remained under researched. Therefore, the reality stated above, together with scanty literature on the issue under

study provide a major justification for this study. It is, therefore, against this background that this study seeks to investigate how the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, and the implications thereof for leadership and management.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Since there is insufficient literature that focuses on how schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, the findings of this study can make a significant contribution to a greater understanding of the challenges facing schools affected by “teacher loss”, and the implications of such phenomenon for leadership and management. The study can also recommend possible ways in which school management teams can adopt to cope with such phenomenon.

It is also anticipated that the findings of this study will provide the DoE with a better insight of what “teacher loss” means to schools, and what kind of assistance, therefore, do those schools need from the DoE. This can also motivate the DoE to reflect on, and review some of their policy related issues such as the provision of temporary educators as well as substitutes when “teacher loss” has struck the school.

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study was limited only to two (2) rural schools that had experienced “teacher loss” in the East London district, in the last five (5) years. The study consisted of four (4) participants from each school, i.e. one (1) principal, one (1) member of the SMT as well

as two (2) post level 1 teachers. This brought the total number of participants to eight (8). Furthermore, this study was only focused on the strategies employed by the two (2) selected schools to adapt in times of “teacher loss”, as well as the implications of “teacher loss” for leadership and management of schools.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

Below is the definition of the key concepts which reflects the context in which they have been used in the study: These include strategies, “teacher loss”, leadership and management.

### **➤ Strategies**

This refers to the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment and to fulfill stakeholder expectations (Johnson & Scholes, 2005).

### **➤ “Teacher loss”**

This refers to when a school loses a teacher either through attrition, or mobility / migration (Hahs-vaughn & Scherff, 2008).

### **➤ Leadership**

Leadership is a process of influence, leading to the achievement of desired purposes (Bush & Glover, 2003). It is about direction-setting and inspiring others to make the journey to a new and improved state for the school (Davies, 2005).

➤ **Management**

Management is a process concerned with efficiently operating in the current set of circumstances and planning in the shorter term for the school. In other words, running the day to day operations of the school (Davies, 2005).

## **1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **Chapter 1**

The first chapter of this research presents the background of the study, where it is presented with reference to the literature reviewed in both the international and national contexts. The statement of the problem is clearly stated which led to the research questions that were posed for the study. The purpose of the study and its significance was also identified. The key concepts that were used in the study were defined according to the context in which they have been used in the study.

### **Chapter 2**

Chapter two (2) deals with the literature review for the study. In this chapter, the concept of “teacher loss” is conceptualised with reference to the literature reviewed. Conceptual framework as well as theoretical framework also forms part of this chapter.

### **Chapter 3**

Chapter three details the research design and methodology of study. This includes the collection of data, the selection of subjects, a plan for organising and analysis of data.

### **Chapter 4**

In chapter four (4), data was presented as reported by the respondents, and then analysed. The findings of the research were presented and discussed with reference to relevant literature reviewed.

### **Chapter 5**

The last chapter, chapter five (5), gives the summary of how the research report was conducted. It also deals with the conclusions that were drawn out of the collected data. And lastly, recommendations for further research were also made.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a review of the relevant literature with regard to “teacher loss”. This was done by examining international as well as local literature related to the topic. Specifically, this literature review covers a range of concepts and issues which include the following: the study’s theoretical framework, conceptualisation of “teacher loss”, as well as the strategies for the prevention of “teacher loss”.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), teachers represent some 1,6 % of the world population in the age group 15-64 years, and by some estimates the largest single group of professionals in the world (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). More than two-thirds of these teachers are employed in developing countries (Ibid). “Teacher loss” manifests itself in many ways and is attributed to many reasons and causes many effects (Xaba, 2003). It is imperative; therefore, that the Department of Education and schools take cognisance of this and seek possible strategies to cope with “teacher loss”, before it brings disastrous consequences to our schools (Ibid).

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.3 Conceptualizing “teacher loss”

2.4 How can “teacher loss” be prevented?

2.5 Summary

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Different theoretical perspectives have been put forward to explain leadership and management role in terms of “teacher loss”. Therefore, contingency and transformational leadership theories appeared appropriate to form theoretical framework for this study. This was because they seemed to offer useful approaches that relate to this study for a better leadership and management model. Each of these theoretical lenses is discussed below.

### **2.2.1 Contingency leadership theory**

Contingency leadership theory entails that there is no best way of leading or to make decisions, instead, the optimal course of action is contingent (dependent) upon the internal and external situation (Bush & Middlewood, 2005; Cherry, undated; McNamara, undated; Schoech, 2006; Sing Tng, 2009; Wikipedia, 2010). In other words, the best way to organize depends on the nature of the environment to which the organization must relate, and that a leadership style that is effective in some situations may not be successful in others (Ibid). This is because education leadership and management are exercised at school level but are also influenced by a range of contextual variables (Bush & Middlewood, 2005).

Basically, contingency theory asserts that when managers make a decision, they must take into account all aspects of the current situation and act on those aspects that are key to the situation at hand (McNamara, undated). Contingency theory is often called the “it all depends” theory, because when you ask a contingency theorist for an answer, the typical response is that it all depends (McNamara, undated; Schoech, 2006). Therefore, this suggests that when a particular school is faced with “teacher loss”, the leadership and management of the school have to identify the leadership style best suited for that particular situation. Therefore, Contingency theory of leadership (Fiddler, 1967) was adopted in this study because it provided alternative approaches, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to a particular situation (“teacher loss” in this case), rather than adopting a ‘one size fits all’ stance (Bush, 2007).

### **2.2.2 Transformational leadership theory**

Transformational leadership theory is all about leadership that creates positive change in the teachers whereby they take care of each other's interests and act in the interests of the group as a whole (Daszko & Sheinberg, 2005), and is about building a unified common interest between principals and teachers (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Interactions with colleagues are teachers’ most valued form of professional stimulation (Billingsley, 1993), and schools that retain their teachers at high rates are those with a sense of collaboration among teachers and the principal (Allensworth, Mazzeo & Ponisciak, 2009).

This appeal to social values will encourage teachers to collaborate, rather than working as individuals (and potentially competitively with one another) which will relieve teachers of having to deal with too much work load alone. Since “teacher loss” results in stressed and de-motivated teachers because of too much work load (Kasseim, 2007), a need to motivate and inspire them is demanded in order for them to see the importance and higher good of the task (Cherry, undated; Doyle & Smith, 2001), and to gain their commitment to such a degree that higher levels of accomplishment become virtually a moral imperative (Bush, 2007). Through this transformation process, which is an ongoing process, the motives of management and teachers emerge (Bush & Middlewood, 2005), which is very crucial in dealing with “teacher loss”.

Furthermore, a transformational leadership approach has the potential to engage all stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives (Bush, 2007). School leaders must dedicate extraordinary time to recruiting and mentoring teachers year after year if they are to provide their students with effective new teachers (Allensworth, Mazzeo & Ponisciak, 2009). Teachers are likely to stay in schools where they view their colleagues as partners with them in the work of improving the whole school (Ibid).

Teachers who experience higher levels of principal support are likely to be less stressed, more committed and more satisfied with their jobs (Billingsley, 1993). Interactions with colleagues are teachers’ most valued form of professional stimulation and an environment that allows for professional discretion bolsters teachers’ motivation, commitment, and confidence, while a lack of independence tends to lead to dissatisfaction and/or attrition (Ibid).

Teachers are more likely to stay in schools where there is a clear sense of purpose, where the needs of the staff are recognized and support is provided (Robinson & Smithers, 2005). For example, if an employee is absent for a period of three consecutive days without informing the principal of the reason for absence, the principal must, on the fourth day of such absence, make every endeavour to trace the employee's whereabouts and keep the record of what was done (ECDoE, undated).

Therefore, transformational theory of leadership (Burns, 1978) appeared appropriate for this study because it provided a platform for a leader / school management team (SMT) to engage with staff members in such a way that they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality towards a common goal (Covey, 2004; Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Moreover, a leader who is accepted by the group members is in a more favourable situation than one who is not accepted (Ibid).

## **2.3 CONCEPTUAL OF “TEACHER LOSS”**

### **2.3.1 What is “teacher loss”?**

Various theoretical perspectives on “teacher loss” can be found in the literature. The constructs of turnover, attrition and wastage are the most commonly used (Robinson & Smithers, 2005). “Teacher loss” is when a school loses a teacher either through attrition or mobility / migration / turnover (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; ECDoE, 2008; Hahs-Vaughn & Cherff, 2008). Attrition refers to change of careers, retirement, dismissal, illnesses/death, etc., whereas mobility / migration / turnover refer to transfer or movement of teachers from one school to the other, local and international (Ibid).

“Teacher loss” could either be permanent (teacher leaving the school or profession altogether) or temporal (teacher on leave, workshop, etc.) (Ibid).

Bennell (2004); Macdonald (1999) add that “teacher loss” can also be either voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary “teacher loss” includes resignation, early retirement, transfer, etc., while involuntary “teacher loss” includes death, illness, dismissal, etc. (Ibid). Moreover, “teacher loss” also includes all permanent teachers who have left the teaching profession, or who are on leave without pay (Engler, 2008). Robinson & Smithers (2005) define “teacher loss” as teachers leaving full time posts whatever the destination.

“Teacher loss’ includes wastage (Macdonald, 1999; Robinson & Smithers, 2005) together with the lateral movement of teachers within schooling systems (Macdonald, 1999). Wastage can be considered as the number of teachers who leave full time teaching through causes such as death, retirement, resignation, dismissal, temporary withdrawals, and resignation within education (Williams as cited in Macdonald, 1999). However, Robinson & Smithers refer to wastage as a loss of full time teachers leaving but not moving to a full time post in a maintained school.

Furthermore, Boe et al (2008) posit that “teacher loss” refers to major changes in a teacher's assignment from one school year to the next. “Teacher loss” includes three components, the most studied of which are leaving teaching employment (commonly referred to as attrition) and moving to a different school (commonly referred to as school transfer or as teacher migration) (Ibid).

According to Bennell (2004), there are five (5) main types of “teacher loss”: departures of teachers at the school level, movements of teachers between public and non-state schools, teacher upgrading, occupational attrition (teachers leaving the profession to take up other jobs), and international migration.

### **2.3.2 What contributes to “teacher loss”?**

Literature reveals that there are many factors contributing to the problem of “teacher loss” in schools all over the globe. Houchins et al (2004) says that by identifying these factors, there is a greater likelihood that strategies can be developed to keep qualified teachers in the classroom.

Teachers may be lost due to change of careers, migration to other countries, retirement, illnesses/death, transfers, etc. (ECDoE, 2008). Reasons for teachers leaving their posts include retirement, resignation, dismissal, death, further studies, among other reasons (Tsheko, 2010). Billingsley (1993) states that external factors, employment factors as well as personal factors all relate to “teacher loss”. Commonwealth Secretariat (2003) states that teacher disaffection; low compensation and job status, frustrating working environments, student behavioural problems, etc., pushed teachers out of the profession to other countries to seek greater job satisfaction. Among other reasons, teachers have sought better remuneration and opportunities to gain different experiences in living in another country, or to pursue further education (Ibid).

Furthermore, school violence, low salaries, strenuous working conditions, and a profession that has lost its spark, are driving teachers out of the classroom every year

(Mbanjwa, 2010). Lack of resources, Job dissatisfaction, primarily due to poor salary, poor administrative support, work overload and student discipline problems, are also among the most frequent reasons teachers give for leaving the profession (Billingsley, 1993; Buckley et al, 2004). From the above, it is clear that teacher loss manifests itself in many ways and is attributed to many causes. It is, therefore, imperative that the education system takes cognisance of this and takes steps to address this situation proactively before it reaches critical proportions (Xaba, 2003).

Below is the discussion of the above mentioned factors that contribute to “teacher loss”.

#### **2.3.2.1 *Change of careers***

Literature indicates that some teachers are lost into the teaching profession due to changing of careers (Diko & Letseka, 2009; Macdonald, 1999). Some teachers seek to change careers because of forced retirement or because their current work no longer holds meaning or interest (The Teacher centre organization, 2004). Teachers feel that even after they have enrolled in some form of further study to upgrade their qualifications, they were concerned that they were wasting their time and money, given that qualifications are not recognized for remuneration or promotion (Diko & Letseka, 2009). Investing in further study in modern day South African education does not make business sense given that such an initiative is neither recognized nor rewarded, which is why most teachers decide to leave the profession (Ibid).

On the other hand, attractive openings in other occupations/industries when compared with the working conditions of teachers attract teachers away from the profession (Macdonald, 1999). This is because individuals enter into or change occupations to

maximize net returns, taking into account both benefits and costs (Ibid). In other countries, teaching is often a fallback position and is abandoned when the bonded period expires or conditions are right to use their skills and experience elsewhere (Ibid).

### **2.3.2.2 Migration to other countries**

Literature reveals that developed countries, primarily the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the United States are actively recruiting teachers from the developing world, including South Africa, to meet their own needs for teachers (Bennell, 2004; Chapman & Harker, 2006; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). Concerns over the international recruitment of teachers in South Africa came to prominence in 2001 when the then Education Minister, Kadar Asmal, accused British recruiters of raiding the country's resources (Appleton et al, 2006).

Miller, Mulvaney & Ochs (2008) and Elaine (2009) further state that the recruitment of teachers from developing countries has become a popular solution to rectify a shortage of teachers in many industrial countries at the expense of developing countries. However, the reasons teachers cite for migrating to other countries include, among others, higher salaries, opportunities for travel and professional development, which are 'pull' rather than 'push' factors (Appleton et al 2006; De Villiers, 2007).

It is argued that the "brain drain" of teachers to other developed countries is negatively impacting on teacher supply and retention in a growing number of developing countries (Appleton et al, 2006; Bennell, 2004; Carm, 2008; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003; Macdonald, 1999). In terms of defining this "brain drain", the South African Migration Project (SAMP) defines a period of more than two (2) years as a permanent move

(emigration) (Crush et al as cited in Appleton et al, 2006). They further argue that if teachers who leave are returning after two (2) years, this may not constitute a “brain drain”, but rather a “brain circulation” (Appleton et al, 2006).

Usually, the more qualified and more experienced teachers are targeted by recruitment efforts in developed nations to serve in their schools, living a “brain drain” in the developing country (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). This ‘brain drain’ implies that not only would sending countries directly lose skilled personnel through emigration; shortages in the education sector would impair the transfer of skills to their next generation of citizens (Appleton et al, 2006). Furthermore, Carm (2008); Macdonald (1999) argue that low salaries may be the root cause of “brain drain” in some less developed countries where salaries are too low to support a family.

This recruitment of teachers was objected to because, due to the heavy state subsidies of teacher education, it also implied that South Africa would be funding the training of teachers who serve in other countries (Appleton et al, 2006). In September 2004, the Ministers of Education of the Commonwealth countries formally adopted a Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol, which aims to balance the rights of teachers to migrate internationally against the need to protect the integrity of national education systems (Buckley et al, 2004; Keevy & Morrow, 2006). If anything, given what is known as the “push and pull” factors, the situation of teachers migrating from their own countries through recruitment, will continue to grow in the future (Degazon-Johnson, 2006).

Furthermore, literature reveals that South Africa has been a net sender of teachers to developed countries and has been at the forefront of protest about international teacher mobility (Appleton et al, 2006). For instance, it is estimated that South Africa in particular lost 310, 000 citizens to emigration between 1987 and 2001, with 50, 000 being professionals including teachers (Ibid). However, the loss of teachers through recruitment and migration impacts most on education systems in small countries where the stock of human capital is limited, and in poor countries where the cost of teacher training is funded mainly by the national budget (Degazon-Johnson, 2006; De Villiers, 2007), as it is the case in South Africa.

It is further stated that this international recruitment would leave the country with insufficient teachers to staff its own education system (Appleton et al, 2006; Chapman & Harker, 2006). That would lead some developing countries, including South Africa, to import teachers in the future (Ibid). The most recent data revealed that New Zealand actively recruits teachers from the UK and Ireland as they cannot retain their own teaching stock (Degazon-Johnson, 2007). The UK then replenishes its teaching stock with South Africa's teachers who can find teaching positions in the UK upon graduation, without teaching experience (Ibid). When there is a shortfall in one of these industrialized countries, then developing countries that include South Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and small states are used as the means of filling the gap. Little consideration is being given to the impact of this recruitment on the human capital needs and development of the developing country or small state (Ibid).

### **2.3.2.3 Retirement**

According to Macdonald (1999), retirement can either be premature or normal. Premature retirement refers to when teachers retire earlier than the retirement age, which is sixty (60) years for females and sixty five (65) years for males (Ibid). On the other hand, normal retirement is when teachers retire when they reach the retirement age (Macdonald, 1999).

Evidence indicates that in South Africa, an average of 2 000 teachers go into retirement each year (Mbanjwa, 2010). Education international, the world-wide association of teachers' organizations, predicts that over the next decade, 40% of teachers in industrialized countries will retire and there are indications that a new teacher shortage is going to be upon us by 2015, the year when according to the Millennium Development Goals, we are supposed to have every child in school receiving primary education (Degazon-Johnson, 2006).

There is also evidence that severance packages were introduced to encourage the exit of teachers from the system through early retirement (Appleton et al, 2006, Xaba, 2003). But that decision leaves much to be desired since there has always been a shortage of teachers in the country (Appleton et al, 2006, De Villiers, 2007). Where schools had excess teachers, those who left the system were often those nearest to retirement age as they were the most willing to leave (Appleton et al, 2006).

### **2.3.2.4 Illnesses / death**

Evidence shows that illnesses or death; especially as a result of HIV/AIDS contribute to high rate of "teacher loss" (Clark et al, 2004; Cohen, Govender & Mbabela, 2009;

Govender, 2002; Kasseim, 2007; News24 2010; Times LIVE, 2009). The HIV/AIDS pandemic is indicated mostly as a cause for “teacher loss” in Sub-Saharan countries (Arends & Paterson, 2009; Xaba, 2003). In May 2002, a world Bank report on the impact of HIV/AIDS estimated that in the worst-hit countries, teachers ‘are dying faster than they can be replaced’ (Appleton et al, 2006). As a result, schooling is disrupted when teachers are absent due to illnesses, death or the need to care for ill family members (Xaba, 2003). Schooling is also disrupted when HIV positive teachers leave schools in remote areas that lack health facilities and request postings in locations near hospitals (Ibid). In South Africa, about 1 800 teachers die of different causes and over 500 are discharged due to ill-health each year (Mbanjwa, 2010).

Evidence further shows that a large number of teachers in South Africa are lost due to HIV/AIDS (Arends & Paterson, 2009; Clark et al, 2004; Cohen, Govender & Mbabela, 2009), most of whom are women (Govender, 2002). For example, a study in South Africa revealed that 21% of teachers aged 25-34 are living with HIV (Clarke et al, 2004; Times LIVE, 2009; Govender, 2002; News24 2010; Kasseim, 2007). On the other hand, a comprehensive study of South African public schools found that 12.7 per cent of the 17 088 teachers who gave a specimen for HIV testing were HIV-positive – a very high figure, but not significantly different from the rate among the general population (AfriMap, 2007; Appleton et al, 2006; Shisana et al as cited in Chediel, 2010). Therefore, it is clear that teacher mortality from HIV/AIDS will soon have an impact on the schooling system (Appleton et al, 2006).

The above situation has led to high rate of absenteeism among teachers (Clarke et al, 2004; Times LIVE, 2009; Govender, 2002; News24 2010; Kasseim, 2007) since the epidemic has transformed absenteeism into a very serious issue in highly impacted settings (AfriMap, 2007; Chediell, 2010). As a result school becomes envisaged as a multi-purpose institution, a centre for disseminating messages about HIV/AIDS to pupils through Life Orientation and staff (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). It is clear that HIV/AIDS are having a devastating effect on the already inadequate supply of teachers in African countries (Ibid).

Most teachers who are HIV/AIDS victims resign from teaching and get employment in Non-Governmental Organizations where they have good medical treatment schemes (Lumadi, 2008). HIV/AIDS can lead to a loss of trained teachers through mortality, and reduced productivity among sick teachers. Due to this loss, it can reduce the education system's ability to match supply with demand because of the loss of education officers, inspectors and management personnel (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). As a result, funds might be tied down by salaries for sick but inactive teachers (Ibid). Furthermore, teachers who are living with HIV/AIDS may be unable to perform consistently in their teaching activities (Ibid). This may result in underperformance among learners who may have lost a great deal of teaching time.

#### **2.3.2.5 Transfers**

According to DoE (1998), the Director General or Head of Department may transfer a teacher to any post or position in any other department of State with the prior approval of the person. The Director General or Head of Department may also transfer a teacher

from a post at a public school or public further education and training institution, to a post at another public school or public further education and training institution (Ibid). No employee is allowed to transfer, leaving the current workstation without the written approval letter of transfer from the District Director (DoE, 2007). Any employee must make sure that he/she is transferring into a substantive vacant post of the same level (Ibid). Transfers can be either voluntary or involuntary (Bennell, 2004). The main issue in most countries is the high rate of transfers of teachers between schools rather than attrition per se (Ibid).

Tsheko (2010) posits that teachers request transfers to go to better places that bring them closer to study institutions as well as medical institutions in semi-urban areas, towns and cities. According to SACE (2011), approximately half of all rural districts in South Africa undergo a net loss of population due to rural-urban migration. Chediell (2010) adds that teachers ask for transfers for a number of reasons including: joining their spouse; staying near a hospital for medical care; staying near home so as to provide care and support for dependants; and moving away from areas known to have difficult living conditions. This has an impact on the quality of teachers left in the remote or rural areas (Tsheko, 2010). As a result, the school system may rely more and more on less qualified teachers with less experience, resulting in a decrease in the quality of education (Appleton et al, 2006).

#### **2.3.2.6 Redeployment**

Redeployment is a process whereby excess teachers in one school are taken to another school that is having a shortage of teachers (Chudnovsky, 1998). Evidence

shows that teachers are lost in South African schools due to a process of redeployment (Hammett, 2008). Redeployment also forms part of internal teacher migration, given that teachers are taken from one school from one part of the country to another school in another part of the country (SACE, 2011). The redeployment of excess educators in schools, all seem to suggest that the supply of educators is adequate and the apparent shortage is due to an unequal distribution of teachers in the country (Garson as cited in Xaba, 2003). All departmental officials, including school principals, must ensure that human factors are also taken into consideration during the identification and transfer process of teachers who are in addition (ECDoE, 2011).

#### **2.3.2.7 Resignation**

According to Macdonald (1999), a teacher who resigns from a school system or region should not perhaps be considered as a “leaver” in that they might be re-employed in another school sector, educational occupation or country. The high rate of resignations of old and more experienced teachers means that there are going to be lesser experienced teachers in the system as older teachers retire (Teacher Incentive Study, 2006). Retention of this group of teachers is important in formulating policies to reduce shortage resulting from this group of teachers exiting the system (Ibid).

Evidence shows that a number of teachers in South Africa resign from their posts every year due to different reasons (Mbanjwa, 2010, Tsheko, 2010). According to DoE (1998), a teacher may resign by giving 90 days’ notice in writing or such shorter notice as the employer may approve at the request of the teacher. If the name of a teacher is struck off the register of teachers kept by the South African Council for Educators, the teacher

shall be deemed to have resigned with effect from the day following immediately after the day on which the teacher's name was so struck off (Ibid).

Furthermore, the shocking statistics in South Africa showed that over 4 500 teachers resigned in the 2007/08 financial year, up from about 4 300 in 2007/06 and 3 800 in 2005/06 (Mbanjwa, 2010). This was confirmed by Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, who revealed that 24 750 teachers left the profession between 2005 and 2008 (Ibid). The statistics also showed that the largest number of teachers quitting were in Gauteng with 5 614 leaving between 2005 and 2008, followed by KZN (5 005), Eastern Cape (4 763), Western Cape (3 017), Limpopo (2 317), Free State (1 979), Mpumalanga (1 686), North West (1 658), and the Northern Cape with 611(Ibid).

### **2.3.2.8 Dismissal / expulsion**

There is evidence that some schools lose teachers because they are expelled due to unprofessional conduct (SACE, 2009). According to Section 17 of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 as cited by Mothemane (2003), a teacher must be dismissed if he/she is found guilty of:

- Theft, bribery, fraud or an act of corruption in regard to examinations or promotional reports.
- Committing an act of sexual assault on a learner, student or other employee
- Having sexual relationship with a learner of the school where he/she is employed.
- Seriously assaulting with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm to a learner, student or other employee.

- Illegal possession of an intoxicating, illegal or stupefying substance
- Causing a learner or a student to perform any of the acts contemplated above.

However, before adverse decisions such as dismissal are implemented, the state is obliged to “hear the other side” or follow the rule of *audi alteram partem* (Ibid).

Furthermore, Cohen et al (2009) report that four (4) of South Africa’s nine (9) provincial education departments fired eighty six (86) teachers for bunking school. Moreover, another fifty one (51) were fired with misconduct charges for skipping classes in 2008 (Ibid). With regard to the above situation, the DoE policy on teachers who abscond states very clearly that an educator who absconded or absents himself from his official duties without permission for a period exceeding 14 consecutive days, shall be deemed to have been discharged from service on account of misconduct (ECDoE, undated). This shall be with effect from the day following immediately after the last day on which the educator was present at work (Ibid).

#### **2.3.2.9 Qualifications**

There is a growing consensus among researchers and educators that the single most important factor in determining student performance is the quality of his or her teachers (Issue Brief, 2005; Robinson & Smithers, 2005). Therefore, if the national goal of providing an equitable education to children across the nation is to be met, it is critical that efforts be concentrated on developing and retaining high-quality teachers in every community and at every grade level (Ibid).

There is evidence that one's qualifications (Billingsley, 1993; Boyd et. al., 2005; Diko & Letseka, 2009; Houchins et al, 2004; Ingersoll, 200) which include educational preparation (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Xaba, 2003) contribute to the problem of "teacher loss" around the globe. Furthermore, there is widespread evidence that those younger teachers who are university graduates are more likely to move out of teaching than their counterparts who only have certificates (Macdonald, 1999). Given the common finding that more academically talented teachers are likely to leave in the first few years of teaching, the issue of teacher retention gains more urgency (Shen, 2001).

Teachers with strong academic qualifications are more likely to switch schools and districts, or to leave teaching completely (Allensworth et al, 2009; Billingsley, 1993; Boyd et. al., 2005; Croasmun, Hampton & Herrmann, 2006; Macdonald, 1999; Shen, 1997). This is because in this profession, the chances of being promoted to a senior position are very slim, irrespective of one's educational qualifications (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). Diko & Letseka (2009) concurs that teachers are concerned about the non recognition of their qualifications and experience for remuneration and promotion posts, and their feeling is that there is therefore no reason why they should not leave the teaching profession. As a result, some teachers prefer to leave the teaching profession for promotion posts in non teaching areas within the education sector, while others leave the education sector for the private sector (Buckley et al, 2004; Diko & Letseka, 2009).

### **2.3.2.10 Work overload**

Work overload is one of the reasons cited for “teacher loss” (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003; Kasseim, 2007; Macdonald, 1999). The duties and responsibilities of the post level 1 teacher include, among others, to engage in class teaching, including the academic, administrative, educational and disciplinary aspects and to organize extra and co-curricular activities so as to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner (Bengu, 1999). Commonwealth Secretariat (2003) concurs that not only do teachers serve as educators, but they also serve as disciplinarians, administrators, managers, mediators, HIV/AIDS counselors, and custodians of children. This implies that there is more to the teacher’s job than meets the eye, and as a result, teachers are overloaded with work.

There is also evidence that in South Africa, there are schools still operating with insufficient teachers for weeks and even months, and that there may be 3 or 4 classes without a teacher (Kasseim, 2007). In such cases, the classes are put together and the teacher left standing has a double load, and as a result, teachers tend to be crushed under pressure (Ibid). This is because the DoE can only provide a substitute after 30 days (Ibid). According to ECDoE (undated), such a substitute may not be appointed for a period of less than 1 month and will only be approved in the case of educators on sick and maternity leave.

However, despite the suffering of learners because of the absence of their teacher, a school can never appoint a substitute without a written approval from the district office, which can only be obtained after a month (ECDoE, undated). What happens before that is a matter of concern for all schools because learners will suffer a great deal until the

department has acted on the matter. This implies that the teachers who are left behind are given extra work to do and left with heavy workloads (News24, 2010; Tsheko, 2010).

#### **2.3.2.11 Personal factors**

Personal variables (past or present) are likely to directly or indirectly influence teachers' career decisions (Billingsley, 1993). For example, teachers may decide to retire, stay home with children, or pursue new interests with minimal consideration of work factors (ibid). Teachers also list family or personal reasons, such as pregnancy, the demands of child rearing, marriage, relocation and health problems as reasons for leaving the profession (Billingsley, 1993; Buckley et al, 2004; Houchins et al, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001). Especially in the initial years of one's teaching career, "teacher loss" (attrition) may be high due to likely changes such as marriage, birth of children, relocation, etc. (Billingsley, 1993; Macdonald, 1999). Marital status is related more strongly to "teacher loss" than is any other variable on which data are available

#### **2.3.2.12 Work environment**

Teacher's work environment as one of the contributing factors to "teacher loss" (Appleton et al, 2006; Billingsley, 1993; Buckley et al, 2004; De Villiers, 2007; Hahs-Vaughn & scherff, 2008; Hammett, 2008; Houchins et al, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Shen, 1997; Xaba, 2003). Feeling comfortable in their teaching location is important to teachers' satisfaction (Macdonald, 1999). Teachers tend to leave positions where living conditions are extremely poor, harsh or overly expensive, or they do not feel

comfortable with local ethnicity, customs or language (Ibid). It is argued (Billingsley, 1993; Mbanjwa, 2010) that with unsupportive and unfavourable work environments, and problems with role expectations, teachers are likely to experience reduced commitment, stress, burnout and eventually, “teacher loss”. The quality of school facilities is an important factor in the decision making of individual teachers (Buckley et al, 2004).

Houchins et al (2004) further add that salary, school climate, administrative and colleague support, induction and mentoring, professional development, teacher roles, and paperwork are all aspects of teacher’s work environment. Furthermore, Teacher Incentive Study (2006) found that teachers value the environment in the school along with teacher salaries. That means in an attempt to reduce teacher demand due to teachers leaving the profession the environment has to be conducive to retain teachers (Ibid).

Furthermore, there are indications that working conditions, aside from those directly resulting from student composition, affect teachers’ career decisions (Boyd; Grossman; Ing; Lankford & Wyckoff, 2009). A relatively large literature has used cross-sectional data to link teachers’ self-reports of school working conditions to measures of their own satisfaction and plans for the future (Ibid). Herbert & Ramsay (2004); Luther & Richman (2011); Macdonald (1999) concur that recent research has found that there is a relationship between the conditions and circumstances surrounding teachers’ work and “teacher loss”. As a result, teachers are leaving the teaching profession and will continue to do so until the working conditions at schools are improved (Diko & Letseka, 2009).

### **2.3.2.13 Student behaviour**

Negative pupil behaviour was also cited as a reason for “teacher loss” around the globe (Billingsley, 1993, De Villiers, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001; Robinson & Smithers, 2005). A report by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) in 2008 revealed that South African schools were regarded as the most dangerous in the world and that learners lived in fear (Miet Africa, 2009). Current research also shows that cases of learner indiscipline are on the increase in South African schools and in some cases; learners are alleged to have murdered others in school premises (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

Increasing the problem of violence in schools is the fact that student-on-student violence is often ignored, as it is considered to be part of growing up (Miet Africa, 2009). Letting less serious behaviour go unchecked often leads to a point where teasing and fighting ceases to be play and becomes harmful (Ibid). Some cases of indiscipline include, among others, physical and verbal confrontations, theft, substance abuse, watching pornography, etc. (Aziza as cited in Maphosa & Shumba 2010). Sexual violence and harassment also form part of student misbehaviour (DoE, 2008).

Furthermore, safety in schools has become an issue where teachers are no longer able to teach effectively because of school violence (Mbanjwa, 2010). They are becoming targets or victims of children who carry weapons to school (Ibid). Such cases of learner indiscipline have impacted negatively on teaching and learning in the schools (Zulu; Urbani; Van der Merwe; & Van der Walt, 2004), and have led to some teachers quitting the teaching profession (Billingsley, 1993; Robinson & Smithers, 2005).

According to Maphosa & Shumba (2010), the magnitude of reported cases of learner indiscipline warrants the use of different kinds of punishment-based disciplinary measures and the question still remains on the usefulness of such measures in curbing future occurrences of indiscipline or in helping the perpetrators. The thrust on children's rights and subsequent banning of corporal punishment has ushered an era of freedom for learners who no longer have respect or fear for their teachers (Ibid).

It is also argued (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Zulu et al, 2004) that school size, age and its location has a statistically significant influence on most forms of violence and violence-related behaviour. Furthermore, secondary schools, schools with 500 or more learners and schools located in rural areas reported the highest incidence of most forms of violence-related behaviour (Ibid). Such harsh and unfavourable conditions are more likely to drive teachers out of the school, or even out of teaching (Billingsley, 1993; Herbert & Ramsay, 2004). However, teachers in schools with fewer student discipline problems are less likely to leave teaching or move to other districts (Ibid).

#### **2.3.2.14 Low salaries**

Previous research, (Appleton et al, 2006; Buckley et al, 2004; De Villiers, 2007; Elaine, 2009; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Houchins et al, 2004; Macdonald, 1999; Xaba, 2003) has noted that one's salary has an effect on teachers' career decisions. Simpson as cited in Xaba (2003:287), Croasmun et al (2006) concur that low salaries result in many teachers leaving the profession for greener financial pastures.

According to Hammett (2008), education is not regarded as a lucrative career choice; hence the change of careers and teaching is no longer a career of first choice (Degazon-Johnson, 2006). For instance, those who migrate to other countries are offered opportunities to re-establish their careers and to improve their financial stability in their new country (Elaine, 2009). Although teachers are motivated primarily by intrinsic rewards, they are not solely motivated by them, money does matter (Billingsley, 1993). This suggests that the DoE has to recognize teachers' qualifications by providing incentives for them to remain in teaching.

Furthermore, the Department of Education has established an Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which seeks to ensure quality public education through performance management, i.e. pay incentives will be based on performance (AfriMap, 2007). In this regard, collective agreement number 5 of 2006 made provision for qualified post level 1 teachers to progress to salary level 9 without having to be promoted to an available vacant post and for all teachers to progress quicker to the maximum of their applicable scales (ELRC, 2006). According to ELRC (2006), the performance requirements for salary progression are salary progression (one notch increment) for satisfactory performance, and accelerated salary progression (three notches increment) for three years good performance (Ibid). However, the application of this has been problematic as educators claimed that they were not given the necessary development training they required before the evaluations took place and therefore should not be penalized (Ibid).

### **2.3.2.15 Public image of teaching**

The perceived decline in the status of teachers is of concern in most countries from the perspective of how teachers are seen by others as well as how they see themselves (Macdonald, 1999). While teachers may have high regard and expectations for themselves and their profession, the recognition of teachers' work by communities and governments is poor (Chapman as cited in Macdonald, 1999).

Some authors observe that one of the perceived causes of diminishing interest in the profession is the poor public image of the profession and its status (Buckley et al, 2004; Chapman & Harker, 2006 & DoE, 2006). Literature indicates that more general factors, including government policies, portrayal of teachers in the mass media, and community attitudes, also influence teachers' general esteem and status in society, which features largely in their professional commitment and morale (Buckley et al, 2004). Hammett (2008) concurs that changes in the political economy, and shifts in social attitudes have demoralized the profession in a rights-based culture perceived as having disempowered teachers and undermined their status.

Hammett (2008) further states that redeployment and retrenchment that was implemented by the DoE in South Africa dispersed teachers geographically and into other careers. As a result, many teachers believed this policy undermined their respect standing, as redeployment and retrenchment portrayed them as a disposable resource (Ibid). In the past, teaching has been a highly valued and respected profession which also paid adequately, but in more recent years, teachers are losing their higher status (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). But in Europe, evidence shows that the profession

is more highly regarded than teachers think (Robinson & Smithers, 2005), whereas in England it is less attractive than other graduate occupations (Ibid).

### **2.3.2.16 Absenteeism**

Evidence shows that some schools temporarily lose teachers due to absenteeism for a number of different reasons, including HIV/AIDS (Kasseim, 2007; Cohen et al, 2009; Scott & Wimbush, 1991). Absenteeism may be for valid and justifiable reasons and may be asked for in advance, or it may be unpredictable and chronic (Hmmond & Onikama, undated). Bennell (2004) adds that most teacher absenteeism is for legitimate reasons, namely: personal illness, official duty and leave. Whether planned or unplanned, absenteeism creates a host of problems at all levels of the educational system (Ibid). Absenteeism has major implications for the quality of education; classes are often not taught and it creates heavier workloads for the remaining teachers and increases reliance on less qualified teachers (Chediell, 2010).

High rate of absenteeism is mostly due to teachers who are both infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, and who are likely to take periods of time off work (Clarke et al, 2004; Xaba, 2003). Those with sick families may also take time off to attend funerals or to care for sick or dying relatives, and further absenteeism may result from the psychological effects of the epidemic (Ibid).

Furthermore, workshops during school hours, court appearances (News24, 2010), leave - Sick leave (Kasseim, 2007; Cohen et al, 2009), vacation leave in addition to school holidays, maternity leave, unauthorized leave (Cohen et al, 2009), leave without pay (Engler, 2008, NZ Ministry of Education, 2010), poor motivation and lack of

accountability (Bennell, 2004), etc., are some of the common reasons cited for teacher absenteeism. These are unpacked later in the study.

Despite all the above, teachers still take time off work without valid reasons or even without reporting. But the DoE (undated) suggests that failing to report for work without valid reasons or prior permission is not only very disruptive to the effective functioning of the school, but grossly to fellow employees who have to take over the duties of the absent colleague unexpectedly. It is also important that the school management deals promptly with employee absenteeism as failure to do so usually lead quite rapidly to a general breakdown in morale and authority (Ibid).

### **2.3.2.17 Leaves**

Teachers are entitled to many different types of leaves. These are: annual leave; normal sick leave; temporary incapacity leave; permanent incapacity leave; leave for occupational injuries and diseases; special leave for quarantine purposes; maternity leave; adoption leave; family responsibility leave; special leave for urgent private affairs; special leave for professional and personal development; special leave for study purposes; special leave for examination purposes; special leave for participating in sporting, cultural and other events; special leave in extraordinary circumstances; unpaid leave; unpaid leave for continuity of service, leave for union office bearers or site stewards (Bengu, 1999; DoE, 1998; ECDoE, undated; ELRC, 2001).

Bengu (1999); DoE (1998); ECDoE, (undated); ELRC (2001) further unpack each of the above types of leave days as follows:

*(a) Annual leave*

A teacher will be regarded as being on annual leave during institution closure periods that are outside of scheduled working time.

*(b) (Normal) sick leave*

Teachers are entitled to thirty six (36) working days sick leave with full pay over a three- year cycle. Teachers who apply for three or more sick leave days must submit a certificate from a registered and recognized medical practitioner as defined by the Health Professionals' Council of South Africa, citing the reason for and duration of absence.

*(c) Temporary incapacity leave*

A teacher who has exhausted his or her sick leave credits in a three-year cycle and who, according to the relevant medical practitioner, requires to be absent due to incapacity that is not permanent may be granted additional sick leave with full pay.

*(d) Permanent incapacity leave*

Teachers whose degree of incapacity has been certified by a component medical practitioner as permanent shall, with the approval of the Head of Department, be granted a maximum of thirty (30) working days paid sick leave. If the employer or the teacher is convinced that the teacher will never be able to render an effective service at his or her level of rank, the teacher may proceed with an application for termination of service due to ill health.

*(e) Leave for occupational injuries and diseases*

Teachers who, as a result of their work, suffer occupational injuries or contract occupational diseases, shall be granted occupational and disease leave for the duration of the period they cannot work. If a teacher suffers a work-related injury as a result of an accident involving a third party, the Head of Department shall grant him or her occupational injury leave. This can only be done provided that the teacher brings a claim of compensation against the third party or undertakes to use compensation received to recompense as far as possible for the employer's contribution to the cost arising from the accident.

*(f) Special leave for quarantine purposes*

Special leave with full pay may be granted to a teacher who has been exposed to a medical condition that requires such person to be placed under quarantine. Application for such leave must be accompanied by a certificate from a medical practitioner stating the period of quarantine as well as the reasons necessitating such leave.

*(g) Maternity leave*

A teacher is entitled to four (4) consecutive months' maternity leave on full pay to commence at least fourteen (14) days prior to the expected date of birth but not later than the actual date of birth in a case of a premature confinement. A teacher who experiences a miscarriage, still birth or termination of the pregnancy after starting paid maternity leave, shall be eligible for six (6) consecutive weeks paid maternity leave where she shall apply in the event of a medical complication.

*(h) Adoption leave*

A teacher who adopts a child that is younger than two (2) years qualifies for adoption leave to a maximum of forty five (45) working days where he or she shall apply. If both spouses or life partners are employed in the public service, both partners qualify for adoption leave provided that the combined leave taken does not exceed forty five (45) working days.

*(i) Family responsibility leave*

A teacher shall be granted three (3) working days leave per annual leave cycle if the teacher's spouse or life partner gives birth or if the teacher's child, spouse or life partner is sick. A teacher shall be granted five (5) working days leave per annual leave cycle if the teacher's child, spouse or life partner dies, or the teacher's immediate family member dies.

*(j) Special leave for urgent private affairs*

A teacher may, during a scheduled working period, be granted special leave to attend to an urgent private matter, the nature of which is such that it warrants such a teacher's absence from work.

*(k) Special leave for professional and personal development*

Special leave with full pay may be granted to teachers to engage in activities aimed at his or her professional as well as personal development, and where such personal development is also in the interest of the employer. The number of leave days granted to a teacher may not exceed three (3) working days per annual leave cycle.

*(l) Special leave for study purposes*

Special leave may be granted to a teacher for an approved course of study and for a period approved by the employer, on condition as approved by the employer, including leave with full or partial pay or without pay.

*(m) Special leave for examination purposes*

A teacher may be granted special leave for examination purposes with full pay for each day on which such teacher sits as a candidate for an examination approved for this purpose by the employer. In addition to that, one (1) additional day of special leave for study purposes for each such day of examination which may be taken on the working days immediately prior to the days of examination.

*(n) Special leave for participating in sporting, cultural and other events*

Special leave for a period and on conditions approved by the Head of Department, in terms of policy of such department, may be granted to a teacher for participating in sports, cultural and other relevant activities. Participation for which leave may be granted may include representation of the country, province or other comparable level as an actual participant, referee, adjudicator, course or group leader, or for participating in or attending a relevant conference, meeting or other event approved for this purpose by the employer.

*(o) Special leave for extraordinary circumstances*

Notwithstanding any disciplinary measures that may apply, unauthorized absence by the teacher shall be regarded as special leave in extraordinary circumstances and shall be without pay unless the employer in a specific case determines otherwise.

*(p) Leave for union office bearers or site stewards*

Office bearers or shop stewards of recognized employee organizations shall receive up to ten (10) days paid leave per annum for activities related to his or her union position.

*(q) Unpaid leave*

If the teacher has utilized all his or her accrued annual leave, the Head of Department may grant him or her unpaid leave up to a maximum of one hundred and eighty four (184) consecutive days in a period of eighteen (18) months. Absences from work due to arrest, imprisonment or appearance in court on a criminal charge that leads to a conviction must be recorded as unpaid leave.

*(r) Unpaid leave for continuity of service*

Unpaid leave for a maximum of one hundred and twenty (120) consecutive days may be granted to a teacher who was previously employed as a teacher by the same or another education department for the purpose of retaining the continuity of the teacher's service. The unpaid leave shall commence on the day immediately following the date on which the teacher last received salary from his or her previous employer, and shall expire on the day preceding the date of assumption of duty with the present employer.

According to Cohen et al (2009), of all the types of leaves available, sick leave is the most commonly used. For example, in South Africa, Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, said that the country's 371,449 teachers took 79,848 days of sick leave between April 2008 and March 2009 (Cohen et al, 2009). This implies that healthy teachers are forced to deal with heavy workloads because of backlogs caused by their

ill counterparts' absenteeism (News24, 2010). According to Bengu (1999); Education Labour Relations Council (2001), teachers shall be granted 36 working days sick leave with full pay in a three-year cycle. But hundreds of them are staying away for longer periods, some as a result of illnesses including HIV/AIDS (Cohen et al, 2009).

In four (4) of the nine (9) provinces of South Africa, almost one million teaching days were lost to sick leave, vacation leave, maternity leave and unauthorized leave (Cohen et al, 2009). This situation leaves schools without teachers for a number of days, and impacts negatively on the quality of teaching and learning (Kasseim, 2007; Cohen et al, 2009).

As has been mentioned above, some teachers take time off work without permission (ECDoE, undated; Engler, 2008). This constitutes "teacher loss" and may lead to suspension or expulsion if it happens for a number of days (ECDoE, undated; Cohen et al, 2009; SACE, 2009). Failing to report for work without valid reasons or prior permission is not only very to the effective functioning of the school, but grossly unfair to fellow employees who have to take over the duties of the absent colleague unexpectedly (ECDoE, undated). If a teacher is absent for a period of three (3) consecutive days without informing the principal of the reasons for absence, the principal must, on the fourth day of such absence, make every endeavour to trace the teacher's whereabouts and keep a record of what was done (Ibid).

### **2.3.2.18 Workshops**

Evidence shows that teachers do attend workshops organized by the DoE for professional development purposes (News24, 2010). This is supported by Bengu (1999)

who states that all educators may be required by the employer to attend programmes for ongoing professional development, up to a maximum of 80 hours per annum. However, there is evidence that these workshops are held during school hours (News24, 2010). Oosthuizen's (2011) confirms that teachers attend too many functions and workshops during class hours. This suggests that teachers were not in class for the duration of the workshop, a situation which is regarded as temporary "teacher loss".

The above situation is in contrast with the DoE regulation that such programmes are to be conducted outside the formal school day or during the vacations (Bengu, 1999). The fact that these workshops were organized by the DoE reveals a loophole in terms of policy making and its implementation within the department.

### **2.3.2.19 Teachers with scarce skills (subjects)**

The finding that educators in certain subject areas were more likely to leave than others may only be an indication that they perceive their skills in these categories to be more marketable than others, and that given a chance educators in all subject areas may want to leave (SACE, 2010). Arends & Paterson (2009); Diko & Letseka (2009) posit that the subject areas which are more likely to bring "teacher loss" are English, Mathematics and Science, given that South Africa already has a shortage of teachers in those particular subjects in both urban and rural public schools (De Villiers, 2007). As a result, in the South African context, there is consistently poor performance of learners in Mathematics and Science measured in terms of matric results (SACE, 2010).

Furthermore, according to DoE (2006), shortages are being experienced in scarce skills areas such as Mathematics, Science and Technology, Languages and Arts, and in the

Economic and Management sciences. Macdonald (1999) concurs that teachers with attractive employment alternatives tend to be those in areas such as the Sciences and Technical Education and Languages – areas of the curriculum that are considered a priority in realizing the aims of economic adjustment and the promotion of international understanding.

The above situation, for example, led to a situation whereby in Bojanala (Rustenburg) district, public schools found themselves fighting a losing battle against mine schools for teachers in the above mentioned subjects (Diko & Letseka, 2009). This is because mine schools offered highly competitive salary packages that public schools could not match (Ibid). This resulted in the recruitment of Science and Mathematics teachers from neighbouring Zimbabwe and other African countries (De Villiers, 2007; Diko & Letseka, 2009).

#### **2.3.2.20 Age**

Age is highly predictive of whether or not teachers stay or leave the profession (Houchins et al, 2004). Furthermore, literature indicates that younger teachers are more likely to leave schools or teaching entirely than older teachers, except those who are closest to retirement age (Barnes et al, undated; Croasmun et al, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Macdonald, 1999, Mbanjwa, 2010; Luft et al, 2003, Robinson & Smithers, 2005; Shen, 2001). “Teacher loss” is higher among young and old teachers compared to middle-aged ones, and among less experienced teachers compared to more experienced ones (Boyd et al, 2005). Houchins et al (2004) concur that typically, younger teachers and those reaching retirement leave at higher rates as compared to mid-career teachers.

Teachers who leave teaching, and those who intend to leave, are more likely to be less experienced (Ibid).

#### **2.3.2.21 Location and status of the school**

It is argued that high-poverty urban and rural districts are more likely to experience “teacher loss” (DoE, 2006; Hags-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). In South Africa there is an acute shortage of qualified teachers in rural schools compared to urban areas (Report of Ministerial Committee on Rural Education, 2005) and this is related to lack of resources found in schools and surrounding areas (SACE, 2010).

However, private school teachers are more likely to leave teaching altogether, but less likely to move to other schools, than are public school teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). Literature generally shows that teachers who work in low-achieving schools, and in those with high concentrations of poor / and or minority students, are more likely to move than other teachers (Allenworth et al, 2009).

Furthermore, schools with large concentrations of low-income, non-white, and low-achieving students are the most likely to experience high teacher turnover (Boyd, 2005). The focus of this attention associates the “teacher loss” problem with the shortage of high quality teachers in low-achieving schools, suggesting that teacher “teacher loss”—due to teachers either quitting the profession or transferring to a higher performing school—leaves low achieving schools with the least qualified teachers (Haycock as cited in Kritsonis & Terry, 2008). One of the pivotal causes of inadequate school performance is the inability of schools to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers (Kritsonis & Terry, 2008).

### **2.3.3. The consequences of “teacher loss”**

There are a number of reasons why “teacher loss” is perceived as problematic to the education system. It has been argued that “teacher loss” brings a lot of disruption in schools (Macdonald, 1999; Shen, 1997; Xaba, 2003). Xaba (2003) further states that a school is disrupted especially so when teachers leave the profession during the academic year or whilst engaged in critical projects in school. Furthermore, Shen (1997) regards high rates of “teacher loss” as disrupting programme continuity and planning, hindering student learning and increasing school districts’ expenditures on recruiting and hiring. High “teacher loss” rates produce a range of organizational problems for schools, such as discontinuity in professional development, shortages in key subjects, and loss of teacher leadership (Mbanjwa, 2010). Since teaching quality has been shown to be strongly associated with student learning, schools that cannot retain their best teachers are likely to see their future academic performance suffer (Ibid).

“Teacher loss” is frequently positioned as either a problem for work force planning and resources or an indicator of the relatively poor quality of school life and teacher morale (Macdonald, 1999). Furthermore, a culture of discontinuity often characterizes “teacher loss” in hard-to-staff schools in rural areas (Bennell, 2004; Berry, undated; Little, 2004). For instance, in South Africa there is an acute shortage of qualified teachers in rural schools compared to urban areas, and this is related to lack of resources found in schools and surrounding areas (SACE, 2010). This constitutes an incredible burden on the teacher and impacts negatively on both teaching and learning (Lumadi, 2008). However, Prince as cited in SACE (2010) argues that recruitment and retention

difficulties are also experienced in urban schools that serve large concentrations of poor and minority students, especially teachers of scarce skills.

It is clear that even if there are available teachers to fill vacant posts created due to “teacher loss”, this exercise does not come as easy as it may sound. Tsheko (2010) states that although there is a need to replace teachers who are lost to the teaching service due to various attrition routes, there is a general feeling among teachers that replacement of teachers takes a long time. Duffrin as cited in Xaba (2003) points out that it is difficult to fill the vacancies created by teachers who leave the profession. This means that learners sometimes sit without a teacher for a long time, losing so much learning as a result (Tsheko, 2010). This is also supported by Barnett and Whiteside (2003:202) who noted that teachers are difficult to replace, which leaves classes untaught for extended periods of time, due to problems with finding suitable replacements.

With regard to the above situation, Bengu (1999); ECDoE (undated), state that teachers can only be replaced after taking a leave of thirty (30) days or more. Even when these teachers eventually get employed, that is only on a temporal capacity which can only happen after 30 days (ECDoE, undated, IOL, 2007). Furthermore, administrative delays, where permanent posts must be advertised in bulletins issued by the DoE before they can be filled, also make it difficult for schools to fill vacant posts (Appleton et al, 2006:131). According to DoE (1998), any appointment, promotion or transfer to any post on the educator establishment of a public school or a further education and training institution, may only be made on the recommendation of the governing body of the public school or the council of the further education and training institution.

Hahs Vaughn & Scherff (2008); Houchins et al (2004); Luther & Richman (2011) argue that “teacher loss” creates teacher shortages that will cost the department a lot of money. As a result, monies that should be directed to student programs go to the recruitment and professional development of new teachers within the district (Luther & Richman, 2011). Hiring and educating new teachers puts a financial burden on the district and keeps resources from those who most need them: the students (Ibid). Moreover, this exercise is time consuming and detrimental to the learning of students (Ibid). Appleton et al (2006) raised a concern that when “teacher loss” is due to migration to other countries, the concerns are financial, as teacher training is often heavily subsidized, so governments are aggrieved to be paying to train people who subsequently teach in other countries.

Imazeki (as cited in Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008:22) adds that poor teacher retention rates can ultimately lead to substantial consequences on the quality of education provided to students. This is because “teacher loss” may ‘cream off’ the more effective teachers (Appleton as cited in De Villiers, 2007:69). Moreover, low performing schools rarely close the student achievement gap because they never close the teaching quality gap – they are constantly rebuilding their staff (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, undated). However, higher performing schools will have lower levels of “teacher loss”, and conversely, lower performing schools will have higher levels of “teacher loss” (Ibid).

According to South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) general secretary, Mugwena Maluleke, “teacher loss” has serious implications for education as a whole (Mbanjwa, 2010). The exit of teachers from the profession and the movement of

teachers to better schools are costly phenomena, both for the students, who lose the value of being taught by an experienced teacher, and to the schools and districts, which must recruit and train their replacements (Issue Brief, 2005). This is supported by Ingersoll (2001) who posits that whether those departing are moving to a similar job in another school or leaving the occupation altogether, their departures similarly impact and are impacted by the school.

More frequently and globally, the impact of “teacher loss” is viewed as an impediment to the educational, cultural and economic goals of schools and communities (Macdonald, 1999). Furthermore, discontinuity of staff can be a major inhibitor to the efficiency of schools in promoting student development and attainment (Ibid). For instance, where the leavers are those who are more successful and qualified, the result is a less capable pool of teachers to assume leadership positions (Thompson as cited in Macdonald, 1999). Ingersoll as cited in Xaba (2003) postulates that staffing problems are created when employees leave the organization and have to be replaced.

In contrast, it is argued (Allenworth et al, 2009), that “teacher loss” may even be good for schools, if it results in a reduction in conflict among staff or the loss of weaker teachers. Commonwealth Secretariat (2006) concur that international teacher migration can benefit schooling systems and prove to be a significant contributor to the professional development of teachers. Furthermore, it has been argued that attrition from the teaching profession may be good for other sectors of the economy as teachers with sound knowledge and skills move across employment sectors (Macdonald, 1999). But Ingersoll (2001) warns that this would create school staffing problems primarily due

to excess demand resulting from a number of teachers departing their jobs for various reasons, and that it would mean more workload for those left behind.

The following section explores different strategies for the retention of teachers.

## **2.4 HOW CAN “TEACHER LOSS” BE PREVENTED?**

“Teacher loss” translates, amongst other things, into shortages in teacher supply, costs in recruitment, training and mentoring, poor learner performance due to disruption of planning programmes and continuity, as well as overcrowded classes (Xaba, 2003). This poses a challenge to the education system to manage “teacher loss” and retain teachers (Ibid). The retention of public school teachers has been an issue of continuing concern around the globe (Shen, 1997). Therefore, managing or preventing “teacher loss” requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders in the education system (Xaba, 2003). The DoE obviously has a major role to play in this regard (Ibid). Shen, (2001) posits that there is no single solution for the issue of “teacher loss” prevention, a multiple perspective approach to this issue needs to be in place.

According to Macdonald (1999), strategies presented to manage or prevent “teacher loss” rates are at one level clearly linked to the research on the causes of “teacher loss”. Therefore, researchers cannot talk about the strategies for the prevention of “teacher loss” without mentioning the causes, since these are interrelated (Bennell, 2004; Buckley et al, 2004; Houchins et al, 2004; Macdonald, 1999). If these causes can be addressed properly, then there will be a decrease in the rate at which teachers are lost (Houchins et al, 2004; Macdonald, 1999). According to Houchins et al (2004), work

environment and school climate, which include salary, administrative support, colleague support, induction and mentoring; professional development, teacher roles and paper work, are highly correlated with “teacher loss” as well as prevention thereof.

In addressing working conditions, schools and school systems have sought to protect and /or improve the physical, social and professional dimensions of teaching together with enhancing teachers’ living standards and relationships with the community (Macdonald, 1999). Buckley et al (2004) argue that the benefits of facility improvement for “teacher loss” prevention can be equal to or even greater than those from pay increases. Teachers who rate their work environment as positive are more likely to stay on the job (Houchins et al, 2004).

#### **2.4.1 Salaries / financial incentives**

It has been argued that there is a correlation between teacher salaries and “teacher loss” prevention (Herbert & Ramsay, 2004; Houchins et al, 2004; Imazeki, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Shen, 2001). There is a call for rises in teachers’ salaries so that they are commensurate with other professionals with equivalent qualifications (Macdonald, 1999). Increasing salaries is the single most direct and effective way to reduce “teacher loss”, though not always practical due to fiscal limitations (Buckley et al, 2004; Chapman as cited in Macdonald, 1999). However, in South Africa collective agreement number 3 of 2006 states that the salary level of a principal is determined by the grading of the school, which is done in accordance with the number of educator posts allocated to a school in terms of national norms (ELRC, 2006). If the school is up-graded, i.e. post allocation exceeds the number of posts required for the up-grading of the school, the salary of the principal increases (Ibid).

Furthermore, state that higher salary is highly correlated with “teacher loss” prevention (Herbert & Ramsay, 2004; Houchins et al, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Shen, 2001). Houchins et al (2004) further state that teachers with higher salaries tend to stay on the job longer as compared to those with lower salaries. Salary increases and other financial incentives are often thought to be a primary motivator for teachers to remain in the classroom (Herbert & Ramsay (2004). Imazeki (2005) uses data from Wisconsin and finds that teacher retention is higher when salaries are higher.

Most frequently, and across varying socio-economic contexts, remuneration has attracted attention as a primary incentive to contain or decrease “teacher loss” together with attracting quality candidates into the teaching profession (Macdonald, 1999). To address shortages of qualified teachers and teacher attrition, states and districts have begun to turn to financial incentives to retain qualified teachers and recruit new ones to particular districts and subjects (Herbert & Ramsay, 2004). Shen (2001) argues that special incentives and programmes must be provided to teachers working in schools with disadvantaged students. Furthermore, remuneration has been closely linked to the somewhat elusive notion of increasing the status of the teaching profession which occupies a central, yet to date ill-defined, place in the “teacher loss” debate (Macdonald, 1999).

#### **2.4.2 Administrative support**

Administrators influence the conditions in which teachers work, therefore, it is not surprising that administrative support, or lack of it thereof, has been consistently linked

to “teacher loss” (Billingsley, 1993; Luther & Richman, 2011). Chapman as cited in Macdonald (1999:840) adds that these impact upon attrition / loss when they fail to be a sufficient incentive for teachers to remain in the profession. Administrators should create more democratic environments and the commanding attitudes should be eliminated (Luther & Richman, 2011). Administrators should support and encourage open two-way communication, shared leadership, and allow the teachers to feel a sense of empowerment (Minarik et al as cited in Luther & Richman, 2011).

A substantial research literature provides evidence that school leaders matter for teachers (Boyd et al, 2005). Increased administrative support leads to higher levels of commitment; lower stress and increased job satisfaction (Houchins et al, 2004). These are all closely correlated to the teachers’ intent to stay or their actual staying on the job (Ibid). Furthermore, a much larger research base documents principals' effects on school operations, through motivating teachers, identifying and articulating vision and goals, developing high performance expectations, fostering communication, allocating resources, and developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning (Boyd et al, 2005)). Supportive and encouraging school administrators are four (4) times more likely to keep teachers as compared to those that are unhelpful or discouraging (Houchins et al, 2004). Boyd et al add that principals also affect the instructional quality of schools through the recruitment, development, and retention of teachers.

In addressing the issue of “teacher loss”, intrinsic rewards / motivation by the school management teams are very helpful to those left at school (Arends & Paterson, 2009; Billingsley, 1993; Macdonald, 1999; Shen, 2001; Xaba, 2003). The absence of psychic rewards can result in teacher dissatisfaction, burnout, and ultimately the desire to leave

teaching (Rosenholts as cited in Billingsley, 1993:158). Appreciation of intrinsic merits of the teaching profession helps teachers remain in teaching (Shen, 2001). Furthermore, in order to address “teacher loss” at school level, school managers should be equipped with skills to create conditions that instill intrinsic motivation for teachers (Arends & Paterson, 2009; Xaba, 2003). This implies that the DoE must ensure that support is offered to schools via management development support programmes aimed at capacitating school managers in this regard (Ibid).

Furthermore, several researchers have found that positive job satisfaction is significantly related to teachers’ intention to stay on the job (Houchins et al, 2004). Most important, is the need to capacitate school managers with competencies to influence school organizational characteristics and conditions so as to foster teacher job satisfaction and commitment (Xaba, 2003). For example, as satisfaction with job design and intrinsic job value increases, so does the teachers’ intention to stay in teaching (Ibid).

### **2.4.3 Colleague support**

Closely related to administrative support is increased colleague support, which has a positive impact on “teacher loss” prevention (Houchins et al, 2004). Literature suggests that schools should develop emergency management plans that foster an open and supportive school climate within the school (Buckley et al, 2004). These should include colleague support, active parent involvement, and demonstrate a strategy, including

clear staff roles and responsibilities, for responding to losses that impact students and staff (Billingsley, 1993; Buckley et al, 2004; Houchins et al, 2004; Macdonald, 1999).

#### **2.4.4 Induction and mentoring**

One way to reduce “teacher loss” rate is through supportive induction and mentoring programmes (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). Croasmun et al (2006); Whitaker as cited in Houchins et al (2004) suggest that the prevention of “teacher loss” can be increased through mentoring. Furthermore, comprehensive induction programs have been proven to increase teacher retention and improve student achievement (Barnes et al, undated; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Robinson & Smithers, 2005). Induction activities may include mentoring programmes, professional development, new teacher orientations, networking opportunities, or similar activities (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). Robinson & Smithers (2005) further claim that this intervention reduces “teacher loss” rates by half and improves teaching quality and student performance. With a strong induction programme, good teachers stay, weaker teachers are weeded out and teaching quality is improved (Ibid).

#### **2.4.5 Professional development**

To empower teachers is one of the ways to improve the prevention of “teacher loss” (Shen, 2001). Professional development of teachers should be recognized through ongoing appraisal and rewards (Macdonald, 1999). Moreover, access to quality pre-service education which provides teachers with a sound platform of knowledge and skills, followed by ongoing access to quality in-service education, are also seen as essential to establishing and retaining teachers’ interest and effectiveness (Chapman as

cited in Macdonald, 1999). Empowering teachers and giving them more influence over school and teaching policies are also associated with “teacher loss” prevention (Macdonald, 1999; Luther & Richman, 2011).

#### **2.4.6 Teacher roles and paper work**

Teaching environment is also influenced by how realistic teachers perceive their roles (Houchins et al, 2004)). Teachers who view their roles as unmanageable, ambiguous, unrealistic, and having conflicting purposes have a greater intent of leaving the teaching profession (Ibid). Furthermore, teachers need to be released from burdensome administrative tasks and have more time and responsibility for teaching (Macdonald, 1999). Houchins et al (2004) further claim that a principal source of role problems for teachers is excessive paperwork. Moreover, teachers who believe that they do not have an adequate amount of time to complete their paperwork are at greater risk of leaving teaching (Ibid). This is particularly true when paperwork is contradictory, unnecessary and takes them away from teaching (Houchins et al, 2004).

#### **2.4.7 Flexible career pathways**

To reduce “teacher loss” rates, teachers should be emphasized as lifelong learners through improved career structures, opportunities for advancement and in-service education and support (Macdonald, 1999). This will help in overcoming flat and narrow career structures that sometimes drive teachers away, and serve as a priority in retaining teachers (Ibid). The revising of salary scales and new career paths are a step

in the correct direction in reducing demand caused by teachers exiting the profession (Teacher Incentive Study, 2006).

Furthermore, flexible career pathways whereby teachers are not expected to work full time, all years, continuously to retirement with the one job description, are claimed to enhance teachers' satisfaction (Buckley et al, 2004; Macdonald, 1999; Shen, 2001). Flexibility might also include job-sharing and team-teaching (Wagner as cited in Macdonald, 1999). With such flexibility and varied responsibility, should come different career profiles which in turn need to be recognized and rewarded in order to keep teachers in the classroom (Macdonald, 1999).

#### **2.4.8 Legislation**

Policies for teacher attraction, distribution, and retention need to take into consideration a range of issues that lead to “teacher loss” (Pitsoe as cited in Mbanjwa, 2010). These policies should have incentives which increase the attractiveness of teaching as a career, reward teachers for effective performance, and encourage and maintain high levels of enthusiasm for the teaching process (Robinson & Smithers, 2005). Policy suggestions include building into teaching a career ladder, empowering teachers, providing incentives to teachers working in schools with more disadvantaged students, and taking a multiple perceptive approach to the issue of “teacher loss” prevention (Shen, 2001). One of the policy implications of “teacher loss” is that there is an urgent need to build a career ladder into teaching, as teaching is often characterized as having a flat ladder or being “careerless” (Shen, 2001).

The greatest threat to the prevention of “teacher loss” in the teaching profession, particularly in South Africa, appears to be ways in which provincial and regional education offices appropriate teacher appointment policies and procedures (Diko & Letseka, 2009). Teacher recruitment and appointment procedures are open to abuse (ibid). One may argue that the availability of a number of qualified teachers in South Africa, who are currently unemployed, can be a solution to the problem of “teacher loss”. But Ingersoll (as cited in Houchins et al, 2004:376) points out that this only addresses the problem to some degree, but does not address the most problematic issue of “teacher loss”.

The latter can be attributed to the fact that the supply of newly qualified teachers is substantially less than the number of teaching posts that become vacant each year (De Villiers, 2007). In this regard, in South African context, Basic Education Director-General, Bobby Soobrayan, expressed concern that the number of teachers who quit the profession (between 2005 & 2008) was higher than the number of teachers who were trained each year (Mbanjwa, 2010). Gauteng department of education also reported that there were more permanent teachers leaving than entering the system (Xaba, 2003).

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter dealt with reviewed literature and theoretical framework for the study. In so doing, “teacher loss” was conceptualised, the reasons for “teacher loss” as well as the strategies for the retention of teachers were discussed. In conceptualising “teacher loss”, various definitions were given to clarify the concept. Then, the factors that

contribute to “teacher loss” were discussed, which either can be permanent or temporal, or voluntary or involuntary. Furthermore, the consequences of “teacher loss”, which were found to be negative given the kind of disruption “teacher loss” brings to the schools, were also discussed in this chapter. Lastly, the strategies for the prevention of “teacher loss” were also discussed, which were found to be much more related to the factors that contribute to “teacher loss”.

However, there is scarcity of literature that talks to how schools cope with “teacher loss”. Therefore, this study focuses on the strategies that schools use to cope with “teacher loss”.

The following chapter presents and discusses the research methods and methodology for this study.

# CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”. The aim of this chapter was to explain the research methods and methodology that were employed by the study. In other words, this chapter presents the research methodology used in the study, and how the research process unfolded. The chapter also gives an account of the research methods and designs adopted, including measures to ensure trustworthiness, ethical considerations, data collection and data processing, as well as sampling of the research sites and participants. The research methodology was therefore outlined with reference to the research questions, problem and aim of this study.

This chapter is structured as follows:

- research approach
- research paradigm
- research design
- data collection methods
- sample and sampling
- data collection phases
- access to participants and research sites
- data analysis

- ethical issues
- data trustworthiness
- triangulation
- validity and reliability

Gough (2001) refers to methodology as a theory and analysis of how the research should proceed. Research methodology can also be described as the explanation of the plan of how the researcher intends conducting the research (Hood, 2008), and specifies how researchers may go about practically studying whatever they believe in (Vapi, 2007). According to Cohen and Manion (as cited in Maponya, 2010) research methodology means the range of approaches used in the educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction.

The next section discusses the approach that was used in the study.

### **3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

To investigate how schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, this study subscribes to a qualitative research approach, which appears appropriate for the research questions posed for this particular study. Patton (2002) suggests that when conducting qualitative research, the researcher must be sure that the approach fits the research questions, which justifies the approach followed in this particular study.

Qualitative research is an approach that utilizes methods that seek to discern the quality, as opposed to the quantity, of its subject (Flamand, 2003). It is, therefore, more

concerned with explaining the *why* and *how* of a phenomenon rather than the *what*, *when* and *where* (Ibid). For example in this particular study, the researcher was more concerned with how the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, than the factors that contribute to “teacher loss”. Furthermore, qualitative research is an approach that explores the richness, depth, and complexity of phenomena, and produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Neill, 2006). This suggests that in this study, the researcher did not use a questionnaire to determine how many people have come up with a certain answer to the questions posed, but have rather used more qualitative instruments such as interviews and document analysis and looked for emerging themes or categories in their responses in order to draw his own conclusions.

Maree (2007) takes the definition further stating that a qualitative research approach is an umbrella term for a wide range of approaches intended at collecting rich, descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon with the aim of understanding a situation from the participant’s point of view. This is relevant to this study since the researcher used multiple methods of data collection (i.e. interviews and document analysis). This was done in order to get rich information and understand the situation in depth, as experienced and explained by the respondents. Qualitative research is concerned with meanings and the way people understand things, a concern with patterns of behaviour (Adam, 2010). Once again, in this study, the researcher was concerned with what does it mean for schools (teachers, SMTs, learners, etc.) to lose teachers. In other words, how did “teacher loss” affect teachers and learners and what implications did it bring for leadership and management of the school?

A qualitative researcher stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Furthermore, in doing their investigation, qualitative researchers tend to be interested in the meanings attributed to events by the research participants themselves, rather than with the identification of cause–effect relationships, nor work with variables that are defined by the researcher before the research process begins (Schwartz, 2009; Willig, 2001). This is in line with this study because the researcher did not come up with his own ideas of what schools are supposed to do in order to cope with “teacher loss”, but has rather depended on the respondents to provide information in order to draw his own conclusions. In other words, the researcher sought to understand the phenomenon as it was experienced and interpreted by the respondents, and took into consideration the reality and viewpoints of participants as they are the ones in the thick of things.

Qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study because during field work, which was the central activity of this study, the researcher was afforded an opportunity to have direct contact with the respondents. This was done in the respondents’ own environments, getting close to the people and situations being studied to personally understand the realities of the situation under study as experienced by participants (Partington, 2001, Patton, 2002). This was done for a period of time as well as through development of closeness in the social sense of shared experience, empathy and confidentiality (Ibid). This suggests that the key concern was to understand the phenomenon of interest (“teacher loss” in this case) from the participants’ perspectives,

not the researcher's. This also ensured that the most important voices are those of the respondents, and that the aim of the study was to explore the quality of the data, not the quantity. In a nutshell, the respondents, through their interaction with the researcher, were able to give in-depth information about how “teacher loss” has affected their school, as well as what strategies do they currently employ to cope with such loss, and whether those strategies are effective or not.

One of the major strengths of the qualitative approach is the depth to which explorations are conducted and descriptions are written, usually resulting in sufficient details for the reader to grasp the idiosyncrasies of the situation (Neill, 2006). Participants have the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail than is typically the case with quantitative methods (Mack *et al*, 2005). In turn, researchers have the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participant has provided (Ibid). Furthermore, as the central activity of this study was to conduct interviews and analyze documents, this produced qualitative data which consists of quotations, observations and excerpts from the analyzed documents (Patton, 2002). Then the qualitative data produced described, told a story of how the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, and took the readers inside the selected schools so that they know what it is like to be there (Ibid).

Qualitative research also has its limitations which the researcher needed to be aware of and respond to wisely (Neill, 2006). Schwartz (2009) posits that bias introduced by the researcher in the collection and analysis of the data remains a constant threat and that it is difficult to generalize findings from either a case study or results of a focus group.

This was responded to by ensuring that multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process were used, to corroborate information gathered from the interviews (Yin, 2003). This meant that for the purpose of this study, document analysis was also used in addition to the literature review and interviews to collect data. This provided opportunities for triangulation, since the researcher used more than one method of collecting data (Patton, 2002), in order to give more weight to the findings.

Another limitation is that the very subjectivity of the inquiry leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approaches and information (Adam, 2010). In response to this, the researcher ensured that he remained non- judgemental throughout the study, and reported the findings in a balanced way (Stenbacka, 2001), as Patton (2002) suggests that any credible research strategy requires that the researcher adopts a stance of neutrality with regard to phenomenon under study.

The next section explores the research paradigm adopted by the study.

### **3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVISM**

Paradigm is an important theoretical construct for illuminating fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality (Patton, 2002). It is a systematic set of beliefs and methods that provide a view of the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). According to Maree (2007), a paradigm helps the researcher to tell the story of the research by depicting a world that is meaningful, but subjective. Voce (2004) suggests that when the purpose of a study tries to understand the way in which people make meaning in their lives, the

appropriate research paradigm is interpretivism. This enabled the researcher to find out how schools adapted in times of teacher loss, from the participants' point of view.

Interpretivism, which is a qualitative approach, is the research paradigm adopted in this study. It is a way to gain insights through discovering meanings by improving our comprehension of the whole, and proposes that there are multiple realities, not single realities of phenomena, and that these realities can differ across time and place (Neill, 2006). In other words, the whole needs to be examined in order to understand phenomena. This means that the researcher was aware that there was many reasons for "teacher loss", and that different schools use different strategies to adapt to it, hence the use of multiple sources of data as well as two different schools that operate at different levels.

The reason for adopting interpretivism in this study was because it emphasizes human interaction with phenomena in their daily lives, and suggests a qualitative research approach (Dash, 2005). It was also used because of its nature to emphasize understanding and interpretation of phenomena and making meaning out of this process (Ibid). Cohen et al (2007) posits that interpretivism also advocates that the world should be studied in its natural state, rather than in controlled laboratory type experiments and with minimum intervention by a researcher. This means that through data collection process, the researcher was able to interpret, understand and analyze data as it was presented by the respondents, to find out what it means for schools to lose teachers, and what implications does that bring to leadership and management of those particular schools. Therefore, the choice to work in this paradigm indicates that

the researcher had an interest in investigating people within their contexts, in an attempt to make sense of their understanding and experience of the phenomenon under study.

Interpretivists deny what positivists assert, that humans can be studied using the same philosophical base as used in studying physical objects or other animals (Patton, 2002; Willig, 2001). Interpretivists assert that there is a difference between the subject matter of sociology and natural science. Humans are active, conscious beings; they make choices (Ibid). It follows that if we want to understand peoples' actions; we have first to understand them in the way that the participants do (Schwartz, 2009; Willig, 2001). This suggests that the best way to find out how schools adapted in times of “teacher loss”, was to get inside the selected schools, interview teachers themselves and analyze some relevant documents without having pre-conceived ideas about the situation under study.

Furthermore, interpretivists, as opposed to positivists, also suggest that social reality is not out there waiting to be discovered and that positivist ontology is a sort of stimulus response model of human behaviour. People do not simply respond to external stimuli but actively interpret the world (Willig, 2001). One who calls himself an interpretivist implies that what distinguishes him from others who see things differently is that he interprets the world while they do something else, and presumably something less legitimate (Primus, 2008). Based on this study, the phenomenon under study (“teacher loss”) was interpreted and understood on the basis of what the respondents provided and what information had been gathered from the analyzed documents. That made the findings more legitimate.

The next section explores the research design that that the study adopted.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: A CASE STUDY**

A research design is a plan, structure and strategy so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Kumar, 2005, Trochim, 2006), and provides the glue that holds the research project together (Trochim, 2006). The plan is a complete scheme or program of the research (Ibid). Leedy & Omrod (2001) warn that in planning a research design, it is very important to select a viable research problem but also to consider the kind of data required and a feasible means of collecting and interpreting such data. But Yin (2003) simply defines a research design as a logical plan for getting from here to there. With reference to this particular study, 'here' refers to the research questions posed for the study, and 'there' refers to some conclusions drawn based on the collected data. In a nutshell, the research design used provided the overall structure for the procedures that the researcher followed, the data that the researcher collected, and the analysis that the researcher conducted (Leedy & Omrod, 2001).

Patton (2002) suggests that when the purpose of the study is to acquire a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases, an appropriate research design is a case study, which is a qualitative approach. A case study refers to the study of a person, a small group, a single situation, or a specific "case", which involves extensive research, including documented evidence of a particular issue or situation, and the conclusion reached following the study (Holetzky, 2010). In line with the above statement, Yin (2003) states that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. In other

words, a case study is an in-depth investigation into a specific and relatively small area of interest (Gummesson, 2000), and is not intended as a study of the entire organization, but rather intended to focus on a particular issue, feature or unit of analysis (Anderson, 2007; Shuttleworth, 2008). In this study, multiple sources of evidence used were interviews and document analysis, and the area of interest is “teacher loss” (i.e. how the selected schools adapted to it), not the whole organizational issues.

A case study design was used in this study because its findings usually provide a rich and holistic description of the case and its context (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, a case study design is also flexible and involves using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process and is applicable to real-life, contemporary, human situations (Patton, 2002, Soy, 1997; Yin, 2003). It also attempts to shed light on phenomena by studying in-depth a single case example of the phenomena (Neill, 2006), or used primarily when researchers wish to obtain an in-depth understanding of a relatively small number of individuals, problems, or situations (Patton as cited in Lisle, 2006). The case can be an individual person, an event, a group, or an institution (Cohen et al, 2007; Gillham, 2000; Neill, 2006).

Based on this particular study, the case is the two (2) schools. Stake (2005) posits that when a number of cases are studied, with the aim to investigate a certain phenomenon, then that process is called a multiple-case study or a collective-case study. Because two (2) schools were investigated in this particular study, this indicates that the researcher has conducted a multiple-case study, but not a comparative study. The multiple-case study design allows the researcher to explore the phenomena under study

through the use of a replication strategy (i.e. to obtain similar results or to explore and confirm or disprove the patterns identified in the initial cases) (Lisle, 2006). It was therefore, anticipated that the researcher would obtain similar (not the same) results from the two (2) selected schools since they represent different phases (i.e. High school and Primary school).

A case study is also particularly useful when the researcher needs to understand particular people, problems or situations in great depth, and when information-rich cases can be found which provide great insight into the phenomenon in question (Trochim, 2006), which is the case in this particular study. The phenomenon in question in this particular study is “teacher loss”, which meant that a case study design was relevant since it would allow the researcher to investigate how schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, in depth, with interviews and document analysis making the findings information-rich. It also allowed the researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events and to answer the ‘how’ and ‘what’ research questions posed for the study (Vapi, 2007), as well as provide a much richer and more vivid picture of the phenomenon under study than other more analytical methods (Marshall & Rossman as cited in Lisle, 2006).

The next section explores data collection methods that were used in the study.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

O’Leary (2004) defines data collection methods as the techniques used to collect data. In addition to that, Bernard (2002) describes data collection as the steps that involve

setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials and establishing the protocol for recording the information. According to Yin (2003), there are different types of data collection methods associated with case studies, which include document analysis, archival records, interviews, direct observation and others. For the purposes of this study, only two data collection methods were used, which were Interviews and Document Analysis.

### **3.5.1 Interviews**

Interviews are a form of conversation in which someone asks a question and someone else responds (Hood, 2008). With the research interview, the conversation is turned into a research tool (Ibid). An interview is an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee; it is also referred to as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest for production of knowledge (Cohen et al, 2000). Interviewing is a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in a communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic (Janesick, 2004).

Furthermore, research interview has been defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by the researcher on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation (Ibid). In line with the above, Cohen et al (2007) describes interviews as a means of accessing what a person knows and are used to give respondents chance to narrate their stories.

Interviews were used to collect data in this study because they are often used in order to clarify and explore issues in qualitative research (Silvermann, 2000), as that is the central concern of this study. This procedure allowed the researcher to gain access to the “real life” contexts of the selected schools, their participants and their environment (Yin, 2005). In addition to that, Yin (2003) claims that interviews are the most vital sources of case study information and that they have rich data. They also provide a natural platform for interacting with people and give the researcher an opportunity to get to know people intimately so that he can really understand how they think and feel (Kelly as cited in Vapi, 2007). Through their cooperation, the researcher and participants generate a meaningful research narrative which is actually authored by the researcher and respondents (Silvermann, 2000). However, the narrative should always be understood as a limited and composite picture of the participant’s realities, never the whole story (Ibid).

Interviews can be categorized as structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Yin, 2003). With structured interviews, the researcher engages in a discussion/conversation with one, two or a group of people in a professional manner (Hitchcock & Hughes as cited in Adams, 2010). Unstructured interviews have an implicit research agenda and questions emerge typically from a conversation (Hitchcock & Hughes as cited in Adams, 2010). They also allow the interviewer to introduce new material into the discussion which the researcher had not thought of before hand but only arose during the course of the interview (Ibid). On the other hand, semi-structured interviews involve conducting intensive individual interviews with small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation (Boyce & Neal, 2006). Patton

(2002) defines semi structured interviews as a flexible process that allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand interviewee's responses.

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interview was used to collect data because of its nature to allow the interviewer to be in control of the process of obtaining information from the interviewee, but is also free to follow new leads as they arise (Cohan & Crabtree, 2006; Partington, 2001). This type of interview is relevant in this particular study since it allowed the respondents to be free to express their views, feelings, ideas, etc. about the issue of "teacher loss" that have affected their school. The respondents consisted of the principal, 1 SMT member (HOD) and 2 post level 1 teachers from each school. This goes without saying that four (4) people from each school were interviewed in order to understand the phenomenon in question. The use of this method helped to respond to the following research questions – What is the teachers' conception of "teacher loss? What strategies do schools use to cope with teacher loss? What are the implications of teacher loss for leadership and management of schools?

Reinharz as cited in Hoods (2008) notes that semi-structured interviews maximize both discovery and description. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. According to Greef (2002), semi-structured interviews are deemed appropriate particularly in order to understand the world from the participant's point of view. This is also the type of interview where the interviewer and respondents engage in a formal interview (Cohan &

Crabtree, 2006). Moreover, in this type of interview, the interviewees are allowed a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts and enable certain responses to be questioned on greater depth (Horton et al, 2004), and thus, making it information rich.

A semi-structured interview guide was used in this study (see appendix C, D & E), and one of the techniques used was tape-recording, with the interviewees' consent. Cohen & Crabtree (2006) suggest that since semi-structured interviews often contain open-ended questions and discussions may diverge from the interview guide, it is generally best to tape-record interviews and later transcript these tapes for analysis. Semi-structured interview guide served as a checklist of what the researcher needed to ask, and assisted him to work systematically (Thwalingca, 2007). The semi-structured guide also increases confidence that the data that is co-created will be comparable across the participants (Padula & Miller as cited in Hood, 2008). However, the flow of the interview rather than the order in a guide, determined when and how a question should be asked so as not to restrict the respondents. This list of interview questions must be arranged from simple to complex so that the interviewees can adjust and closely follow the questions, which will be open-ended and transparent (Govender, undated).

Central to conducting research, and more specifically qualitative research, is the researcher as research instrument (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). Researchers are an integral part of the research process; for many qualitative researchers they become the research instrument (Moore, 2010). Through being that research instrument the researcher becomes intimately involved with the participants, their stories and their lives (Ibid).

Since this is a qualitative study, the researcher was used as one of the research instruments when conducting those interviews. But De Vault as cited in Hood (2008) advises that researchers need to listen in ways that are 'personal, disciplined and sensitive. This is because the researcher is the key person in obtaining data from respondents, facilitating the flow of information, identifying cues, setting the respondents at ease, and it is through the researcher's facilitative interaction that a context is created where respondents share rich data regarding their experiences and life world (Moore, 2010; Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). This also contributed to a relaxed atmosphere for the respondents because they were listened to. Also, in the data analysis stage, it is also the researcher who is instrumental in translating and interpreting data generated from the respondents into meaningful information (Ibid).The above explanation justified the use of the researcher as research instrument in this particular study.

### **3.5.2 Document Analysis**

Cohen et al (2007) state that documents are pre-produced text that has not been generated by the researcher, and they often refer to more than just a paper; but there is a hidden picture in them that needs to be interpreted by the researcher. Document analysis, therefore, involves the study of existing documents, either to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings which may be revealed by their style and coverage (Ritchie et al as cited in Vapi, 2007).

The purpose of looking into documents is to analyze and make a comparative analysis of collected data, or to provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources, for purposes of validity (Vapi, 2007; Yin, 2003). In this particular study,

document analysis helped to compare and corroborate data collected from interviews. Gray (2004) adds that in exploring organizational records, data is compared with other sources, making it valuable data. Documentary sources also had an advantage of being reviewed repeatedly and that they have a longer life span of events (Ibid).

Document analysis is another method that was used to collect data in this study. Kelly (2002) proposes that document analysis can be a useful technique for investigating decision making within organizations. Relevant documents such as leave register, time / attendance register; minutes of staff and SMT meetings, were analyzed in order to access relevant and useful information about the study. The aim of collecting these documents was to find out whether the selected schools have put in place any policies guiding “teacher loss” at the school, and whether the issue of how to adapt to it is up for discussion in the stakeholders’ meetings at school.

Document analysis created an opportunity for triangulation, which can be defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse view points or standpoints cast light upon a topic (Olsen, 2004). The mixing of data types, known as data triangulation, is often thought to help in validating the claims that might arise from an initial pilot study (Ibid). In addition to that, Patton as cited in Golafshani (2003) advocates the use of triangulation by stating that triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Ibid).

Furthermore, documentary evidence also acts as a method to cross-validate information gathered from interview and observation, given that sometimes what people say may be

different from what people do (Noor, 2008). It was anticipated that analyzing the above mentioned documents would enable the researcher to find answers to the research sub-question, “what do the strategies currently employed by the selected schools reveal about the possibilities and limitations that these schools are confronted with”? This was revealed by the minuted discussions in their different stakeholder meetings. Documentation also allowed the researcher to make inferences about the selected schools. But Yin (2003) warns that such inferences should only be treated as clues worthy of further investigation rather than as definitive findings because they could later turn out to be false leads.

Since a case study design was adopted for this study, more than one method was used to collect data. The aim was to eliminate any biased views that the researcher might be tempted to employ. Therefore, different phases such as piloting, interviews as well as document analysis appeared appropriate as data collection methods (phases) for this study. The motivation for the use of multiple methods of data collection supports what Yin (2003) observes, that there is no single source that has complete advantage over another, but that sources do complement one another.

The next section explores the sampling techniques that were used in the study for the research sites as well as the participants.

### **3.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

After identifying a research question as well as the design, a decision must be taken to identify whom or what the focus of the research would be. In other words, the researcher had to decide on a representative sample of the whole population since he

could not interview all the people. Then, the sample size should be directly related to the purpose of the study, the research problem, the major data collection technique and the availability of information-rich participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001).

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Mugo, undated). When dealing with people, it can be defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of the study (Ibid). This view is supported by De Vos et al (2002) who further state that a sample comprises the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study and can be viewed as a subset of measurement drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested. A sample may provide the researcher with needed information quickly, instead of dealing with large numbers of people, which is time consuming (Mugo, undated).

On the other hand, sampling can be referred to as the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations, etc.) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen (Trochim, 2006). It is a process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group (Kumar, 2005). This must be done whenever one can gather information from only a fraction of the population of a group or a phenomenon which one wants to study (Adam, 2010). According to Arksey & Knight (as cited in Thwalingca, 2007), sampling needs to be done thoughtfully, since the sample of respondents or informants affects information

that will be collected, and determine the sort of claims that can be made about the meaning of the information.

Mack *et al* (2005) state that there are three most commonly used sampling methods in qualitative research. These are purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a special non-probability method for developing a research sample where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances (Katz, 2006). It is also a sampling technique often used in hidden populations which are difficult for researchers to access, or in cases where a sampling frame is hard to establish and it is assumed that cases are affiliated through links that can be exploited to locate other respondents based on existing ones (Ibid).

On the other hand, quota sampling focuses on issues of gender, age, residence, class, profession, marital status, etc. (Mack *et al*, 2005), which was not the focus for this particular study and as such they were not used.

Purposive sampling is the procedure that requires the researcher to select samples that are rich with information needed as for the research and are fit for the study (Trochim, 2006). Cohen *et al* (2007) add that information-rich cases are those from which one can learn great about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study. This type of sampling technique was used in this study since the researcher was looking to identify only schools that have suffered “teacher loss”, and respondents in those particular schools. This was because these were the schools and teachers who knew, in-depth, what it meant to suffer “teacher loss”, and the implications of such phenomenon for

leadership and management of the school, hence they were regarded as the ones who will be able to give rich information.

### **3.6.1 Sampling the research sites**

Two (2) schools from East London district were selected for this research and were both located in the rural areas. In this study, by rural areas, the researcher refers to those areas with poor background, which were also far away from town. These are referred to as school A and school B throughout the research report to retain their anonymous status. The criterion that was used in their selection was one (1) primary (school A) and one (1) high school (school B). Not that it's a comparative study, but the researcher wanted to find out how schools at different levels cope with "teacher loss", in order to build a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study. It was anticipated that there would be differences since there are also differences in the way they conduct their day-to-day activities.

Schools were selected based on their geographical proximity and accessibility. This suggests that schools were selected conveniently since they came from the same circuit as that of the researcher, which made them easily accessible to the researcher. Only schools that had suffered "teacher loss" were considered for this study, as they were considered information-rich schools. These schools were identified with the help of the circuit manager.

### **3.6.2 Sampling the respondents**

The sample of the respondents consisted of principals, post level 1 teachers and members of school management teams of the selected schools affected by “teacher loss” in the East London district. This means that four (4) teachers from each school (i.e. 2 post level 1, a principal & 1 from SMT) made up the sample size. Post level 1 teachers were selected on the basis that they were regarded as the ones who had to implement any strategies that the school has decided on in order to cope with “teacher loss”. On the other hand, SMTs were selected since they were the ones to see to it that any suggestions or strategies to cope with “teacher loss” are being implemented, and to be able to see if they actually worked, in order to make some adjustments where necessary. Because of that, SMTs were able to provide in-depth information about the implications of “teacher loss” for leadership and management of the selected schools.

The sample was drawn purposively because it was done with a purpose in mind (Trochim, 2006) of getting information from teachers as well as the leadership and management of the selected schools. This was because in this sampling procedure, the aim is to select informants that are deemed information-rich (Saunders et al, 2003). Patton (2002) concurs that regardless of the kind of unit of analysis, the purpose of purposive sampling was to select information-rich cases whose study would illuminate the questions under study. This meant, therefore, that the selected schools, as well as the respondents were not chosen for any specific reason other than accessibility and the likelihood of obtaining information-rich cases.

The next section discusses the data collection phases for the study.

## **3.7 DATA COLLECTION PHASES**

In this study, data was collected in two (2) phases, the pilot study and the main research phase.

### **3.7.1 Pilot Study**

The first phase to collect data was through piloting. Shuttleworth (2010) states that if you are talking about a research project, a pilot is a mini piece of research which is used to make sure that the questions set are answerable and that the tools to be used actually work. In addition to that, a pilot study is a standard tool for research, allowing researchers to conduct a preliminary analysis before committing to a full-blown study (Ibid). Furthermore, Simon (2008) refers to a pilot study as a model of ones full research study but on a smaller scale. In other words, a small-scale rehearsal of the larger research designs (Shuttleworth, 2010; Strydom as cited in Smit, 2010).

The following justify the reasons for conducting a pilot study:

- To discover possible weakness, inadequacies, ambiguities and problems in all aspects of the research so that they can be corrected before the actual data collection takes place (Adam, 2010). The researcher learnt that people understood and responded better when simple language was used for an interview.
- To grip some practical aspects of establishing access, make contact and conduct the interview so as to become alert of own level of interviewing skills (De Vos et al, 2002). The researcher learnt that the interviewee

needed not be interrupted when he/she was responding to a question. That disrupts the flow of an interview. A follow up question or clarity should be asked once the respondent finishes response.

- To provide the researcher with a practice of interviewing techniques and the corrections of some mistakes in the interview questions (Mason as cited in Maponya, 2010). The researcher learnt that questions asked should be open ended to allow the interviewee to express him/herself freely.
- To test the feasibility, equipment and methods, to see if they actually work. (Shuttleworth, 2008). For training myself as an inexperienced researcher, allowing me to make mistakes without fear of failing the assignment (Ibid).
- To determine the next steps such as sample size, and the main aim is to make sure that the research planned will actually work (Ibid).
- When applying for approval from places such as ethics committee's and sponsors, pilot studies are usually asked for as it is an indication of a sound basis for the work (Ibid).
- The pilot study helps by providing data needed to plan the larger study and by identifying areas where Murphy's Law will strike. Murphy's Law says that anything that can go wrong will go wrong. The reason the researcher runs a pilot study is to ensure that the things that do go wrong, go wrong during the pilot study so that he can fix them before he starts the full study (Simon, 2008).

- Finally, information from the pilot will help the researcher to estimate resource requirements. How much time do I spend in each phase? How much money do I spend per phase? Both pieces of information are critical for preparing the budget for the researcher's full study (Ibid).

In this research, pilot study was conducted in one (1) school, which is not among the schools sampled for the main research. But the school had similar characteristics as those of the main study. The same instruments as the ones which were used in the main study were also used during the pilot phase. The reason for that was to identify any loopholes in the instruments of collecting data and to check whether strategies intended for the main research would be effective. This also helped the researcher to condition himself for the various kinds of reception he might get from different kinds of people who would participate in the main research (Madalane, 2008).

In conclusion, from the pilot study conducted, the following were the lessons learnt:

It is wise to negotiate access to the respondents verbally first, before the formal procedure of giving them consent forms to sign. This helped to ease any tension that may occur and the researcher got a chance to chat and familiarize himself with the participant before the actual interview.

Participants expressed themselves freely and confidently, and provided rich data when they were allowed to code switch. This was because they were not too cautious or afraid of making mistakes using the foreign language. This also allowed them to dwell as much as they could in their responses.

When tape recording was part of the interview process, it was wise to bring two (2) recording devices so as to have a backup when a technical problem occurs. This, ensured that the interview carried on as planned, instead of an interview without recording.

Even if the researcher has an appointment with the participants on a certain date, it is wise to phone before going to the research site. This is to confirm whether the participants are still available for the interview, and whether there are any adjustments that need to be made in terms of time of the interview.

### **3.7.2 The main research**

In this phase, data was collected in two (2) selected schools in the East London district, using interviews and document analysis as data collection methods. The selected schools were different from those of the pilot study, but had similar characteristics in terms of the phenomenon under investigation.

The next section discusses how access was gained to the research sites as well as the participants.

## **3.8 ACCESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH**

### **SITES**

Formal letters to the Provincial Department of Education, to East London district as well as to the principals of the respective schools, as gatekeepers (Saunders et al, 2003), were written to request permission to conduct research (see appendix B). Research

objectives were also explained in detail to ensure that everyone concerned knew what the research was all about. Access to the respondents was negotiated verbally as well as with consent forms filled and signed by each respondent (see appendix F). This was to ensure that access to the site and research participants as well as cooperation were secured. This exercise ensured that ground work for data collection was properly prepared and only after securing their permission was the field work mounted.

The next section discusses the data collection process that was followed in the study.

### **3.9 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

As mention earlier, data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Interviews with the post level 1 teachers as well as the HODs from both schools were conducted during break time in the classroom. None of the respondents showed any reluctance to participate in the study. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes and was done on a separate date for each of the participants. Break time was regarded as a convenient time for the interview so as not to disrupt teaching and learning at school. The classroom was regarded as an appropriate venue for the interview since the learners were not in class, and they could not disrupt the interview process. This meant that the researcher had an opportunity to be alone with each participant without any disruption.

However, interviews with both principals were conducted in their respective offices after school. This was an agreement between the principals and the researcher. Conducting interviews after school was also aimed at not disrupting any day to day running of the

school. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes, and the principals willingly gave as much information as possible.

There were two (2) languages used during the interview process, namely: isiXhosa and English. IsiXhosa was used because it is the mother tongue of the researcher as well as respondents. On the other hand, English was used because it was the language used in the interview guide (see appendix C, D & E). The respondents were allowed to code switch between the two (2) languages when responding to the questions. This was done so as to create a more relaxed atmosphere for the interview process. Code switching also helped to make the respondents express themselves freely and thus, giving rich information. This really helped a lot because the respondents could dwell as much as they could in giving their responses, without being too cautious about making mistakes using the foreign language.

Furthermore, document analysis was carried out in the principal's office in both schools. The principal's office was regarded as a convenient place for this exercise since it is where all the analyzed documents could be found. Documents analyzed included teachers' attendance register, leave register as well as minute book for staff and SMT meetings from both schools. This was done on a separate date from that of the interviews. Analysis of documents was carried out under the supervision of the principal in school A, and the deputy principal in school B. In each school, the researcher took about forty five (45) minutes for document analysis process, which was also done after school hours in both schools.

The next section explores data analysis method that was adopted in the study.

### **3.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data is information gathered in a non-numeric form, e.g. interview transcripts, field notes, documents, etc. (Gibbs, Lewins & Taylor, 2005), which is what this study is all about. Therefore, qualitative data analysis is a non-mathematical analytical procedure, essentially about making sense of the data in order to answer the research question (Hood, 2008). According to Holland and Ramazanoglu (as cited in Hood, 2008), data analysis is the process of envisioning patterns, making sense, giving shape and bringing quantities of material under control.

Gibbs et al (2005) take the definition further by stating that qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. Terre Blanche et al (2002) concurs with this by maintaining that data analysis involves reading through your data repeatedly and engaging in activities of breaking the data down and building it up again in novel ways. It is usually based on an interpretative philosophy and the idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Gibbs et al, 2005). In a nutshell, to analyse data is to give sense to the information that the researcher has collected from the respondents.

Analysis begins when the data is first collected and is used to guide decisions related to further data collection (Neill, 2006; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). It is easy, when starting qualitative data analysis, both to write and code in ways that are nothing more than descriptive summaries of what participants have said or done (Gibbs et al, 2005). Given

that interviews were one of the methods used to collect data, the method of data analysis used in this study was thematic content analysis (TCA), which is the most foundational of qualitative analytic procedures, and in some way informs all qualitative methods (Anderson, 2007).

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data which may take the form of interview transcripts collected from research participants or other identified texts that reflect experientially on the topic of study (Ibid). In other words, in order to be satisfactory, my analysis of data should portray the thematic content of interview transcripts and documents analyzed by identifying common themes and categorizing patterns in the texts provided for analysis (Anderson, 2007; Gibbs et al, 2005; Neill, 2006). As it has been mentioned earlier, the most important voices in this study are those of the respondents, and every attempt reasonable was made to employ names for themes from the actual words of participants and to group themes in manner that directly reflects the texts as a whole (Anderson, 2007). This suggests that the researcher did not try to push his own feelings and thoughts about the themes or what the TCA themes may signify (Ibid). In summary, the core of qualitative data analysis in this study was a dual task. First, to select the data, and second to assign it to a category, which is a process called coding (Henning, 2004).

It is very important for the researcher to identify and know what he has before he starts doing something with it (Fox, 2008). This is because collecting and analyzing qualitative data is time consuming, and finding themes and extracting meaning can be a daunting task since the researcher will be faced with volumes of material (Ereaut, 2007, Gibbs et

al, 2005). But since this is a case study, and multiple data collection methods were used, opportunities to triangulate data were provided in order to strengthen the research findings and conclusions. So, regardless of the amount of data, the researcher was able to analyze it with less difficulty since he has identified, coded and knew his data well. This helped the researcher to be able to keep going back to the cases, re-read field notes, and listen again to the tape recorded interviews as he wrote the conclusions (Patton, 2002).

The next section explores the ethical issues that were observed in the study.

### **3.11 ETHICAL ISSUES**

It is imperative for the researcher when conducting a research to note that he is working with human beings and therefore needs to constitute behaviour that is acceptable in terms of protecting participants (Vapi, 2007). Thwalingca (2007) posits that any researcher needs to take into consideration the welfare of respondents. Since research studies raise issues that are not anticipated, Leedy & Omrod, 2001; Ritchie et al as cited in Vapi (2007) suggest that ethical issues have to be taken into consideration. A basic guideline is that the researcher should make sure that no individual suffers any adverse consequences as a result of the study and will also be attentive to maximizing positive outcomes of the research process (Fowler, 2002). Ethics looks at our proper relations, our duties to each other, individually and collectively (Blatner, 2006), and is about the principles and rules we use to decide which actions are acceptable and which are not, and to guide our relationships with others (SAAVI, 2008). Ethics is based on

what is good, right, fair and just (Ibid). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the following ethical issues were observed and respected throughout the study.

### **3.11.1 Informed consent**

Informed consent is one of the most important tools for ensuring respect for persons during research (Mack *et al.*, 2005). It can be defined as a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so that they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate (Ibid). With reference to this study, consent forms were issued to respondents which briefly described the expectations of them as participants (see appendix F). Participants were informed of all aspects of research; they might be reasonably expected to influence their willingness to participate in the research (Adam, 2010). They were also informed about what it is that they were volunteering for as well as a brief description of the purpose of the research. For instance, the use of the tape recorder was discussed upfront with the respondents, who all gave the researcher permission to use it.

The participants of this study were adults, which mean that they had the capacity to give informed consent directly. After giving a detailed explanation of the purpose and the objectives of the research to the participants, the researcher then formally (gave consent forms) requested their participation in the study. Mack *et al* (2005) suggest that these consent forms must be in the local language, use local terms, and be written for a language level that potential participants can easily understand. In this study, the consent forms given to the respondents were written in English, since teachers were regarded as the people who should understand English. The informed consent

documentation must include a description of any benefits to the participant (if any) or others that may reasonably be expected from the research (Ibid).

### **3.11.2 Voluntary participation**

When conducting research, the researcher should under no circumstances force participants to participate or continue unwillingly with the study (Mack *et al*, 2005). It is important to assure the potential participant that participation in the research is absolutely voluntary, and that he or she will be free to discontinue participation at any time if he or she so wishes (Ibid). This suggests that in this particular study, the principle of voluntary participation was adhered to, and that no one was forced to participate in the study. Only those who volunteered were allowed to participate.

Participants were also informed of their freedom to withdraw at anytime if they no longer felt interested or comfortable with the study. The researcher also indicated to the participants that refusal to participate or decision to withdraw would not result in any penalties or loss of benefits (if any) to which the participant was otherwise entitled (Leedy & Omrod, 2001). In other words, the researcher always checked if the participant was still willing to continue with the study before each and every interview was conducted. However, it was made clear how important the participant was and how much it meant that he or she completes the study (Ibid). This ensured that cooperation or maximum participation was secured, and that the participant willingly gave rich information.

### **3.11.3 Anonymity and confidentiality**

Confidentiality is about not disclosing the identity of study participants, and not attributing comments to individuals in ways that can permit the individuals or institution with which they are associated to be recognized, unless they have expressly consented to being identified (Richards & Schwartz, 2002). In most research studies, the participants provide information they may consider confidential or personal. This suggests that in the informed consent process, they must be informed about the degree of confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study and once the study is over (Leedy & Omrod, 2001). This is in line with what was followed in this study where participants were assured that their names would not be revealed anywhere and under no circumstances in the study, and that no personal or sensitive information would be released without their consent. In other words, the researcher did not invade the privacy of the respondents, but respected them and obeyed a strict code of ethics in respecting their anonymity when recording their responses (Thwalingca, 2007).

To that effect, the researcher did not use the respondents' real names and institutions to avoid the possibility of reluctance from the respondents once they suspect that the investigation is the invasion of their privacy (Ibid). This means that anonymity and confidentiality were maintained and respected throughout the study to ensure that no harmful effects came in the way of the respondents after the completion of the study. This is in support of Hood (2008) who posits that ethical considerations should ensure that the research causes no harm to the participants.

The next section discusses how data trustworthiness was ensured in the study.

### **3.12 DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to validity and reliability (Lincoln & Guba as cited in Jakuja, 2009). Ensuring trustworthiness is important because it evaluates its worth, checks whether the findings fit and are consistent (Ibid). To ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial (Golafshani, 2003). This trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability (Ibid). Morton (2001) states that by asking participants to examine field notes and early analyses, researchers can give back something to their participants and engage in member checks as a means of ensuring trustworthiness.

However, trustworthiness of a research should not end with the methods employed, but should continue to strive to represent findings in ways that honour the respondents' commitment to the study, as well as the researcher's commitment to their desire to contribute to the project to enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study (Ibid). Morrow & Williams (2009) suggest that a study is considered trustworthy if the researcher can clearly communicate what he has found and why it matters. The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is how an inquirer can persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth (Bryman & Burgess as cited in Maponya, 2010).

In this study, Hancock's (2002) model for assessing trustworthiness of qualitative data was adopted. The model involves four components, namely:

(a) Truth value, which asks if the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings for the subjects or informants and the context in which the study was

undertaken. In this study, the researcher ensured this by communicating findings with the respondents from which data was drawn and asking them to help with the verification of collected data.

(b) Credibility, which entails that a qualitative study is considered credible when it presents accurate description and interpretation of human experiences that people who also share that experience would immediately recognise the description. To ensure credibility of this study, the researcher shared the work with the respondents and gave them an opportunity to provide constructive criticism to the report.

(c) Applicability, which entails that research meets this criterion when the findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that have a degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts. In this study, the findings were not applied to other contexts other than the one under study.

(d) Data completeness, which entails that in any data resource, it is essential to meet requirements of current as well as future demand for information. Data completeness assures that the above criterion is fulfilled. In order to ensure data completeness in this study, the researcher ensured that he had all the data elements filled as required, by keeping all the interview transcripts, field notes as well as tape recorded information for future references.

The next section explores how triangulation was ensured in the study.

### **3.13 TRIANGULATION**

Triangulation is defined to be a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study (Creswell & Miller as cited in Golafshani, 2003). It is typically a strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings (Golafshani, 2003). Patton (2001) advocates the use of triangulation by stating that it strengthens a study by combining methods, and controls bias and establishes propositions (Mathison as cited in Golafshani, 2003). In qualitative research, particularly based on interviews, it is difficult to assess validity and reliability. One way of doing so is to compare data from different sources, hence triangulation (Thwalingca, 2007). The use of multi-data collection techniques contributes to the trustworthiness of data (Luswazi, 2007).

Triangulation may include multiple methods of data collection and data analysis, but does not suggest a fix method for all the researches (Golafshani, 2003), and that these multiple sources will help to check the integrity or extent to which inferences can be drawn from the data (Ritchie et al, 2003). For example in this particular study, triangulation was used for the purpose of collecting data from different sources (i.e. interviews and document analysis), to confirm or ascertain what is actually happening inside the selected schools. This is in acknowledgement of the fact that one method of collecting data would not be able to provide sufficient data, or no one method is 100% effective, but when they converge, their shortcomings are neutralized (Richie et al, 2003; Mouton as cited in Thwalingca, 2007). In a nutshell, this suggests that findings are more convincing if multiple sources have been corroborated (Vapi, 2007).

The next section explores how reliability and validity were ensured in the study.

### **3.14 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Gray (as cited in Vapi, 2007) argues that the question of validity and reliability is vital for case studies because of the reliance on data that is generated from either limited or particular samples. Patton (as cited in Golafshani, 2003) states that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study. Since this is a multiple-case study, these two concepts are deemed appropriate to use in the study in order to judge the quality of the study when analyzing data.

This corresponds to the question that "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln & Guba, as cited in Golafshani, 2003). To be more specific with the term of reliability in qualitative research, the term "dependability" can be used in qualitative research, which closely corresponds to the notion of "reliability" in quantitative research (Ibid). The consistency of data will be achieved when the steps of the research are verified through examination of such items as raw data, data reduction products, and process notes (Campbell as cited in Golafshani, 2003).

Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative paradigm. It is also through this association that the way to achieve validity and reliability of a research get affected from the qualitative researchers' perspectives which are to eliminate bias and increase the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition

about some social phenomenon (Denzin as cited in Golafshani, 2003) using triangulation.

### **3.14.1 Reliability**

The most important test of any qualitative study is its quality (Golafshani, 2003). Quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of generating understanding (Stenbacka as cited in Golafshani, 2003). In this study, the purpose was to generate understanding on how schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”, which is why reliability is a relevant concept for the study. In ensuring reliability in this study, the researcher adopted a stance of being an outsider in order not influence the findings of the study. (Ibid) describes the notion of reliability as one of the quality concepts in qualitative research which needs to be solved in order to claim a study as part of proper research. With regards to the researcher's ability and skill in any qualitative research, Patton (2001) states that reliability is a consequence of the validity in a study.

### **3.14.2 Validity**

The concept of validity is not a single, fixed or universal concept, but rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects (Winter as cited in Golafshani, 2003). It is suggested that (Creswell & Miller as cited in Golafshani, 2003) the validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study and his/her choice of paradigm assumption. Based on this particular study, the paradigm selected is interpretivism, which promotes understanding and multiple interpretations of a given phenomenon. As

a result, many researchers have developed their own concepts of validity and have often generated or adopted what they consider to be more appropriate terms, such as, quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). If the validity or trustworthiness can be maximized or tested, then more credible and defensible results may lead to generalizability which is one of the concepts suggested as the structure for both doing and documenting high quality qualitative research (Ibid). Since this is a case study, Patton (2001) suggests that generalizability is one of the criteria for quality case studies depending on the case selected and studied.

The question of replicability in the results does not concern qualitative researchers, as it is the case in quantitative research, but precision, credibility, and transferability provide the lenses of evaluating the findings of a qualitative research. Since this is not a quantitative research, and quality rather than quantity was considered, the researcher had to ensure validity by conducting a pilot study with a view to reduce errors in the actual research. This was carried out as phase 1 of the study.

### **3.15 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined the research methodology used in this study. This has been done with reference to the research questions, problem as well as the aim or purpose of the study. The research methods and methodology that were employed have also been explained in detail, i.e. research approach, research paradigm, research design, sample and sampling, data collection methods as well as analysis of data.

The following chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data as well as the discussion of findings.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to present and analyze data. These data were generated through the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. As has been indicated in chapter three, data presented was gathered from two schools in the East London district. For ethical reasons, these schools are referred to in the study as school A, which was a primary and school B which was a high school. Data collected aimed at responding to the following research questions:

Main Research Question: How do the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”?

- What is the teachers’ conception of “teacher loss”?
- What strategies do the selected schools use to cope with “teacher loss”?
- What do these strategies reveal about the possibilities and limitations that schools are confronted with?
- What implications does “teacher loss” have on leadership and management?

This chapter is structured as follows:

**4.1 Profiles**

**4.2 Data Presentation**

**4.3 Discussion of the findings**

## 4.1 PROFILES

### 4.1.1 Profiles of the research sites

**TABLE 4.1 Profiles of the research sites**

| SCHOOL OF NAME | TYPE AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL | QUINTILE | GRADES TAUGHT | LEARNER ENROLMENT IN 2010 | TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN 2010 |         | NUMBER OF TEACHERS LOST IN THE PAST 5 YEARS | NO. OF REPORTED VACANCIES IN 2011 |
|----------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---|-----------------------------------|
|                |                             |          |               |                           | Males                            | Females |   |                                   |
| A              | Rural Primary school        | 2        | R - 8         | 253                       | 1                                | 5       | 4   | 3                                 |
|                |                             |          |               |                           |                                  |         |   |                                   |
| SCHOOL         |                             |          |               |                           |                                  |         |   |                                   |
| B              | Rural High school           | 2        | 8 - 12        | 803                       | 9                                | 15      | 4   | 2                                 |
|                |                             |          |               |                           |                                  |         |   |                                   |

Table 4.1 above shows the profiles of the sites where the research was conducted. Two (2) schools were selected for this research. For ethical reasons, these schools are referred to as school A which is a primary school, and school B which is a high school. They are referred to as such throughout this research report.

The table further shows that both schools were located in the rural areas, and were both quintile 2. This suggests that the schools might have been disadvantaged schools with lack of facilities and resources to enhance teaching and learning. This also implies that

the community which the schools served might have a poor background, which might result in difficulty in retaining teachers. This was because, according to the DoE (2008), the schools that were quintile 1 and 2, and were considered to be situated in poorly resourced backgrounds.

Furthermore, the table indicates that schools A starts from grade R up to grade 8, while school B starts from grade 8 up to grade 12. This suggests that the learners in school A should range between the ages of four (4) and fourteen (14) years, whereas in school B the majority should be in their teens. Because of that, the researcher assumed that the strategies that can be implemented in the primary school to cope with “teacher loss” might not be the same as those implemented in the high school because of the age difference.

The table also indicates that there were more teachers in school B than in school A. This might be attributed to the fact that the enrolment of school B was more than that of school A. This may be due to the fact that school A reportedly depends on the children from only one village for their enrolment, since each village had its own primary school in the area of research. However, for the high schools, it was reported that there were only four in the area, which depended on the primary schools from different villages to act as their feeder schools, a situation which resulted in higher enrolment for school B.

The table further indicates that there was a shortage of teachers from both schools (especially school A), as illustrated by the teacher- learner ratio from each school, which is 1:42 in school A and 1:34 in school B. This suggests that there were teachers who were overloaded with work from both schools. The implication was that such a situation

might bring unhappiness at work for some of the teachers as well as underperformance by those teachers as well as their learners, and thus the whole school.

In terms of gender, the table indicates that the majority of teachers (83, 3 %) were females, and only 16,7 % were males in school A. The table further indicates a similar situation in school B, where the majority of teachers (62, 5 %) were also females, with only 37, 5 % being male teachers. This illustrates that there were more female teachers than males in both schools. Depending on their age, the implications of such a situation might be that there would be more cases of teachers taking maternity leave.

In terms of the levels of “teacher loss” in the last five (5) years, the table shows that school A has lost 3 teachers, whereas school B has lost four (4). As a result, for the 2011 academic year, there were three (3) reported vacancies in school A, while there were two (2) in school B. This may suggest that there is a problem in terms of the replacement of teachers by the DoE in both schools.

## 4.1.2 Profiles of the respondents

**TABLE 4.2 Profiles of the respondents**

| School | Respondent code | Gender | Teaching experience | Experience in current position | Age group | Highest Qualification             | Portfolio        |
|--------|-----------------|--------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| A      | P1              | F      | 32                  | 17                             | 50-60     | Bachelor of Arts (Hons)           | Principal        |
|        | HOD1            | M      | 19                  | 12                             | 50-60     | Further Diploma in Education      | Head Of Division |
|        | TA1             | F      | 21                  | 21                             | 40-50     | Advanced Certificate in Education | Post Level 1     |
|        | TA2             | F      | 18                  | 18                             | 40-50     | Further Diploma in Education      | Post Level 1     |
| School |                 |        |                     |                                |           |                                   |                  |
| B      | P2              | F      | 27                  | 16                             | 50-60     | Bachelor of Education (Hons)      | Principal        |
|        | HOD2            | M      | 24                  | 8                              | 40-50     | Bachelor of Education             | Head Of Division |
|        | TB1             | F      | 22                  | 22                             | 40-50     | Advanced Certificate in Education | Post Level1      |
|        | TB2             | F      | 24                  | 24                             | 40-50     | Further Diploma in Education      | Post Level1      |

Table 4.2 above shows the profiles of the respondents from school A and school B respectively, who participated in this research. The table shows that there were four (4) teachers who participated in the interview process in each school, i.e. the school principal; a Head of Division and two (2) post level 1 teachers. This means that the total number of interviewed people for this study is 8. The table also shows that the majority of the respondents (75 %) were females. The reason behind that was, as reported,

there was only one (1) male teacher in school A from the entire staff, whereas in school B only female teachers were willing to participate in the research, except for one (1) male teacher who was reported to be an SMT member.

The table also shows that the principals of both schools were females, with both male teachers forming part of the SMT (i.e. HODs). This might imply that the schools recognized issues of affirmative action that people should not be discriminated against because of their gender. On the grounds of the South African Constitution's Bill of Rights, diversity needs to be respected and people should be allowed to interact at all levels on an equal basis (Robbins as cited in Niemann, 2006).

The table also indicates that the majority of the respondents (62, 5%) were between the age groups of 40-50 years, and 37, 5% of them were in the range of 50-60 years. This suggests that these teachers were not young anymore and some were not very far from the retirement age. The implication of such a situation may be more “teacher loss” due to retirement in the near future for the selected schools.

Table 4.2 also indicates that the principals of both schools have more than fifteen years of experience in their current portfolio. This may suggest that they had lots of experience in terms of managing their schools, and that experience could come in handy when their schools were faced with situation such as “teacher loss”. The assumption is that because of their experience, they should be able to manage the situation of “teacher loss” in their school better than their inexperienced counterparts.

The table also shows that the majority of the respondents (87,5 %) from both schools had more than twenty (20) years of experience as teachers, with the exception of only

one (1) respondent who falls just below twenty (20) years in terms of teaching experience. This suggests that these teachers might have had the needed experience or expertise to help their schools cope with “teacher loss”. This is because they had been teaching for a long time, and might have dealt with some difficult situations such as “teacher loss” along the way. The assumption is that even if the schools had lost some of their teachers, they should be able to achieve good results because they had experienced teachers who know how to deal with challenging situations such as “teacher loss”.

In terms of their qualifications, the table 4.2 indicates that all the respondents developed themselves academically because all of them had taken their education further than just a teaching diploma. The table further indicates that the principals of both schools were post graduates. This gave an assumption that all the respondents should be more capacitated and equipped with better teaching and classroom management skills as most of them had done courses that were in line with their field of work. This also shows that all the respondents were concerned about their academic development which could help the schools in terms of expertise.

## **4.2 DATA PRESENTATION**

As I have mentioned above, semi-structured interviews as well as document analysis were used to collect data from the two (2) selected schools. The following themes and sub-themes were developed out of that process:

## 4.2.1 Categories of “teacher loss”

It was noted from the respondents’ stories as well as from documents analyzed that teachers were lost either temporarily or permanently.

### 4.2.1.1 Permanent “teacher loss”

The respondents from both schools reported that they had experienced “teacher loss” in different ways in the past five (5) years. For instance in School A, which was a primary school, the respondents reported that they had experienced “teacher loss” through transfers and redeployment. However, in school B, which was a high school, the respondents reported that they had experienced “teacher loss” through transfers, death and resignation.

When probing them what “teacher loss” meant to them, the respondents all seemed to be in agreement that “teacher loss” was the transfer or departure of a teacher for good or death of a teacher. For instance respondent TB1 from School B echoed that *“It is not easy to accept it especially if it is because of death. But it can also be a transfer to another school, leaving a gap in our school”*. On the other hand, respondent TA1 from school A noted: *“A loss means you no longer have what you had before. So it should be that the school no longer has the teacher that they had before in their staff, whether it is death or transfer to another place”*.

In debating the concept further, it transpired that the respondents categorized permanent “teacher loss” into four (4) areas:

- (a) Transfers
- (b) Redeployment

(c) Death

(d) Resignation

#### 4.2.1.1.1 *“Teacher loss” due to transfers*

All the respondents from both schools reported that some teachers left their school due to transfers. For instance, respondent P1 from school A said: *“Fortunately for us, we have never experienced a loss of a teacher by death”*. It was further reported by respondent P1 that the school had only lost four (4) teachers since its inception in 1994. Two (2) teachers were transferred to other schools in 2006 and 2009. In this regard, respondent P2 from school B noted: *“The physical science teacher for grade 11 and 12 was also transferred to another school in 2008”*.

According to the respondents, it was a very sad moment when they were told that those teachers had been transferred to other schools. This, they reported, was because they knew that the DoE would take a long time to replace those teachers, if they would be replaced. This would reportedly mean more workload for the teachers left at school. It was also confirmed by the minutes of staff and SMT meetings from both schools that the schools lost teachers due to transfers.

When the respondents were asked what they meant by transfers, they explained it as when a teacher left the school to go and teach in another school. In this regard, respondent P1 uttered: *“Some teachers leave the school because of getting posts from better places or schools which are nearer their homes and towns. When that happens, it means they are being transferred to other schools”*.

The next category that the respondents discussed was “teacher loss” due to redeployment.

#### 4.2.1.1.2 “Teacher loss” due to redeployment

A few of the respondents (25 %) from school A reported that their school had also lost teachers due to redeployment. When asked about the meaning of redeployment, both respondent P1 and HOD1 from school A defined redeployment as when the teachers who were declared additional or in excess to their schools and were sent to other schools that had a shortage of teachers. In this regard, respondent HOD1 said: *“Redeployment means when a teacher is declared in excess in his / her school, and is sent to another school that is in need of a teacher. We say that teacher has been redeployed to that school”*.

When asked why those teachers were redeployed, respondents P1 and HOD1 from school A reported that those teachers were redeployed because of dropping numbers in their school. This reportedly meant that there were more teachers than the required number as per the school’s staff establishment. This, they reported, is why those teachers were redeployed to schools which had a shortage of teachers as per their staff establishment.

With regard to redeployment, respondent P1 said: *“The two (2) teachers who left the school in 2007 and 2008 left due to redeployment”*. The researcher noted that these were the views of the principal and head of division from school A, which were not supported by both post level 1 teachers from the same school as they both mentioned only transfers in their responses. This might suggest that by mentioning transfers only, both post level 1 teachers’ understanding of redeployment and transfer was that it

meant the same thing, since the teacher was taken to another school in both cases, which is maybe why they didn't mention redeployment.

However, the information from the minutes of staff and SMT meetings from school A confirmed what the principal and head of division said, that the school has indeed lost some of its teachers due to redeployment.

The next category that the respondents discussed was "teacher loss" due to death.

#### 4.2.1.1.3 *"Teacher loss" due to death*

All the respondents from school B reported that their school has lost two (2) of their teachers due to death. In this regard, respondent P2 from school B uttered: *"One teacher who was a deputy principal was sick for a very long time in 2008 and later died in January 2009. Another one also died in 2008 after a short illness"*. Respondent TB1 echoed these words: *"Two (2) of our teachers died in 2008 and 2009. The second one had a long illness which eventually resulted in death"*. It was also noted in the staff and SMT minutes of August 2008 that one (1) teacher died after a short illness in that particular year. Furthermore, it was also highlighted in the staff and SMT minutes of January 2009 that one other teacher died after a long illness in January 2009. When the other teacher was sick for a very long time in 2008, it was noted in the SMT minutes of May 2008 that some teachers would be requested to share the workload that belonged to the teacher who was sick.

According to the respondents from school B, it was very difficult to adapt whenever one of their colleagues was sick, especially for a very long time. This, according to

respondent HOD2, was due to the fact that the DoE did not provide them with a substitute, although the school applied for one. In order to ensure that teaching and learning did take place, the SMT had to request some teachers amongst the staff to share the workload that belonged to the teacher who was sick. In this regard, the teachers who were asked to share the work load of the teacher who was sick raised a concern that this arrangement meant that they were being overloaded with work since they already had their own subjects to teach. The minutes of SMT and staff meeting did confirm that certain teachers were requested to take over the workload of the teacher who was sick. This suggests that learners might not have suffered much in the absence of their teacher as they had another teacher to teach them. But as for the teacher, he/she is the one who suffered most because of the work load that was assigned to him/her.

In terms of the workload issues in school B, it was mentioned in the minutes of staff and SMT meetings that the sharing of the workload would be done by the teachers who taught the same subjects as the teacher who was sick, especially those with lesser number of periods. The fact that the school had teachers with lesser number of periods than others suggested that in school B, the workload was not distributed equally amongst the staff, which might lead to some teachers being unhappy at work.

The next category that the respondents discussed was “teacher loss” due to resignation.

#### 4.2.1.1.4 *“Teacher loss” due to resignation*

It was reported by 50 % of the respondents (all from school B, which was the high school) that their school also lost a teacher due to resignation. In this regard, respondent P2 said: *“One teacher resigned for personal reasons in January 2010, which left a big hole in our school”*. The reason given by the principal of school B for the teacher’s resignation was that it was for personal reasons. As for the post level 1 teachers from school B, they reported that they did not know why the teacher resigned because they were never told by the teacher herself or by the principal. It was also noted in the minutes of staff and SMT meetings of February 2010 from school B, that one (1) teacher resigned in January 2010 for personal reasons, confirming data from interviews.

#### 4.2.1.2 *Temporary “teacher loss”*

From the Two (2) selected schools, temporary “teacher loss” was reportedly experienced through different types of leave days that teachers take. The types of leave days taken by the staff of both schools were reported to include:

- (a) Family responsibility leave
- (b) Special leave
- (c) Sick leave

##### 4.2.1.2.1 *Family responsibility leave*

Both principals of the selected schools reported that family responsibility leave was one of the types of leave days that were mostly taken by their teachers. In this regard, respondent P1 uttered: *“A leave that is frequently taken by my teachers is family*

*responsibility leave*". Family responsibility leave is the type of leave that teachers are entitled to take for three (3) working days per annual leave cycle when their spouse or life partner gives birth or when their child, spouse or life partner is sick (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001). In this type of leave, teachers are also granted five (5) working days per annual leave cycle if their child, spouse or life partner dies or if their immediate family member dies (Ibid).

From the information gathered, this type of leave was reportedly taken when the teachers had to attend to their sick family members or when they were bereaved. In most cases when teachers took family responsibility leave, there was evidence that they produced documents such as death certificates for family members and doctors' certificates for their sick children or other family members. There were, however, some cases where such evidence was not available. These documents were safely kept in the leave management file in both schools. For ethical reasons, the researcher was not allowed to peruse them alone, but under the strict supervision of the principal in school A, and the deputy principal in school B.

The leave registers for both schools also revealed that teachers often took days off for family responsibility leave. In school A, the leave register revealed that this type of leave was the one that teachers frequently took more than the other types of leaves. It was also identified from the leave registers of both schools that teachers took from one (1) to three (3) days for family responsibility leave. Another type of leave that teachers of both schools often took was the special leave.

#### 4.2.1.2.2 *Special leave*

The principals of both schools noted that special leave was another type of leave that was frequently taken by their staff. According both principals, this type of leave was mostly taken when teachers had to write examinations. In this regard, respondent P2 said: *“My teachers often take special examination leave especially mid- year and towards the end of the year. They take only a few days as stated in the department of education resource documents, but there are some cases where they take more days for their examination leave, saying that they need more time to study”*. The fact that teachers requested extra days off for their examination leave meant more loss in terms of teaching and learning, which was an aspect that needed serious attention from the SMT. This was because failure to implement leave policies might result in teachers taking advantage of the situation by requesting more days than required for their leaves, a situation which might negatively affect teaching and learning.

The leave registers as well as teachers' attendance registers of both schools also revealed that teachers sometimes took leave when they had to write a particular examination. From what was found in those documents, teachers took from two (2) to six (6) days for their examination leave, depending on the dates stated in the time table for that particular examination. The researcher could easily identify instances where teachers took examination leave because it was clearly stated in the leave registers of both schools that certain teachers were on leave, and that these were highlighted in red pen in the attendance registers.

Furthermore, examination time tables were always available as evidence each time the teachers were on special leave for examination purposes from both schools. The principals further reported that teachers reported for their absenteeism and that leaves were managed properly in both schools. This was confirmed by the availability of required documents whenever teachers took examination leave. Another type of leave that teachers of both schools often took was the sick leave.

#### 4.2.1.2.3 (Normal) sick leave

The third type of leave that was reported to have been taken by the staff of both schools is the (normal) sick leave. In this regard, respondent P2 uttered: *“Teachers are entitled to many different types of leaves. But the one that my teachers often take is sick leave”*. The leave registers as well as attendance registers of both schools also revealed that teachers sometimes took sick leave, especially in school B where it appeared to be the most frequently taken type of leave. Again, the researcher could easily identify this as it was recorded in the leave registers of both schools whenever teachers took sick leave. Furthermore, the type of leave taken and the number of days were highlighted with a red pen in the attendance registers of both schools.

Furthermore, medical certificates were mostly available as evidence when teachers were on sick leave, but there were some cases where such evidence was not available. In analyzing the documents, it appeared that teachers did produce medical certificates only when they have taken more than one (1) day sick leave in school A, but for one (1) day sick leave, there was no evidence at all. In probing the principal of school A about this, she did confirm that she did not ask for a medical certificate when teachers took

one (1) day sick leave, but only when they had to take more than one (1) day. However in school B, medical certificates were available even for one (1) day sick leave. This gave an impression that leave management was carried out more strictly in school B, where teachers accounted for each and every day that they were not at school.

Once again, these documents were safely kept in the leave management files of both schools. The researcher was not allowed to peruse them alone, but under the strict supervision of the principal in school A, and deputy principal in school B. This illustrated that both school principals practiced confidentiality when it came to staff documents. This was because some of those documents had confidential information, especially doctors' medical certificates.

Other categories were, however, not mentioned by the respondents but were highlighted by the documentary analysis which included the staff and SMT minutes, attendance registers and leave registers. By analysing these documents, the researcher wanted to identify the degree of absenteeism as well as other reasons for teacher absenteeism, and the number of days taken by teachers away from school. These categories include:

- (a) Teachers attending workshops during school hours
- (b) Teachers attending union meetings during school hours
- (c) Teachers attending memorial services during school hours
- (d) Teachers on Strike action
- (e) Maternity leave

#### *4.2.1.2.4 “Teacher loss” due to teachers attending workshops*

The attendance registers of both schools highlighted that teachers sometimes attended workshops during school hours. These workshops were reportedly organized by the Department of Education. This suggests that some learners did not have their teachers for that particular day since it is stated in the attendance register that he/she has gone to a workshop. It was easy to identify that as it was highlighted with a red pen in the attendance registers of both schools that a certain teacher was absent from school, attending a workshop on a specific learning area. Sometimes teachers in school B would leave the school early, signing the time of departure on the attendance register and indicating that they have gone to a workshop.

In cases where a particular teacher was absent from school for whatever reason, it was reported by the respondents from both schools that the teachers who were present were expected to monitor the class which had no teacher. This arrangement would be discussed in depth later in this report. The next category highlighted by document analysis was “teacher loss” due to teachers attending union meetings during school hours.

#### *4.2.1.2.5 “Teacher loss” due to teachers attending union meetings*

Attendance register of school A also revealed that teachers sometimes left before the end of the school day to attend meetings organized by their teacher union. The researcher was able to identify this because the time of departure and the reason for leaving school early were noted with a red pen in the attendance register. In some cases, there was evidence that some teachers did not even come to school due to

attending union meetings, which meant that learners were left suffering as they did not have their teacher for the whole day. The researcher was able to identify this as it was noted in the attendance register each time some teachers were absent from school attending a union meeting. In such cases, it was reported by the respondents that teachers who were present have to monitor the class of that particular teacher, an arrangement which will be discussed in depth later in this report.

However, in school B, there was nothing in the attendance register that showed that teachers attended union meetings during school hours, except for one teacher who was reported to be the union site steward. According to respondent HOD2, the site steward was the one representing the school in most of the union meetings, and comes back to report to the other staff members. This was reportedly due to the fact that these union meetings were held during school hours. It was reported that the principal and staff agreed that they could not close the school for everybody to go to the union meeting because of the busy schedule that the school has.

The next category highlighted by document analysis was “teacher loss” due to memorial services.

#### *4.2.1.2.6 “Teacher loss” due to teachers attending memorial services*

Data from the two (2) selected schools reveal that teachers sometimes attended memorial services for their deceased colleagues during school hours. According to the information on the attendance registers of both schools, teachers usually left the school as early as ten (10) o’clock when they went to a memorial service. The time of departure and the reason for leaving school early were clearly highlighted with a red

pen in the attendance registers of both schools. This indicates that as early as ten o'clock on the day of a memorial service, there was no formal teaching and learning taking place in both schools.

#### *4.2.1.2.7 "Teacher loss" due to strike action*

Two (2) sets of SMT minutes from school B, which dated between September 2007 and September 2010, highlighted that teachers were on strike action for a number of days in those years. The reasons for strike action as well as the actual number of days it took were not stated in both sets of the minutes. The minutes also highlighted that all the teachers as well as learners were not at school for the duration of the strike, which suggests that formal teaching and learning did not take place in school B. Nevertheless, the minutes further revealed that the recovery plan for the time lost during the strike action was also discussed by the SMT in 2007, as well as the SMT and staff in 2010. This included Saturday classes as well as classes during holidays, which will be discussed in depth later in this report.

The minutes further highlighted the perceived negative impact that the strike action had on the activities of the school, including teaching and learning. For instance, in the September 2007 minutes, it was highlighted that sports fixtures were not honoured by the school because of the strike. It was also noted that the SMT reached an agreement that they would cancel all the sports activities for the remainder of the year, and focus on teaching and learning. Furthermore, the SMT minutes, dated September 2007 and September 2010 noted that the school fell behind schedule in terms of learners'

assessment. How the school responded to that situation will also be discussed in depth later in this report.

The next category highlighted by document analysis was “teacher loss” due to maternity leave.

#### 4.2.1.2.8 *“Teacher loss” due to maternity leave*

The leave register, attendance register as well as the minutes of staff and SMT meetings of July 2007 from school A also highlighted the fact that in 2007, a certain teacher was absent from school for about four (4) months due to maternity leave. However, none of the respondents reported on this issue during interviews. The leave forms, signed by the teacher concerned, together with a medical certificate were kept in the leave management file or leave register as evidence that the teacher was indeed on maternity leave. A red pen was used in the attendance register to highlight all the days that the teacher was on leave as well as the type of leave taken by the teacher.

### **4.2.2 Replacement of “lost” teachers**

All the respondents from school A reported that most of the teachers that their school had lost between the years 2005 and 2010 were never replaced, except for one which took more than a year to be replaced. This, the respondents from school A reported, negatively affected teaching and learning. In this regard, respondent P1 said: “The other three (3) teachers were never replaced because of dropping numbers in our enrolment. But the Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology teacher was supplied to us since those are specialist subjects. However, it took us more than a year to get that

replacement". From the above, it seems as if the Department of Education doesn't treat cases of "teacher loss" all the same. It also seems as if there are some cases where immediate replacement is implemented, but there are also some cases where it takes a long time to replace "lost" teachers.

For instance, as mentioned earlier in this report, the leave register, attendance register as well as one set of SMT minutes dated July 2007 from school A revealed that there was a teacher who took about four (4) months maternity leave, which was not reported by any of the respondents during interviews. The SMT minutes further highlighted that the school would request a substitute teacher for the one on maternity leave. There is evidence that this request was a success since it was noted in another set of SMT minutes dated July 2007 that the Department of Education provided the school with a substitute. This was also evident in the attendance register of school A as the new name of the teacher appeared on the attendance register, starting from the day the maternity leave was scheduled to commence. This indicates that the DoE took only one day to provide the school with a substitute. This was a good thing for the school, as it meant that teachers and learners would not suffer in terms of teaching and learning.

All the respondents from school B reported that it took about six months for each of the teachers they lost in 2008, 2009 and 2010 to be replaced. They reported that these teachers left for different reasons and learners suffered in terms of teaching and learning. In this regard, respondent TB1 uttered: *"It took about six months for the teachers we lost to be replaced, and the students were suffering a lot during that time because their subjects were taught by the teachers who were already assigned to teach*

*other classes. Sometimes, the teachers couldn't honour the periods for those classes because of the timetable clash with their own classes".*

According to the respondents, the teacher who died in 2008 was responsible for teaching isiXhosa in grades 10 and 11, whereas the one who died in 2009 was responsible for teaching physical science in grades 11 and 12. In response to that, the respondents reported that the SMT requested teachers who taught isiXhosa and physical science at school to take over those subjects whilst the school was waiting for the replacement of the "lost" teachers. The respondents further reported that the teacher who resigned in January 2010 was responsible for teaching Biology in grade 12. Once again, the respondents reported, the SMT requested teachers who taught Biology at school to take over grade 12 Biology classes until the Biology teacher is replaced. In a nutshell, 100% of the respondents indicated that it took a long time for the "lost" teachers to be replaced. This situation reportedly left both teachers and learners suffering because of the work overload that it brought to the teachers.

Furthermore, all the respondents from school B reported that the above situation had a negative effect to the school in terms of end of year results in 2009 and 2010 respectively, especially in grade 12. In this regard, respondent HOD2 uttered: *"Due to the DoE dragging its feet to replace the teachers we lost, our end of the year results were not good at all in 2009 and 2010, especially physical science and biology in grade 12"*. According to respondent HOD2, only 34 % of their grade 12 learners passed physical science in 2009, and 39 % in 2010. Respondent HOD2 further reported that the school got 38 % Biology pass rate in 2009, and 41 % in 2010. These results were reportedly the worst that the school got in those subjects in a period of ten (10) years.

This was reportedly because the teachers assigned to take over the subjects that had no teacher were sometimes not available to teach the affected classes due to their commitment to their own classes. In debating this issue, it appeared that the learners were the ones suffering the most in terms of teaching and learning since they sometimes set in class without a teacher to teach them.

### **4.2.3 Strategies employed by the selected schools to cope with “teacher loss”**

The information gathered from the two (2) selected schools indicates that there were different strategies employed by the schools to cope with “teacher loss”.

These were:

- (a) Multi-grade teaching
- (b) Monitoring of the class by the teachers present
- (c) Secondment of the teacher by the DoE
- (d) Distribution of the workload that belonged to the teachers lost

#### **4.2.3.1 Multi-grade teaching**

All the respondents from school A, which represents a primary school, reported multi-grade teaching as one of the strategies employed by their school to cope with “teacher loss”. According to the respondents, multi-grade teaching meant a situation whereby one teacher combines two (2) different grades and teach them in one classroom. This, they reported, was mainly due to the shortage of teachers. In this regard, respondents TA1 and TA2 said: *“Multi-grade teaching is when one teacher combines two (2) grades to teach them in one classroom”*.

Both post level 1 teachers interviewed from school A were the ones who were directly involved in multi-grade teaching. When asked about their experiences of multi-grade teaching, both post level 1 teachers from school A reported that it was a very difficult exercise, whereby a teacher had to simultaneously deal with the learners that were at different levels in terms of their grades. In this regard, respondent TA2 from school A uttered: *“Multi-grade teaching is not easy in the sense that the teacher has to make sure that no learner is left behind in terms of learning although the learners are at different levels in terms of their grades. It is also not easy to give individual attention to the learners because of the amount of work that lies ahead of you, especially in the intermediate phase where you are expected to teach nine (9) learning areas in each grade”*.

With regard to the strategies used to cope with “teacher loss”, respondent P1 uttered: *“We decided to combine classes, for example, grade 1 & 2 and grade 5 & 6”*. This was also supported by respondent TA1: *“What we just do here at school is just to combine classes so that all the children are taught, although that is unfair to the teachers concerned. But if you look at it, what other choice do we have? The department is not doing anything about the situation”*. This was also confirmed by one set of SMT minutes from school A. For example, for the teacher who was transferred to another school, one (1) set of SMT minutes highlighted that the school never got a replacement and opted to request another teacher from the staff to combine classes. It was also noted that multi-grade teaching was also suggested after one of the teachers was redeployed, which

meant that now the school had two (2) multi-grade classes, i.e. grade 1 & 2 as well as grade 5 & 6.

According to the respondents from school A, multi-grade teaching was so difficult to them since they never received any formal training on how to deal with it. This suggests lack of support from the Department of Education. This is where the transformational leadership should come in whereby teachers are encouraged to work as a team in support of one another. According to transformational leadership theory, which forms part of the theoretical framework for this study as discussed in chapter two (2), a positive change is created in the teachers when they work together and act in the interest of the group, rather than working as individuals (Daszko & Sheinberg, 2005). This transformational leadership approach also helps in building a unified common interest between principals and teachers (Bush & Middlewood, 2005).

#### **4.2.3.2 Monitoring of the class by the teachers present**

The majority (75 %) of the respondents (from both schools) shared the view that when one of the teachers was absent or on leave for a few days, those that were present were expected to monitor the class which had no teacher. This, they reported, is done in order to ensure that the learners did the work that was left for them by their teacher without making noise to disrupt other classes. This was reportedly on top of the work load that they already had. In this regard, respondent TA1 from school A, who was also involved in multi-grade teaching said: *“On top of the workload that I already have, I’m also expected to make sure that the learners who do not have a teacher do the work that was given to them by their teacher, and that they don’t loiter around and disrupt*

*tuition in other classes*". Monitoring of the class was reportedly the responsibility of all the teachers at school, done by the teachers of the phase affected.

It was also noted in one of the SMT meetings of school A that the SMT members agreed that when one of the teachers was absent or on leave, he/she should leave the learners with work to do. It was further noted in the minutes that the teachers present should monitor the class and ensure that learners did the work left by their teacher. This implies that the teachers who were present at school were given extra work to do and left with heavy workloads which may result in stressed and overworked teachers, a situation which may result in poor performance by the school.

#### **4.2.3.3      *Secondment of a teacher by the Department of Education***

A few of the respondents (25 %), particularly from school A, reported that after they lost one of their teachers in 2009, they requested a replacement from the DoE. They further reported that it took about a year to get that replacement. The replacement was reportedly provided in April 2010, only as a secondment to their school. This teacher was reportedly taken / borrowed from another school which had additional teachers in their staff establishment.

When asked about the meaning of a teacher being seconded to their school, respondent P1 answered: *"It means that the teacher is physically in our school, but in another school's payroll list and receives his correspondence in that school"*. And respondent HOD1 answered: *"It means the teacher will physically be in our school every day but belonging to another school. It's like borrowing a teacher from another school which has more teachers"*. Therefore, from the respondents' point of view,

secondment refers to when a teacher is taken from a school that has more or additional teachers in their staff establishment, and is sent to another school which has a shortage of teachers without removing that particular teacher from the payroll and the establishment of the releasing school.

With regard to secondment of a teacher to their school, all the respondents from school A reported that such an arrangement helped a lot in terms of boosting the morale of the teachers, especially those affected by multi-grade teaching. They further highlighted the fact that the arrival of that teacher meant that one of the teachers affected by multi-grade teaching was relieved of some of the workload that was assigned to her. This arrangement also reportedly helped in terms of the extra-curricular activities at school, with some of them being assigned to the teacher seconded.

However, as much as secondment had its advantages to the school, it reportedly had some disadvantages too. For instance, the teacher seconded reportedly always had to be in touch with the school where he came from because his pay slips and other DoE documents were sent to that school. This, the respondents reported, meant that the teacher was not made to feel like belonging to his present school, since most of his official documents were received in his previous school. The implication is that this could result in him not being fully committed in the activities of the school due to lack of sense of belonging to his present school.

There was evidence that “teacher loss” situation was discussed by the SMT in school A in January 2010, and the agreement was that the school would again request a teacher from the DoE to replace the one who was transferred to another school in 2009. It was

also noted in another set of SMT minutes of January 2010 that the school indeed received a teacher as a secondment to their school. This also confirmed what the principal and the head of division reported.

#### **4.2.3.4 *Distribution of the workload that belonged to the teachers lost***

All the respondents from school B, which represents a high school, reported that the SMT distributes the subjects that were taught by the teachers who were permanently lost to the school amongst those teachers who were still at school. This was reportedly done by identifying those teaching the same subjects as the teachers lost, especially those with lesser number of periods. This suggests that the workload was not distributed equally amongst the staff in school B and there were those who had more workload than others. In this regard, respondent P2 uttered: *“We resolved that those teachers who are having less periods have to share the workload that belonged to the teachers we lost. We did this by identifying teachers who specialize in the same subjects as those that we lost”*. This indicates that the principal was aware of the fact that the workload was not distributed equally amongst the staff members at school, but allows the situation to carry on which was unfair to the other staff members. The above situation further indicates that in school B, subject teaching, which was mostly done in high school, was practiced since school B is also a high school.

Furthermore, there was evidence that “teacher loss” situation was discussed in some of the SMT meetings in school B where the coping strategies were also suggested. For instance, the minutes of August 2008 referred to the teacher who was permanently lost due to death during that year. It was noted in those minutes that the subjects that were

taught by the teacher (i.e. isiXhosa grade 11 and 12), should be distributed amongst those teaching isiXhosa at school, 'especially those with lesser number of periods'.

However, respondent TB1 and TB2 from school B raised a concern that the situation of "teacher loss", and the coping strategies thereof, was never discussed with the entire staff of the school. In this regard, respondent TB1 said: "*We never discussed the strategies to cope with "teacher loss" in any of our staff meetings. The SMT only reported to the staff what they have agreed upon in their meeting, and at the same time identifying the teachers who had to take the workload of the teachers we lost*". The researcher concluded that in school B, the issue of "teacher loss" appeared to be discussed and agreed upon at SMT level only. Seemingly, teachers were never involved in the discussions and decision making, they were just told what to do without having a say on how to do it. According to the respondents from school B, teachers were not happy about not being involved in such discussions. They felt that they should be involved since the decisions taken directly affect them.

Other strategies were, however, not mentioned by the respondents but were highlighted by the documentary analysis which included the staff and SMT minutes, attendance registers and leave registers. These included:

- (a) Recovery plan by the school
- (b) Finding a substitute

#### **4.2.3.5 Recovery plan by the school**

As it has been mentioned earlier, two (2) sets of SMT meetings which dated between September 2007 and September 2010 from school B, which is a high school,

highlighted that teachers were on strike for a number of days in 2007 and 2010 respectively. It was also highlighted in the September 2007 minutes that the SMT came up with a recovery plan by introducing a catch-up programme to return the time lost during the strike. In that catch up programme, it was noted in the minutes that teachers would be requested to come to school even on Saturdays, as well as during the September holidays. It was also noted that this idea of a catch-up programme would be discussed with the other staff members before it could be implemented.

However, there was no evidence of any discussion of the catch-up programme with the staff in the minutes of any of the staff meetings of school B in 2007. Furthermore, there was also no evidence in the documents analyzed that teachers and learners did go to school during weekends or September 2007 holidays. When asked if the recovery plan took off in 2007, respondents P2 and TB2 reported that it never took off. This, according to respondent TB2, was because post level 1 teachers were never involved in the discussion of a recovery plan in 2007, whereas they were the ones expected to implement the plan. These teachers reportedly felt that they were being taken for granted by not being involved in such discussions, which made them unwilling to cooperate with the SMT in this regard. Respondent P2, who is the principal of school B also echoed these words, adding that teachers were not happy about being told to come to school during holidays without the issue being discussed with them first.

But the staff minutes of September 2010 in school B indicated that the issue of a recovery plan was discussed by both the SMT and the staff. This indicates that the SMT learnt from the mistake they made in 2007, which was non involvement of the entire

staff in the discussion of a recovery plan. The minutes further highlighted that both parties reached an agreement that the school wouldn't close during the September 2010 holidays. Furthermore, it was noted that the SMT and the grade 12 teachers also reached an agreement that the grade 12 teachers would also have Saturday classes until grade 12 starts writing their 2010 final examination.

In this regard, evidence shows that the idea of a recovery plan was adopted positively by the staff and that it was carried out as planned in 2010. For instance, there was evidence in the attendance register of school B that some teachers were in school for the duration of the holiday in September 2010, and during the weekends in October 2010. This implies that teaching and learning did take place even during September 2010 holidays as well as October 2010 weekends in school B. This illustrates teachers' commitment and dedication to their work.

#### **4.2.3.6 Finding a Substitute teacher**

It was highlighted in the minutes of staff and SMT meetings of August 2007, leave register, as well as the attendance register from school A that a certain teacher was absent from school for about four (4) months due to maternity leave. It was further noted that the school would request a substitute teacher from the DoE for the one on maternity leave. Then, in another set of the SMT minutes dated August 2007, it was also highlighted that the DoE did supply the school with a substitute on the first day that the maternity leave started.

Since the issue of maternity leave, as revealed by document analysis, was never mentioned by any of the respondents, the researcher had to go back to school A to

probe the respondents more about it. From their responses, the respondents all seemed to agree that since there was no time where learners sat without a teacher during the period of the maternity leave, they did not regard it as “teacher loss”. In this regard, respondent HOD1 from school A uttered: *“The substitute teacher assumed duty here at school on the first day that the other teacher was supposed to start her maternity leave. So I could not really associate that with “teacher loss” since the number of teachers at school stayed the same as before the maternity leave”*.

Furthermore, evidence shows that a new name of the teacher appeared in the attendance register of school A in August 2007. The researcher also noticed that this new teacher’s name appeared in the attendance register of the school on the first day that the other teacher was supposed to start her maternity leave. In this regard, the researcher assumed that this could be the teacher who was a substitute for the one on maternity leave. When asked about this, the principal of school A confirmed that the new teacher’s name in the attendance register was indeed a substitute for the one on maternity leave. She also said that the reason they got a substitute on the first day of the maternity leave was that they applied for it long before the date of the maternity leave, because of the DoE’s tendency to take time to respond to such cases. As a result, the principal reported, the learners did not suffer much due to their teacher being on leave, and other teachers at school did not have to worry about the class and the workload of the teacher on leave since there was a teacher in that class.

When asked about the meaning of a substitute teacher, the principal of school A said that it refers to a teacher who is temporarily employed to fill the gap left by the teacher who is on leave for a period of one (1) month or more. The principal further reported that

this substitute teacher would continue to work at school until the teacher who is on leave comes back to work.

### **4.2.3 The respondents' views on the effectiveness of the strategies employed**

From the respondents' stories, it transpired that some of the strategies were effective, but some were not effective.

#### **4.2.3.1 Multi-grade teaching**

When asked about the effectiveness of multi-grade teaching as a strategy employed by their school to cope with teacher loss, 25 % of the respondents, who all happened to be post level 1 teachers from school A which is a primary school, reported that it is not effective at all. These were the teachers who were directly affected by multi-grade teaching from school A. They further raised a concern that they are unable to give individual attention that some learners need if they are overloaded with work due to multi-grade teaching. In this regard, respondent TA2 even said: *“It is not effective at all because you can't be expected to teach multi-grade especially in the foundation phase. They all need your special attention and automatically, you will sometimes neglect another class. And when trying to correct that, you will find that you are now neglecting the other one. So that is why I say that it is not effective at all because it denies our learners a better teaching and learning opportunity”*.

Furthermore, the post level 1 teachers from school A, who happened to be the ones directly affected by multi-grade teaching, also claimed that they don't get any support from the SMT or the DoE for that matter. They also raised a concern that they are on

their own in this regard but the SMT also expects them to perform at the same level as those teaching mono-grade. In this regard, respondent TA2 uttered: *“I expect the DoE to support us as much as they can since they are the ones who brought the school into this mess in the first place. At the moment, I’m all on my own, no support or encouragement at all, either from the SMT or the DoE. Even the principal just wants the work done without offering any support”*.

When asked what they mean by not being given support, what kind of support they expect and from whom, respondent TA1 and TA2 highlighted that as they were never trained on how to teach multi-grade, the least they expected from the SMT was to hold one to one discussions with them concerning the matter. This, according to them, would give them a platform to come up with the problems they encounter, share ideas and seek solutions together with the SMT. For instance, respondent TA2 also highlighted that they also expected the SMT to relieve them of some of the duties that they are expected to perform, especially extra-curricular activities since they already have work overload due to multi-grade teaching. According to Boyd et al (2005) what teachers consider “supportive and encouraging” may vary. For one teacher it may be being generally left alone and trusted with autonomy; for another it may be administrators who frequently visit the classroom and provide feedback on instruction (Ibid).

Furthermore, respondent TA1 and TA2 also suggested that the DoE should hold workshops specifically for multi-grade teachers, on how to teach multi-grade. In this regard, respondent TA1 uttered: *“We expect the DoE to offer their support by organizing workshops for multi-grade teachers on how to deal with multi-grade teaching. This*

*would mean that we acquire the necessary skills that would benefit both teachers and learners”.*

However, the principal of school A had a different opinion to that of the post level 1 teachers, claiming that multi-grade teaching practiced by her school is effective since it ensures that every child gets taught. In this regard, respondent P1 uttered: *“I would say multi-grade teaching is effective in the sense that every learner receives tuition and the teachers have adjusted to the situation, understanding that we had no choice but to do as we have done”.*

The fact that post level 1 teachers’ view differed from that of their principal may be attributed to the fact that the post level 1 teachers interviewed were the ones teaching multi-grade, and that they appeared to find it difficult to adjust to the situation. The principal, on the other hand, seems to be just happy to see teaching and learning taking place, without really knowing what the teachers teaching multi-grade are going through. This also suggests that post level1 teachers are not happy with the current arrangement in their school, which requires them to do more work than they should.

#### **4.2.3.2 Monitoring of the class by the teachers present**

When asked whether the monitoring of the class by the teachers who are present at school is an effective strategy to cope with teacher loss, 25 % of the respondents from school A shared the view that it is not effective. This, according to the respondents, is because they already have work overload, which makes it difficult to leave one’s own class to attend to another teacher’s class. In this regard, respondent TA2 even said: *“Even though I have my own class, which is a multi-grade, I’m expected to monitor the*

*class which has no teacher. In the process, my own class is left alone and you know these kids, anything can happen in my absence*". The principal is reportedly the one who sees to it that the class without a teacher is monitored, by assigning a teacher to that class.

However, in school B, all the respondents claim that this strategy of asking the teachers who are present to monitor the class which has no teacher is an effective one. They reported that what makes it effective in their school is the fact that no teacher is expected to leave his / her own class to attend to another class, but teachers are expected to monitor the class with no teacher only when they have free periods. In so doing, teachers have to ensure that learners do the work that was left by their teacher without making noise to disrupt other classes.

In this regard, respondent TB1 uttered: "*The strategy is effective because the teachers who have free periods are the ones expected to ensure that no class is left unattended at any given time, which means that teaching and learning should take place all the time*". According to respondent TB1, all the teachers in school B do have free periods at different times of the day, and that they all get their turn to do the monitoring. The deputy principal is reportedly the one responsible for checking who is absent every day so as to assign a teacher to monitor the class of the teacher absent. This is reportedly to ensure that these classes are really monitored.

There were mixed feelings from the respondents in terms of how they feel about monitoring other classes. For instance respondent TA2 from school A reported that she doesn't feel comfortable at all about it. She further reported that since she already

teaches multi-grade, having to monitor another class disturbs her in her work. This is reportedly because she has to leave her own work to go and do another teacher's work in another class. But having said that, she also sees the need for those learners to be monitored and said that she understands and have accepted the situation as it is. In this regard, respondent TB1 from school B raised a concern that asking teachers to monitor other classes during their free periods denies them an opportunity to get some rest before they go to another class. As a result, some teachers don't like it when they are called to monitor another class. However, respondent TB1 also sees the importance of learners being monitored when they have no teacher in their class. Based on the above statements, monitoring of the class seems to have both positive and negative effects on teachers.

#### **4.2.3.3      *Secondment of a teacher by the DoE***

All the respondents from School A reported that the DoE supplied their school with a teacher but only as a secondment. According to them, this was done to counter the fact that the school had a shortage of teachers due to "teacher loss", and the teachers and learners were suffering because of that.

Furthermore, all the respondents from school A claimed that this arrangement (secondment) is effective since it has relieved some teachers from some of the workload that they had. As a result, they reported, there was an improvement in the performance of the learners as well as the school as a whole. In this regard, respondent TA1 said: *"It was an effective move by the DoE to second a teacher to our school though it would be much better if the arrangement could be made permanent. This also*

*ensured that Mathematics, Science and Technology had a teacher since there was no one at school who had the necessary skills to teach those learning areas especially in the senior phase.”*

#### **4.2.3.4 Distribution of the workload that belonged to the teachers lost**

As mentioned earlier, 50 % of the respondents from school B, which is a high school, reported that the SMT distributes the workload that belonged to the teachers lost to the teachers teaching the same subjects as them. According to the respondents, this strategy is not effective but unfair to the teachers since it means some teachers would be overloaded with work. In this regard, respondent TB2 uttered: “As a teacher who was once directly affected by this, the strategy can’t be effective because of the work overload that comes with it, which is unfair to the teachers concerned.” Furthermore, 50% of the respondents from school B also feel that there is nothing that could make this strategy effective, other than the provision of a new teacher by the DoE each time the school loses a teacher.

#### **4.2.4 The respondents’ views on the effects of “teacher loss” on teachers**

Half of the respondents (50 %), who all happened to be at the post level 1 from both schools, were asked about the effects of “teacher loss” on them, since they are the ones more involved in teaching. They all shared the view that “teacher loss” has brought only negative effects on them. These include:

- (a) Work overload
- (b) Stress

(c) Negative attitudes towards career

(d) Painful experiences

#### **4.2.4.1 Work overload**

Half of the respondents (50 %) from both schools reported that the situation of “teacher loss” in their school has brought so much work overload on their shoulders. They raised a concern that they do more than they have to do which is something that doesn’t go down well with them. In this regard, respondent TB2 from school B even said: *“I am being overloaded with work because of the “teacher loss” situation and it is giving me too much hard time”*. And respondent TA2 from school A said: *“It has negatively affected me because I am being overloaded with work, having to teach two (2) grades in one (1) classroom all on my own. I am not comfortable or happy at all about this, but what can I do?”* This suggests that these teachers are neither comfortable nor happy to work under the circumstances in their schools, which may negatively affect their performance.

#### **4.2.4.2 Stress**

Half of the respondents (50%) who all happened to be at the post level 1 from both schools shared the view that “teacher loss” has resulted in so much stress for them. In this regard, respondent TB1 uttered: *“To me personally, it has brought so much stress because I am one of those teachers who were given extra work after the loss of one of the teachers. It’s worse when it comes to marking during exams, there is a lot of work during that time and I have to do it all by myself. It’s very frustrating”*.

There is evidence from both schools that teachers do sometimes take days off sick leave for illnesses that are perceived as stress related. In this regard, respondents P1 and P2 who are the principals of both schools reported that some teachers sometimes take leave because of constant headache. This, they reported, may be one of the signs of stress on teachers.

#### **4.2.4.3 Negative attitudes towards teaching career**

The majority of the respondents (75 %), who all happened to be post level 1 teachers from both schools, reported that “teacher loss” has resulted in them developing negative attitudes towards teaching as a career. In this regard, respondent TA2 from school A said: *“The situation that “teacher loss” has brought to our school has led me to be negative about my career and there is nothing that motivates me to come to work anymore. I just come and work because I have to get paid at the end of the month to support my family. Otherwise it’s hell out there, really”*. Respondent TB1 echoed these words saying that the circumstances under which the school operates has led her to developing negative attitude about teaching, only doing it without any enthusiasm.

From the researcher point of view, the school seems to be in danger of having teachers in future who do not own the school activities anymore, who are not enthusiastic about their work, and who are just waiting for the perfect opportunity to leave the school, a situation that may lead to underperformance by the school. In this case, transformational leadership theory suggests a need to motivate and inspire teachers in order for them to see the importance and higher good of the task (Cherry, undated;

Doyle & Smith, 2001), and to gain their commitment to such a degree that higher levels of accomplishment become virtually a moral imperative (Bush, 2007)

#### **4.2.4.4 Painful experiences**

All the respondents from school B reported that “teacher loss” situation has left painful experiences for them at school. In this regard, respondent TB1 even said: “*It is painful to lose a teacher although as teachers we have to accept and adapt to the situation and carry on with our work*”. The researcher assumed that by painful experiences, the respondents refer to teacher loss due to death, which may be difficult to accept for both teachers and learners.

### **4.3 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **4.3.1 Teachers’ conception of “teacher loss”**

From the interviews conducted from both schools, it transpired that all the respondents narrowly defined “teacher loss” as the transfer or departure of a teacher, as well as death of a teacher. This was based on how “teacher loss” was experienced in their schools. However, some authors provide a broader view of the concept by referring to it as when a school loses a teacher either through attrition or mobility / migration (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; ECDoE, 2008; Hahs-Vaughn & Cherff, 2008). Attrition refers to change of careers, retirement, dismissal, illnesses / death, etc., whereas mobility / migration refer to transfer or movement of teachers from one school to the other, local and international (ibid). According to Ingersol as cited in SACE (2010), teachers’ movement from one school to another or teacher migration is ignored by aggregated

studies of teacher turnover, because these teachers are not lost to the system. However, from a school's perspective the school that is losing teachers to another school is experiencing shortage (Ibid).

### **4.3.2 Categories of “teacher loss”**

In debating the concept of “teacher loss” through interviews and document analysis, it transpired that from the two (2) selected schools, “teacher loss” was experienced either temporarily or permanently. Bennell (2004) adds that it can also be either voluntary (resignation, early retirement, transfer, etc.) or involuntary (death, illness, dismissal, etc.). However, the respondents' conception of “teacher loss” seemed to be confined only on permanent “teacher loss”, although collected data suggests that both schools lost teachers either permanently or temporarily as well as voluntary or involuntary, as discussed below.

#### **4.3.2.1 Permanent “teacher loss”**

The respondents' stories as well as document analysis reveal that permanent “teacher loss” was experienced from the two (2) selected schools through transfers, redeployment, resignation as well as death. According to Boe, Cook & Sunderland's (2008) definition of “teacher loss”, this suggests that school B has experienced permanent “teacher loss” through attrition (i.e. resignation and death), as well as both voluntary and involuntary (Bennell, 2004). However, data indicates that school A has experienced permanent “teacher loss” through mobility / migration (i.e. redeployment and transfers) as well as voluntary and involuntary (Bennell, 2004; Boe, Cook & Sunderland, 2008).

According to Tsheko (2010), education sector has experienced loss of productivity as a result of death or because staff are forced to leave service prematurely to care for ill family members. This suggests that the core business of the school, which is teaching and learning, is negatively affected as a result of teachers being lost to the school on a permanent basis. In this regard, it has been argued, (Macdonald, 1999; Shen, 1997; Xaba, 2003) that “teacher loss” brings a lot of disruption in schools. Xaba (2003) further states that school is disrupted especially so when teachers leave the profession during the academic year or whilst engaged in critical projects in school, while Shen (1997) sees high rates of “teacher loss” as disrupting programme continuity and planning, hindering student learning and increasing school districts’ expenditures on recruiting and hiring.

According to the respondents, some teachers leave the school because of getting posts from ‘better places or schools’. These include those which are nearer their homes or towns. This movement of teachers from one part of the country to another is also referred to as transfers or internal migration (Kok et al as cited in SACE, 2011). This is supported by Tsheko (2010) who posits that teachers request transfers to go to better places that bring them closer to study institutions as well as medical institutions in semi-urban areas, towns and cities. As a result, rural or remote schools are usually then left with teachers who are described as desperate for jobs or who have failed to acquire jobs in other preferred areas (Wentzel & Tlebeka as cited in SACE, 2011). This has an impact on the quality of teachers left in the remote or rural areas (Ibid). As a result, the

school system may rely more and more on less qualified teachers with less experience, resulting in a decrease in the quality of education (Appleton et al, 2006).

Data collected also indicate that redeployment is another form of permanent “teacher loss” that was experienced in school A. Redeployment is a process whereby excess teachers in one school are taken to another school that is having a shortage of teachers (Chudnovsky, 1998). Based on that definition, this suggests that in school A there was a time where they had additional or excess teachers in their staff establishment. The redeployment of excess educators in schools, all seem to suggest that the supply of educators is adequate and the apparent shortage is due to an unequal distribution of teachers in the country (Garson as cited in Xaba, 2003).

In contrast, data from school A indicate that the process of redeployment only left the school with a shortage of teachers instead, which resulted in some teachers teaching multi-grade. This suggests that something is not done correctly as far as the redeployment of teachers is concerned. This also confirms teacher education in South Africa’s (2005) findings that too many teachers are inappropriately deployed in the teaching profession to meet the human resources needs of the country. However, in the current redeployment process that is taking place in the Eastern Cape, the department’s 2011 management plan is allowing for voluntary movement / transfer of teachers who have been declared in addition (ECDoE, 2011). Moreover, the identification and transfer process should not be used to settle personal scores with the affected individual teachers (Ibid).

### **4.3.2.2 Temporary 'teacher loss'**

As reported earlier, from the two (2) selected schools, temporary "teacher loss" was reportedly experienced through different types of leave days that teachers take. The types of leave days taken by the staff of both schools were reported to include, family responsibility leave, special leave as well as normal sick leave.

#### *4.3.2.2.1 (Normal) sick leave*

According to (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001), (normal) sick leave is the type of leave educators are entitled to when they are sick. Teachers are entitled to this type of leave for 36 working days with full pay over a three-year cycle (Ibid). Sick leave (or paid sick days or sick pay) is time off from work that workers can use during periods of temporary illness to stay home and address their health and safety needs without losing pay (The South African Labour Guide, undated). Data collected reveal that the type of leave that was mostly taken by the staff of both schools is the (normal) sick leave. This is in line what Cohen et al (2009) observe, that of all the types of leave days available, sick leave is the most commonly used. From both schools, it was noted that teachers took one (1) to three days normal sick leave.

Evidence further shows that teachers from both schools did produce medical certificates as evidence when they have taken sick leave. For instance in school A, evidence shows that teachers did produce medical certificates only when they have taken more than one (1) day sick leave. According to (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001), educators who apply for three or more sick leave days must submit a certificate from a registered and recognised medical practitioner as defined by the Health Professionals' Council of

South Africa, citing the reason for and duration of absence. This indicates good leave management as well as good implementation of leave policies as stipulated by the Education Labour Relations Council (2001).

However, in school B, there is evidence that teachers did produce medical certificates even for one (1) day sick leave. This is in line with (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001) who state that a medical certificate may be required even for one (1) day sick leave. This can be done only in instances where a pattern in the utilization of sick leave has been established (Ibid). However, in analyzing the documents in school B, there was no evidence of any pattern in the utilization of sick leave. This gave an assumption that the principal of school B wants her staff to utilize their leaves in a more responsible manner. In this regard, Tshenko (2010) posits that absence from leave for 48 hours should be accompanied by a medical report stating the nature of the illness and a recommended period for sick leave. The medical certificate must be signed by a government or private medical officer.

#### 4.3.2.2.2 *Special leave*

Special leave is the type of leave granted to teachers with full pay to allow them to engage in activities aimed at their professional development; or to engage in activities aimed at their personal development where such personal development is also in the interest of the employer (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001).

Positive changes in education depend on the quality of teachers since they are regarded as the ones who can play a key role in making a difference in the quality of education (Steyn, 2011). As a result, the Professional Development of teachers has

become increasingly important for school improvement initiatives (Ibid). This indicates a link between school effectiveness and professional development of teachers which cannot be ignored. In this study, there is evidence that teachers from both schools selected do develop themselves professionally.

Evidence from both schools shows that teachers do sometimes take special leave when they have to write a particular examination. This indicates that teachers from both schools are concerned about and understand the importance of continuous development. Evidence from both schools further shows that in their academic development, teachers take courses that are in line with their field of work, which is teaching (see table 2 – profiles of the respondents). This helps to continually develop teachers' performance and competence, to improve their professional self-efficacy, subject knowledge and skills and classroom management, as well as to improve the professional status of teachers (Steyn, 2011).

With regard to teachers taking special leave for examination purposes, (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001) state that an educator may be granted special leave for examination purposes with full pay for each day on which such educator sits as a candidate for an examination approved for this purpose by the employer plus one additional day of special leave for study purposes for each such day of examination which may be taken on the working days immediately prior to the days of examination.

However, there is evidence from both schools that teachers do sometimes take more than the required number of days of special leave for examination purposes. This indicates failure on the side of the principals to implement leave policies in a correct

manner which can contribute to high rate of teacher absenteeism in schools. In support of this, Esra Ramasehla, NAPTOSA president, states that principals and department heads also contribute to the problem of teacher absenteeism by failing to implement leave policies (Times LIVE, 2009). This may lead to serious implications on the side of the teacher when retirement time comes.

#### *4.3.2.2.3 Family responsibility leave*

An educator shall be granted 3 working days leave per annual leave cycle if the educator's spouse or life partner gives birth; or the educator's child, spouse or life partner is sick (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001). An educator shall be granted 5 working days leave per annual leave cycle if the educator's child, spouse or life partner dies; or the educator's immediate family member dies (Ibid). Data from the selected schools indicate that teachers do take the required number of days for family responsibility leave, and produce death certificates or family members' doctor's medical certificates as evidence for requiring family responsibility leave. This indicates the responsible utilisation of leave credits by the schools.

#### *4.3.2.2.4 "Teacher loss" due to maternity leave*

An educator is entitled to 4 consecutive months' maternity leave on full pay to commence at least 14 days prior to the expected date of birth but not later than the actual date of birth in a case of a premature confinement (Bengu, 1999; ELRC, 2001). Evidence shows that in school A, one (1) teacher was absent from school for a period of four (4) months due to maternity leave. This was accompanied by a doctor's medical

certificate stating the reason and the length of the leave. Once again, this shows the correct implementation of leave policies.

There were, however, some categories of temporary “teacher loss” which were not mentioned by the respondents but were highlighted by document analysis from the two (2) selected schools. Document analysis revealed that temporary “teacher loss” was also experienced through absenteeism for different reasons such as teachers attending workshops during school hours, teachers attending union meetings during school hours, teachers attending memorial services during school hours as well as teachers on strike action. As absenteeism is such a major problem in schools, close monitoring of the problem is needed, as teacher absences could threaten to compromise the quality of education (Tsheko, 2010).

#### 4.3.2.2.5 *“Teacher loss” due to teachers attending workshops*

Evidence shows that teachers do attend workshops organized by the DoE for professional development purposes. This is supported by Bengu (1999) who states that all educators may be required by the employer to attend programmes for ongoing professional development, up to a maximum of 80 hours per annum.

However, it was noted that these workshops were held during school hours, which confirms Oosthuizen’s (2011) findings that teachers attend too many functions and workshops during class hours. News24 (2010) also observe that teachers do attend workshops during school hours. This suggests that teachers were not in class for the duration of the workshop, a situation which is regarded as temporary “teacher loss”. This is in contrast with the DoE regulation that such programmes are to be conducted

outside the formal school day or during the vacations (Bengu, 1999). The fact that these workshops were organized by the DoE reveals a loophole in terms of policy making and its implementation within the department. The DoE has given schools the policy regarding workshops, yet they are the ones who act against that policy. This suggests that some of the DoE officials do not know or ignore some of the DoE policies. As a result, school programmes are disrupted.

#### 4.3.2.2.6 *“Teacher loss” due to teachers attending union meetings*

Data collected indicates that teachers do attend union meetings during school hours, which constitutes “teacher loss” because they lose so much contact time with their students since they are not at school for a number of hours. In support of this, Oosthuizen (2011) states that a report of the Human Rights Commission found that the average teacher only spends approximately three hours daily on teaching. The largest problems pointed out are that teachers spend too much time on labour union meetings during class hours (Ibid).

The above situation is despite Bengu’s (1999) statement that all educators should be at school during the formal school day, which should not be less than 7 hours per day including the breaks, except for special reasons and with the prior permission of the Principal. The allocation of scheduled contact hours should be done in such a manner that it maximizes the individual abilities to all teachers and optimizes teaching and learning (ECDoE, 2009). Any transgression from the above will be viewed in a serious light by the department, and hours that are not worked by an individual teacher will be recovered by way of deductions from one’s salary (Ibid). The fact that teachers (labour

unions) do not comply with the above mentioned policies implies that the DoE regulations as well as children's right to education are violated by the labour unions.

#### *4.3.2.2.7. "Teacher loss" due to teachers attending memorial services*

Data from the two (2) selected schools reveal that teachers sometimes attend memorial services for their deceased colleagues during school hours. According to the information on the attendance registers of both schools, teachers usually leave the school as early as ten (10) o'clock when they go to the memorial service. The time of departure and the reason for leaving school early were clearly highlighted with a red pen in the attendance registers of both schools. This is despite the fact that according to Department of Education policy, memorial services should be held outside of school hours (Mpumalanga Department of Education, undated). The DoE further states that no teacher shall leave the school for a memorial service earlier than 13H00 (Ibid). This illustrates that what the two (2) selected schools do in terms of attending memorial services is in contradiction with the DoE policy.

#### *4.3.2.2.8 "Teacher loss" due to strike action*

Data collected indicates that teachers were on strike action for a number of days in 2007 and 2010 respectively. The salary increase proposed by the government was the subject of widespread strikes by teachers in June 2007, which was the largest strike since the institution of a democratic regime in the country (AfriMap, 2007). Despite the effect on learners, the strike enjoyed public sympathy; and for one day the public sector workers were joined in solidarity by workers in the private sector (Ibid).

It was also noted that teachers as well as learners were not at school for the duration of the strike. This goes without saying that there was no formal teaching and learning taking place, with learners suffering the most. According to Oosthuizen (2011), a tradition of striking built up by several labour unions has resulted in the professionalism and motive to serve to lack among teachers. Oosthuizen holds that the sharp aim on striking among labour unions such as especially the Democratic Teachers Union, SADTU, have a strong influence on essential teachers who are currently working at historically disadvantaged schools.

The 2007 strikes affected the morale of the workers who had been campaigning for a 12 per cent increase (AfriMap, 2007). They eventually had to settle on a 7.25 per cent increase after long, hard negotiations (Ibid). Way before the 2007 and 2010 strike actions, the Department of Public Service and Administration issued instructions to all governmental departments to apply the principle of no “work, no pay” or alternatively, “leave without pay” (LWP) for absences other than approved leave during the strikes (ECDoE, 2011). Deductions in respect of LWP had to be recovered in three (3) equal instalments, which created major setbacks for teachers (Ibid).

The schools under study can also be classified as historically disadvantaged schools because they are located in the rural areas and are both quintile 2 (see table 2). According to the data collected, the consequences of the strike were not good at all, judging by the end of the year results, especially in school B which represents a high school. “The motive to serve suffers when the money motive becomes the norm. The

majority of schools that did not adopt the tradition of strikes do, however, perform very well” (Oosthuizen, 2011).

### **4.3.3 Replacement of “lost” teachers**

From the data collected, it was noted that the DoE either takes a long time to replace teachers lost in schools or doesn’t replace them at all. Based on that, it seems like it is not easy for the schools to get a replacement once they lose one of their staff members. This is supported by Tsheko (2010) who states that although there is a need to replace teachers who are lost to the teaching service due to various attrition routes, there is a general feeling among teachers that replacement of teachers takes a long time. This is also supported by Barnett and Whiteside (2003:202) who noted that teachers are difficult to replace, which leaves classes untaught for extended periods of time, due to problems with finding suitable replacements. Furthermore, the lengthy time lag does not augur well for a healthy and sustained provision of teaching and learning (Diko & Letseka, 2009). The pressure as a result of vacant posts is often absorbed by teachers in the system, who are already overloaded in regard to teaching and administrative allocations (Ibid).

The above situation is in contradiction with the DoE policy that a school should be provided with a temporal teacher once permanent “teacher loss” such as death, transfer, retirement, etc. is experienced (ECDoE, undated). Furthermore, in addition to the provision of substitutes, the DoE also provides temporal appointments for substantive posts (Ibid). These appointments are usually based on renewable three-month contracts, depending on the school’s staffing needs (Diko & Letseka, 2009). The

temporal teacher shall remain at school until the vacant post is filled (Ibid). In the temporary status category of teachers, there is a sub category of teachers who are mainly paid by the district from its funds by a stipend for a period of a month up to 3 months (Zisongile-Dekeda, 2009).

So the fact that the appointment of teachers does not go according to policy impacts negatively on the quality of education provided to students, because the longer it takes for the DoE to replace teachers lost, the more frustrations thereof for both teachers and learners.

#### **4.3.4 Strategies employed**

Data collected indicates that there were different strategies employed by the selected schools to cope with “teacher loss”. Some of the strategies were found to be more relevant in the primary school setup, whereas some were found to be more relevant in the high school. However, there were also those that seemed to fit in both the high school and primary school set up. This is because of the different levels at which the two (2) selected schools operate (i.e. primary and high school). The strategies employed were multi-grade teaching, monitoring of the class by the teachers present, secondment of the teacher by the DoE, distribution of the workload that belonged to the teachers lost, catch-up programme, finding a substitute teacher.

##### **4.3.4.1 Multi-grade teaching**

Kassiem (2007); Little (2004) maintain that in some primary school systems the same teacher teaches all subjects with children of different grade levels in one classroom

throughout the school year. This is called multi-grade teaching which is mostly found in Schools in areas where the student and teacher numbers are declining, and where previously there was mono-graded teaching (Little, 2004).

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012), in multi-grade teaching, a teacher works with learners from two (2) or more grade levels at the same time in a single classroom. Multi-grading is often associated with 'small' schools in remote areas (Berry, undated; Little, 2001). These 'small' schools are also sometimes referred to as 'multi-grade' schools (Ibid)). In this study, the primary school selected is a small school with low learner and teacher numbers which resulted in multi-grade teaching being employed as a strategy to cope with “teacher loss”. This suggests that multi-grade teaching as a strategy to cope with “teacher loss” is more relevant in the primary school set up.

However, according to the respondents in school A which represents a primary school, multi-grade teaching is very difficult for them and as a result, not effective in their school since learners get less than those in mono-grade classes. The respondents cited the inability of the teacher to give individual attention to the learners who may need it as a reason why they say multi-grade teaching is not effective. This is in line with what Ames (2004), observed that teachers feel unprepared to work in multi-grade classrooms, judge that children don't 'get the same' as in mono-grade classrooms and report that they have insufficient educational materials to support learning in the multi-grade classroom. Managing a multi-grade classroom is difficult because there is more than one grade level in the classroom (Berry, undated, Suzuki, 2004). Hence, the teacher

must be skilled in managing instruction to reduce the amount of 'dead time' during which children are not productively engaged on task (Berry, undated).

The above situation suggests that teachers are not well capacitated in terms of teaching and learning skills as well as classroom management skills to deal with multi-grade teaching. Teachers also seem to be lacking in terms of the different strategies that they can implement to make multi-grade teaching effective. A recent piece of action research suggests that teachers' attitudes to multi-grade teaching become more positive once they realise that there are strategies that can be used to improve student achievement outcomes and lessen the teacher's burden of intensive lesson planning for several grades (Vithanapathirana as cited in Little, 2004). In this regard, Little (2004) adds that the implementation of a single strategy is unlikely to lead to significant improvements in the effectiveness of learning and teaching in multi-grade settings. Surrounding these strategies is the need for national policies (for curriculum, materials, teacher education and assessment) that recognise, legitimate and support learners and teachers in multi-grade settings.

Contrary to what the respondents in this study said, multi-grade teaching has its benefits to teachers and learners which could make life easier in multi-grade classes. Little (2004) lists some benefits that multi-grade teaching can offer: learners develop self study skills, learners cooperate across age groups, resulting in collective ethics, concern and responsibility, learners help each other, teachers can organise both remediation and enrichment activities for low and high achievers respectively more discreetly than in mono-grade classes. Veenman, (1996) claims that multi-grade

classes have a small / slightly negative effect on student achievement as well as potentially negative effects on teacher motivation. Multi-grade classes generally have better students and perhaps better teachers (Ibid). This again shows a gap in the policy implementation of multi-grade teaching in schools and can only be achieved if teachers can be trained to gain the necessary skills to deal with multi-grade classes. Pre-service and in-service training for teachers on the needs of the multi-grade class is vital (Little, 2004).

#### **4.3.4.2 *Monitoring of the class by the teachers present***

Data gathered from the two (2) selected schools indicate that when one (1) of the teachers is absent or on leave for a few days, one (1) of the teachers present monitors the class of the teacher who is absent. According to the respondents from both schools, this was done to ensure that learners do the work that was left by their teacher without making noise to disturb other classes. This is supported by Fifer (1998) who posits that the presence of the teacher in class increases student interaction and decreases student inappropriate behavior.

Although monitoring of the class was the strategy implemented in both the selected schools, it seemed not to be implemented or received in the same way by the respective schools. For instance in school A, which represents a primary school, teachers had to leave their own classes, leaving their own kids unattended to attend to the class which has no teacher. This seemed not to go down well with the teachers as they complained about given more responsibilities on top of the workload that they already have. The researcher found this not safe for both the teacher and learners- anything may happen in the absence of the teacher, which in turn, can bring the teacher

into trouble. This is because teachers have the duty of care towards all the learners when they are in class, and should always ensure that learners' safety is upheld (Smit, 2010). Should anything wrong (e.g. injury) happen to any child in the absence of their teacher, the teacher will be held accountable for that (Ibid). Therefore, the way monitoring is conducted in school A poses serious implications for both teachers and the school as a whole.

However, in school B, which represents a high school, the monitoring of the class was reportedly done by the teachers only when they had a free period. According to the respondents in school B, all the teachers do have free periods at different times of the day which makes it convenient for them to go and monitor the class which has no teacher.

Although this strategy seemed to be received positively by the majority of the respondents in school B, it doesn't go without any challenges. For instance, the respondents argue that having to go and monitor someone else's class denies them an opportunity to prepare and mark his/her learners' work, as well as to have some needed rest before going to the next lesson.

#### **4.3.4.3. *Secondment of the teacher by the DoE***

Data collected from interviews and document analysis reveal that a teacher was seconded to school A by the DoE. This was done as a strategy to assist the school in terms of coping with the loss of some of their teachers. According to Bengu (1999), employee organisations (schools in this case) are entitled to have educators seconded to organisations registered with the ELRC, to occupy full time positions to which they

have been duly elected. Consideration must be given to the teaching and learning program. It is important that the entitlement does not disrupt the school program or the management of education. For this purpose, this entitlement is structured in such a manner that it applies to a calendar year, that is, from 1 January to 31 December of each year (Ibid).

However, data collected from school A indicate that the seconded educator assumed duty at school in April 2010, and the last time I checked, was still at school in August 2011. This implies that the DoE and the school in question did not follow the rules and regulations laid out in the PAM document (Bengu, 1999) regarding the secondment of educators. Bengu (1999) clearly states that secondment should start from 1 January to 31 December, yet in school A it started in April. This gave the researcher an impression that although the DoE makes policies to be implemented by their employees and schools, its officials do not ensure that those policies are being upheld. This indicates a gap in the policy making and its implementation within the DoE.

According to the respondents from school A, secondment of the teacher to their school by the DoE was the only strategy they reported to be effective in their school to cope with “teacher loss”. This is because the arrival of another teacher to their school meant that some educators would be relieved of some of the duties they were expected to perform. Some of the duties would be assigned to the seconded teacher.

#### **4.3.4.4 Distribution of the workload that belonged to the teachers lost**

There should be an equitable distribution of workload between the various post levels and within a post level, to ensure that one or two of the levels or an educator is not overburdened (Bengu, 1999). For example, in primary school, a post level 1 teacher is allocated between 85% and 92% teaching time, post level 2 teacher between 85% and 90%, deputy principal 60% and the principal allocated between 10% and 92% teaching time depending on which post level appointed to (Ibid). The expectation is that every educator must be able to account for 1800 actual working hours per annum (Ibid).

Data collected from school B indicate that when a teacher is lost to the school for whatever reason, the workload that belonged to that teacher is distributed amongst the teachers who teach the same subject as that of the teacher lost. The identification of those teachers was reportedly done by the SMT, looking especially for those with lesser number of periods. During the interview process, the post level 1 teachers expressed their dissatisfaction about being allocated more subjects as a result of “teacher loss”, without the matter being discussed with them first. This indicates that in school B, workload is not distributed fairly amongst the staff.

The allocation of subjects, timetable and resultant scheduled teaching time should be determined by the Principal in consultation with the educator staff (Bengu, 1999). However, this was not the case in school B where the teachers were never consulted by the SMT or principal before they were allocated the subjects of the teachers which the school had lost. This resulted in the post level 1 teachers being unhappy about the distribution of the workload in their school. This suggests that the SMT in school B does

not consult with the entire staff when it comes to the distribution of the workload at school. This shows a communication breakdown between the staff and the SMT which may negatively affect teachers' performance due to their unhappiness.

Furthermore, it was noted that some teachers have lesser number of periods than others in school B which may suggest that the workload is not distributed equally amongst the staff in some schools. This is despite the fact that Bengu (1999) states that there should be an equitable distribution of workload between the various post levels and within a post level, to ensure that one or two of the levels or an educator is not overburdened. This suggests that the SMT should consider different aspects of the teacher's job which include teaching, administration, extra-curricular, etc., when distributing the workload of teachers. This will ensure that the workload is distributed fairly amongst the staff and that no teacher carries more workload than the others.

#### **4.3.4.5 Recovery plan**

Document analysis from school B, which represents a high school, highlighted that after the strike action in 2007; the SMT came up with a recovery plan to return the time lost during the strike. The plan suggested that teachers would be requested to come to school even during September holidays and during weekends in October 2007. It was also noted that this was discussed at SMT level only; teachers were never consulted for their input on the matter. As a result, evidence shows that this plan didn't work out as there was no evidence of teachers attending school during September 2007 holidays or weekends in October the same year.

The above situation indicates that teachers were not happy about not being consulted with a decision that directly affects them, and which requires them to sacrifice some of their spare time. Teachers are more likely to own the school activities when they are involved in the decision making process (Appleton, 2006). Ignoring their input may lead to non-cooperation (Ibid). Moreover, transformational leadership theory posits that interactions with colleagues are teachers' most valued form of professional stimulation and an environment that allows for professional discretion bolsters teachers' motivation, commitment, and confidence (Billingsley, 1993).

However, after the 2010 strike action, evidence shows that the matter of a recovery plan was discussed by the SMT and the staff in school B. Evidence further reveals that the idea was well received by the staff members, because it was noted that teachers did attend school during the September holidays in 2010 as well as during weekends in October 2010. This shows some commitment on the side of the teachers and that they do care about the education of the children.

#### **4.3.4.6 *Finding a substitute***

Data collected from school A indicate that the school did apply for a substitute teacher after one of their staff members took maternity leave. Evidence further shows that the substitute teacher assumed duty at school on the first day that the other teacher was supposed to start her maternity leave. This indicates that there are certain circumstances, such as maternity leave, etc., where the DoE doesn't drag its feet when it comes to the replacement of teachers. This is in line with what the contingency theory of leadership entails, that the optimal course of action is contingent (dependent) upon

the internal and external situation (Bush & Middlewood, 2005; Schoech, 2006; Sing Tng, 2009; Wikipedia, 2010).

Furthermore, teachers are replaced only when they have been granted leave such as long-term sick leave, further studies, maternity leave or retirement (Tsheko, 2010). According to ECDoE (undated), a substitute teacher may only be granted to schools after thirty (30) days. This implies that schools have to find other means of coping with “teacher loss” until the 30<sup>th</sup> day comes, leaving teachers and learners suffering in terms of teaching and learning.

#### **4.3.5 Effects of “teacher loss” on teachers**

50 % of the respondents, who all happened to be at the post level 1 from both schools, were asked about the effects of “teacher loss” on them, since they are the ones more involved in teaching. They all shared the view that “teacher loss” has brought only negative effects on them. These include Work overload, Stress, Negative attitudes towards career, Painful experiences.

##### **4.3.5.1 Work overload**

There is a general feeling among teachers that replacement of teachers takes a long time. What happens is that when a teacher is absent, other teachers take on their workload (Tsheko, 2010). The common practice is for the other teachers to divide the workload of the absent teacher amongst themselves (Ibid). According to data collected from both schools selected, the workload of the teachers lost was given to the teachers that are present at school. This implies that the teachers who are present at school are given extra work to do and left with heavy workloads (News24, 2010). This adds on a

wide range of the duties and responsibilities that the teachers already have, resulting in work overload for those teachers.

The duties and responsibilities of the post level 1 teacher include, among others, to engage in class teaching, including the academic, administrative, educational and disciplinary aspects and to organize extra and co-curricular activities so as to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner (Bengu, 1999). Commonwealth Secretariat (2003) adds that not only do teachers serve as educators, but they also serve as disciplinarians, administrators, managers, mediators, HIV/AIDS counselors, and custodians of children.

The above stated reality shows that the teacher's job does not just end in teaching as many people may believe, there is so much that teachers do which makes their job more challenging and demanding. This also indicates that teachers are overloaded with work (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003; Kasseim, 2007; Macdonald, 1999), and the DoE is aware of that, despite the fact that there are a number of qualified teachers who are sitting without a job. This confirms Appleton's (2006) findings that the shortage of teachers does not automatically translate into available jobs for newly qualified teachers.

#### **4.3.5.2 Stress**

There is a link between the conditions of teaching and teachers' continuation with their work in the occupation (Macdonald, 1999). Teacher stress can be described as the experience of tension, anxiety, frustration, anger, and depression resulting from work (Kyriacou as cited in Macdonald, 1999). This is in support of Mrozek's (undated) claim,

that if given the opportunity, almost all teachers would not become teachers again, as teaching is either very or extremely stressful, and that teachers have surfaced at the start of the new millennium as the most afflicted with rising stress. An international survey report conducted by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) revealed that 25-33% of teachers suffered significantly from stress and that stress was a major issue for teachers and attrition (Macdonald, 1999). In this regard, Houchins et al (2004) warns that teachers who are stressed weekly or daily are significantly more likely to leave teaching.

In this study, the majority of the respondents reported that “teacher loss” has resulted in so much stress for them. This is due to the poor conditions under which they are expected to perform their duties, e.g. overcrowded classrooms due to multi-grade teaching, high teacher-pupil ratio, lack of resources, lack of support, work overload, etc. It is argued (Billingsley, 1993; Mbanjwa, 2010) that with unsupportive and unfavourable work environments, and problems with role expectations, teachers are likely to experience reduced commitment, stress, burnout and eventually, teacher loss. In this regard, Brian Finkelstein, a clinical psychologist, reports to have attended to a number of cases where teachers were stressed and overworked, and who have left the system as a result (Kasseim, 2007). This may have the negative impact on the quality of education produced by teachers. This also indicates that the DoE is failing the schools in terms of offering the necessary support that could ensure smooth administration of teaching and learning.

#### **4.3.5.3 *Negative attitudes towards career***

The isolated and isolating conditions of work and the poverty of the communities served by multi-grade schools reinforce teachers' negative attitude to the school (Ames, 2004). This is in support of the data collected from school A, where teachers expressed their development of negative attitude towards teaching as a career, due to the amount of work overload that multi-grade teaching brings on their shoulders. This could bring serious implications for the school since teachers may be unable to give their best in terms of teaching due to having negative attitudes towards their job. This may also impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning at school, and could paint a bad picture at the end of the year results for the school.

#### **4.3.5.4 *Painful experiences***

Data gathered from school B indicate that "teacher loss", death in particular, has brought painful experiences for both teachers and learners at school. It was noted from the respondents' stories that teachers find it difficult to cope when one of their staff members dies. In this regard, Demaria (undated) suggests that teachers can disclose their own sadness about the loss to the students if that is what they genuinely experience and model for the students how they personally cope with painful emotions (e.g. pray, take walks, talk with friends).

## **4.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, data as reported by the respondents, were presented and analysed. Data presented were gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The presentation of data entailed "teacher loss" categories in the

selected schools, strategies used by the selected schools to cope with “teacher loss”, replacement of teachers lost by the DoE, respondents’ views on the effectiveness of the strategies employed by the selected schools to cope with “teacher loss”, as well as the respondents’ views on the effects of “teacher loss” on teachers. The chapter also discussed the findings of this research report, with reference to the relevant literature.

The next chapter deals with the conclusion and recommendations.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter dealt with data presentation and analysis, where the findings were also discussed with reference to relevant literature. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a final reflection on the research that has been conducted. This is done by giving a summary of the research project, conclusion drawn from the collected data as well as making recommendations for further research.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”. This was done by posing the following research questions:

Main research question: How do the selected schools adapt in times of “teacher loss”?

Sub-questions:

- What is the teachers’ conception of “teacher loss”?
- What strategies do the selected schools use to cope with “teacher loss”?
- What do these strategies reveal about the possibilities and limitations that schools are confronted with?
- What implications does “teacher loss” have on leadership and management?

In conducting the research, the researcher purposively selected two (2) schools, a primary and a high school. Both schools were located in the rural areas and are both quintile two (2), as they are regarded as the most affected areas in terms of “teacher loss”. Four (4) teachers from each school participated in this study, bringing the total number of respondents to eight (8). From each school, a principal, an HOD as well as two (2) post level 1 teachers were selected purposively to participate in the study.

A qualitative research approach, an interpretive paradigm as well as a case study design were adopted in this study. Data were collected through different phases of data collection, namely: the pilot phase and the main research phase. These data were collected through the use of different methods, namely: semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions were drawn from the literature that was reviewed for the study, as well as from data collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis from the selected schools.

#### **5.3.1 Summary of findings**

Data collected reveals that:

- Teachers have a narrow understanding of the concept of “teacher loss”.
- “Teacher loss” is experienced either permanently or temporarily.
- “Teacher loss” can either be voluntary or involuntary.

- “Teacher loss” has a negative effect on the day to day activities and running of the school.
- “Teacher loss” has negative effects on teachers and learners.
- It is not easy to find a replacement when a school has experienced “teacher loss”.
- The DoE takes a long time to replace teachers lost.
- Transfers, redeployment, retirement, death form part of permanent “teacher loss” as experienced by the selected schools.
- Leaves, workshops, memorial services and union meetings during school hours, as well as strike action form part of temporary “teacher loss” as experienced by the selected schools.
- Multi-grade teaching, monitoring of the class by the teachers present, secondment, recovery plan, finding a substitute are some of the strategies used at the selected school to cope with “teacher loss”.
- There is lack of support from SMTs as well as the DoE in terms of helping teachers cope with “teacher loss”
- There is a gap in terms of policy intention and implementation in schools.
- Department of Education, school principals as well as teacher unions contribute, to some degree, to high rate of absenteeism in schools.
- Teachers have limited knowledge in terms of strategies that can be used to cope with “teacher loss”.
- Coping strategies for “teacher loss” differ in terms of their relevance according to the different levels at which schools operate, e.g. primary and secondary level.

### **5.3.2 Implications for leadership and management**

In line with Burn's transformational leadership theory discussed in chapter two (2), which forms part of the theoretical framework for this study, the implications of "teacher loss" for leadership and management of the school are that the leader should engage with staff members in such a way that they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality towards a common goal (Covey, 2004; Bush & Middlewood, 2005). According to this theory, leaders should create positive change in the teachers whereby they take care of each other's interests and act in the interests of others (Daszko & Sheinberg, 2005).

Data collected raises a number of implications for school leadership and management. Evidently, the issue of "teacher loss" put many schools, including teachers and learners, at a disadvantage. This disadvantage situation is illustrated by the consequences thereof experienced by the entire school, and thus, teachers.

School leadership and management cannot ignore the issues raised above. In the educational context, this must be a worrying reality not just for the DoE, but for school leaders, teachers as well as learners. School principals are tasked with ensuring, among other things, the well fare of teachers as well as learners at school. So, having teachers who are stressed, overloaded and de-motivated brings a serious threat to teaching and learning process, which needs to be addressed by the leadership and management of the school. Therefore, transformational leadership theory provides a platform for collaboration among teachers and the principal, which also helps in the prevention of "teacher loss" (Allensworth et al, 2009).

As indicated above, collected data indicates that teachers are de-motivated as result of “teacher loss”. In a school context, unfriendly experiences de-motivate and lower the self-esteem of the individual affected (Jakuja, 2009). This implies that the school management team, headed by the school principal, should find ways of keeping teachers motivated regardless of “teacher loss” in their school. Since “teacher loss” results in stressed and de-motivated teachers because of too much work load (Kasseim, 2007), a need to motivate and inspire them is demanded in order for them to see the importance and higher good of the task (Cherry, undated; Doyle & Smith, 2001). This is in line with Burn’s transformational leadership theory discussed in chapter two, which is about building a unified common interest between principals and teachers (Bush & Middlewood, 2005).

For instance in school B, the principal reported that the school honours those that have achieved good things, academically and otherwise towards the end of each year. This is to motivate them to do even more in the following year regardless of the problems facing the school. This suggests that by rewarding teachers who have contributed significantly to the school, this may raise teachers’ self esteem, and encourage / motivate them to do even more. This is the task of the school management team. In addressing the issue of “teacher loss”, intrinsic rewards / motivation by SMTs are very helpful to those left at school (Billingsley, 1993; Macdonald, 1999; Shen, 1997; Xaba, 2003).

Furthermore, data collected also reveal that there are no support structures to assist the schools or teachers who are affected by “teacher loss”. According to Berry (undated),

schools, and thus teachers, need as much support as they can get in order to overcome the challenges posed by “teacher loss”. This implies that school management teams must take the lead in this regard, as they are the ones dealing with the day to day running of the school. This will ensure that teachers are able to give their best because of the support they receive within the school context. Furthermore, a transformational leadership approach, which forms part of the theoretical framework for this study, has the potential to engage all stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives (Bush, 2007). Teachers stay in schools where their colleagues are collaborators, school administration is supportive and the learning climate for students is safe and non-disruptive (Ibid).

The disadvantage situation caused by the conditions created by “teacher loss” may lead to some teachers wanting to leave the school. When work is unfair, workers do not work hard, are far less committed to the organisation, and are more likely to leave the organisation (Ames, 2004). Educative teaching and learning, as core business of school organisations, require an environment conducive to such activities (Jakuja, 2009). This implies that the school management teams should strive to create fair and favourable conditions to teaching and learning in their schools, and ensure that teachers are happy at school. Therefore, transformational leadership theory provides a platform for a leader / SMT to engage with staff members in such a way that they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality towards a common goal (Covey, 2004; Bush & Middlewood, 2005). This may help in the retention of their staff members. Once teachers are happy in their work environment, and enjoy the support of the SMT in whatever problems they experience, they are more likely to stay at school.

Furthermore, data collected revealed that in order to cope with “teacher loss”, school communities, especially teachers and learners, need as much support as they can get from other relevant stake holders, especially community or parent involvement in the education of their children (Averett, Jordan & Orozco, 2001; Gonzalez-DeHass, undated; Leah, 1995; Skiba & Strassell, undated). It is impossible to imagine an excellent school that does not engage families and community members in meaningful, productive ways (Leah, 1995). Parent involvement promotes a healthy and consistent learning environment by establishing mutual goals between parents and educators and developing activities that bridge home and school (Skiba & Strassell, undated). Parent involvement programs actively engage parents through a variety of activities that enable them to more fully participate in their children’s education both at home and at school (Ibid).

Furthermore, the evidence is clear: When parents are actively involved in their children’s education, their children do better in school (Leah, 1995). In addition, Mapp as cited in Leah (1995) posits that a relationship between parental involvement and enhanced student self-esteem, improves student behaviour, and better student attendance. When parents become involved, students, teachers, and the school all benefit (Ibid). Therefore, community or parent involvement at school consolidates the core business of the school, which is teaching and learning (Averett, Jordan & Orozco, 2001; Gonzalez-DeHass, undated; Leah, 1995; Skiba & Strassell, undated). However, although the importance of family involvement is widely recognized in education, its

implementation in actual practice is weaker (Shores as cited in Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, undated).

Despite the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children, the relationship between parents and schools seems to weaken as children move from primary school to secondary school (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, undated). However, parent involvement at the secondary level is just as important, if not more important, than in the primary years since adolescents have much to gain from the exposure to many different adult models as they try to form their own identities (Ibid)

### **5.3.3 Possibilities and limitations that the schools are confronted with**

Data collected also raises a number of possibilities and limitations that schools are confronted with as a result of “teacher loss”. It is also very important, therefore, to look at these so as to identify the effects “teacher loss” has brought to the entire school community. Data collected revealed that some schools are faced with a situation of producing some underdeveloped learners because of lack of individual attention given to them by their teachers. This is because some teachers raised a concern about being asked to teach multi-grade, a setup that is reportedly not easy to offer individual support to the learners.

Data collected also revealed that the schools, especially those in the rural areas, are also confronted with the problem of having teachers who are stressed and overworked.

This is as a result of the burden that “teacher loss” has brought to their shoulders. This poses a serious threat on the quality of teaching and learning at school.

Data collected also revealed that some schools may face the situation of having teachers who are not enthusiastic about their work, who just do things for the sake of doing them. Respondent TA1 said: “Because of the situation in our school, I don’t feel enthusiastic about my work anymore; instead I feel that too much is expected from me. I try so hard but it is just practically impossible”. This suggests that some teachers’ morals are down, and that there is so much that leadership and management have to do in terms of motivating them to do their best in terms of their performance.

It was also revealed that some schools are in danger of having teachers who have now developed negative attitudes towards teaching as a career. For instance, respondent TB2 even reported that she has lost some interest in her work and she no longer enjoys teaching. This is not good at all for the school because once teachers become negative about their career; they are more likely to produce negative results.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The following recommendations are made for further research:

- The number of schools sampled should be increased to gain more views on the issue of “teacher loss”.
- The district office as well as its officials should also form part of the research site and participants.
- Different locations of the research sites, e.g. Rural, semi-urban and urban, should also be considered.

- Learners should also form part of the research participants to find out how the situation of “teacher loss” has affected them.
- On-site observation should also be included as one of the data collection methods to increase the credibility of data.
- The DoE should provide training for teachers on multi-grade teaching.

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## **7. APPENDICES**

### **7.1 Appendix A - Pilot study report**

#### **1. Background**

In this research, pilot study was conducted in one school, which is not among the schools sampled for the main research but having similar characteristics as those of the main study. This was done to make sure that the questions set are answerable and that the tools to be used actually work (Shuttleworth, 2010). Pilot study involved four (4) participants, i.e. the school principal, HOD and two (2) post level 1 teachers. In addition to that, a pilot study allowed the researcher to conduct a preliminary analysis before committing to a full-blown study (Ibid). This also helped the researcher to condition himself for the various kinds of reception he might get from people with different characters and personalities, who will participate in the main research.

#### **2. Negotiation of entry**

A letter was obtained from the University of Fort Hare which requested permission for the researcher to collect data in the site selected for the pilot phase. This letter was presented to the principal of the school as a gate keeper (Saunders et al, 2003), who showed willingness to assist the researcher in his request. The researcher also explained the research objectives in detail which ensured that the principal understood what the research is all about, and was able to offer his support.

Access to the SMT member as well as the teachers was negotiated verbally first, and then the researcher requested them to fill in some consent forms to secure their participation in the study. This process happened smoothly without any negative attitudes from the respondents. It was only after this process that the researcher began collecting data.

### **3. Research instrument**

The instrument used was the interview schedule, which is the one also used in the main study. The better part of the instrument proved appropriate as it addressed the questions that are intended for the main study and mostly allowed the respondents to provide rich data. The reason for undergoing this process was to identify any loopholes in the instrument of collecting data and to check whether strategies intended for the main research would be effective, as suggested by Shuttleworth (2008).

However, there were some few adjustments that needed to be made in the research instrument. For instance the researcher was not happy with the responses he got for question number 5, section B in the instrument. Judging by the responses from all the respondents, the researcher feels that the question kind of restricted the respondents to giving a response that only reflected “teacher loss” in one year only (see appendix C, D, E), instead of reflecting “teacher loss” at school as it happened in different years, for different reasons.

### **4. Suggested changes**

The researcher was happy with the instrument except for the question mentioned above. This suggested that the question needed to be rephrased going to the main study in order to provide rich data. Going to the main study, the question now read, “What categories have been there for “teacher loss” in your school, and in which years did they occur?” It was anticipated that this would give the researcher more information about different categories of “teacher loss” as they occurred in different years for different reasons, not necessarily in one year only.

### **5. Language used**

There were two (2) languages used during the interview process, i.e. isiXhosa and English. IsiXhosa is the mother tongue of the respondents and English is the language used in the instrument, and the respondents were allowed to code switch between the two (2) languages when responding to the questions. This was done so as to create a more relaxed atmosphere for the interview process, and to make the respondents

express themselves freely, and thus giving rich information. This helped a lot because the respondents could dwell as much as they could in giving their responses, without being too cautious about making mistakes using the foreign language.

However, the use of two (2) languages in the interview process also proved to be time consuming when it came to the analysis of data. This is because the researcher had to translate whatever was said in isiXhosa during the interview process into the language of reporting, which is English.

## **6. Challenges experienced**

Although the pilot phase went well, there were some challenges that the researcher experienced during the process. When the researcher went to the research site to interview the member of the SMT, technical problems occurred with the recorder. The researcher had to carry on with the interview without recording, but only taking notes while the respondent was talking. This really disturbed the process and was also time consuming as the researcher often had to ask the respondent to repeat what she was saying so as to write it down properly. This is because the researcher couldn't match the speed of the respondent by capturing everything she was saying. This suggested that going to the main study, the researcher had to have a backup for the recorder, so that he doesn't experience the same problem again.

On top of that, the principal and the SMT member were scheduled to be interviewed on the same day but in different times, but on arrival to the research site, only the principal was present. The reason given by the principal for the SMT member's absence was that she had to attend a workshop and that they forgot to inform the researcher. This meant that the interview for the SMT member had to be rescheduled for another day and time, which meant more visits to the school by the researcher. This suggested that going to the main study, the researcher should phone before going to the research site to confirm the availability of the respondents, even if they have agreed to meet on the day.

## **7. Data analysis.**

Gibbs et al (2005) states that qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. Terre Blanche et al (2002) concurs with this by maintaining that data analysis involves reading through your data repeatedly and engaging in activities of breaking the data down and building it up again in novel ways. In this pilot study, data has been analysed in order to give sense to the information that the researcher had collected from the respondents.

Questions in the interview schedule were formulated within the context of the questions of the main study. During the pilot phase, these were found to be in line with the study. All the questions in the main study were addressed and responses to the theme of the study are as reflected below :

### **7.1. “Teacher loss” categories**

All the respondents mentioned redeployment and transfers as the reasons for “teacher loss” at school. They also all agreed that those teachers were never replaced.

### **7.2. Strategies used**

All the respondents mentioned Multi-grade teaching as a strategy adopted after losing teachers. This suggested that at this school, there are no other strategies other than multi-grade teaching that are employed to cope with “teacher loss”.

### **7.3. Support strategies**

The management of the school feels that there is some kind of support that they offer to the other staff members to cope with “teacher loss”. For instance the principal and the SMT

member mentioned that they do encourage team work amongst the teachers to create good working relationship.

However, both post level 1 teachers felt that there was no support that they receive from the management of the school to cope with “teacher loss”. They also blame the DoE for not offering their support as they feel that it has a role to play in this kind of a situation. The management of the school also said that there are no programmes at school to capacitate teachers to adapt in times of “teacher loss”. They feel that is the duty of the DoE, not the school as they are the ones who put the school in that situation.

#### **7.4. Problems encountered**

According to the principal, teachers are reluctant to baby-sit and perform any duties that were assigned to the teachers lost. They complain about work overload as they feel they have a lot to deal with already. She also mentioned that this has also negatively affected her relationship with the other staff members, because she is the one to see to it that the work is done regardless of the problems facing teachers.

The SMT member said that the teachers often complain about work overload. She also mentioned that that they also miss due dates for their submissions, saying that there is too much that they have to do with very little time available. Unattended learners who make noise are another problem that the SMT is faced with.

### **8. Findings**

The above analysis reveals the following:

- That redeployment and transfers are some of the reasons for teachers to leave schools.
- When a teacher is redeployed to another school, the releasing school will not get a replacement for that teacher.
- Multi-grade teaching is the strategy used at the selected school to cope with “teacher loss”.
- There is no support from the leadership and management of the school, as well as the DoE, directed to teachers who are affected by “teacher loss”. This is despite the fact that their support is crucial to help teachers cope with such loss.

- Teachers are reluctant to baby-sit and perform any duties that were assigned to the teachers lost, citing work overload as their problem.
- Teacher loss situation negatively affected the principal's relationship with the other staff members, since she is the one to see to it that they have done the work.
- As a result of "teacher loss", some learners are sometimes left unattended and disturb other classes with noise.
- There are no policies guiding "teacher loss" at the selected school, and that there are no strategies in place to capacitate teachers to cope with such loss.
- Affected teachers become stressed and overworked and may not be able to offer their best in terms of teaching, which may result in poor quality of education at school.





### 7.3 Appendix C - Interview questions for the principals

#### Section A – Background information

GENDER :

AGE :

POSITION :

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS PRINCIPAL :

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION :

#### Section B – “Teacher loss” situation

1. Please tell me about yourself as a professional.
2. What are your major successes since you became the principal?
3. What major leadership challenges have you experienced since you took over as a principal of this school?
4. What does “teacher loss” mean to you?
5. What categories are there for “teacher loss” in your school? When did they occur?
6. What do you mean by redeployment?
7. How has that affected your relationship with the other staff members?
8. In any of the categories for teacher loss mentioned above, were those teachers replaced? If not, why? ....
9. If they were replaced, who replaced them (GOVT or SGB), after how long?
10. Whilst you were awaiting the replacement, what strategies did you use to respond to the challenge of teacher loss? How were these strategies arrived at?

11. In your opinion, how effective are those strategies for a better teaching and learning environment?
12. Are there any programs in place to capacitate teachers with more teaching and management skills in order to adjust in times of teacher loss?
13. Which aspects do you think are most important for the school to retain its teachers?
14. What efforts are made by the school to address that?
15. How do you manage to keep teachers motivated regardless of the problem of teacher loss?
16. How often do your teachers take leave? What types of leaves do they frequently take, and for how long?
17. How does that affect the school, and how do you respond to such cases?

## 7.4 Appendix D - Interview questions for the SMT

### Section A– Background information

GENDER :

AGE :

POSITION :

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER :

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION :

### Section A – “Teacher loss” situation

1. How long have you been teaching at this school?
2. How long have you been a member of the SMT?
3. What major challenges have you experienced since you became an SMT member?
4. What does “teacher loss” mean to you?
5. What categories are there for “teacher loss” in your school?
6. What do you mean by redeployment?
7. What school policies have you put in place guiding “teacher loss” in your school?
8. When “teacher loss” has struck the school, which problems do you often encounter?
9. How do you address those problems?
10. What do you mean by seconding a teacher?
11. What role does the SMT play in trying to help teachers cope with such problems?

12. What strategies have the SMT put in place to cope with such “teacher loss”?
13. What strategies does the school employ in an effort to retain its current staff of teachers?
14. What happens when a teacher is absent or on leave?

## 7.5 Appendix E - Interview questions for post level 1 teachers

### Section A – Background information

GENDER :

AGE :

POSITION :

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER :

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION :

### Section B – “Teacher loss” situation

1. How long have you been teaching at this school?
2. What does “teacher loss” mean to you?
3. When last did the school lose a teacher?
4. What categories are you aware of that are there for “teacher loss” in your school?
5. How long did it take for those teachers to be replaced? If they were replaced.
6. What strategies are put in place by the SMT to cope with such loss?
7. In your opinion, how effective are those strategies for a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere at school?
8. What do you mean by teaching multi-grade and how are the learners experiencing it?
9. How has “teacher loss” at school affected you as a teacher?
10. Where and how do you receive support in this regard?
11. What are you expected to do when a certain teacher is absent or on leave?

## 7.6 Appendix F - Consent form

I, Sonwabo Jimana, an MEd candidate at the University of Fort Hare, School of Post Graduate Studies, as part of my academic programme, am conducting research on Strategies employed by schools to cope with “teacher loss”. As part of this process, I am inviting you to participate in the interview process.

Should you consent, I wish to guarantee you that any information that you provide will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be made available to anyone without your consent.

Thank you.

Signature.....

Date.....

I,....., Hereby give / not give consent to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I desire.

Signature.....

Date.....