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Teachers' perceptions of the influence of teacher unions on curriculum delivery

By

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Student Number: 902162594

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Minor Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Supervisor: Dr Clive Smith

January 2017
Abstract

There has been growing concern over South African (SA) learners' low achievement levels in English and Mathematics in international and national benchmark tests, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The 2011 PIRLS indicated that most South African grade five learners have not yet achieved the basic required literacy skills. In order to address SA’s learners’ poor performance in English and Mathematics, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced the Annual National Assessment (ANA) in 2011. However, it would appear that the targets set for learner academic achievement remains elusive. For example, the 2014 ANA report findings indicated that grade nine learners achieved an average mark of 14% for Mathematics and an average mark of 43% for their Home Language. Many educational scholars are of the opinion that teacher unionism in SA constrains the government’s ability to pursue policy objectives to improve learner attainment.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perceptions of the influence of teacher unionism on the curriculum delivery. In order to achieve this general objective, the following exploration questions encircled this study:

- What is the nature of teacher unionism in township schools?
- Is the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery being managed and, if so, how?
- How do teachers think the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery can best be managed?

This research study followed a generic qualitative research design that was located within the interpretive paradigm. A case study design was employed as a research method. Open-ended intense interviews provided ample scope for a rich and in-depth exploration of the topic.

Despite quite a number of educational scholars perceiving teacher unionism in SA to have a negative influence on learner outcomes, minimal literature exists on the topic. This research exploration therefore intends to add to the body of knowledge with regards to teachers’ perceptions of the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery.
DECLARATION

Student Number: 902162594

I, Karen Sharon Kara, understand what plagiarism entails and am fully aware of the university’s policy in this regard. I declare that this study is my own original work. Where someone else’s work was used, whether from a printed source, the internet or any other source, due acknowledgement was given and complete references were made.

_______________________

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people who made it possible for me to complete this study:

“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17)

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- The University of Johannesburg for the financial support via a partial bursary.
- My friend, Weylandt Poole for the editing of my manuscript.
- To my friends and family for your interest and constant questions, support and encouragement.

Dedications

This thesis is a dedication to the following people:

- To my late mother, Sophie Lindoor–Speelman, the primary person who gave me a love for reading and learning and the greatest teacher I have ever had.
- My dad, Fred Thomas Speelman, who still regards teaching as the most noble of professions. Daddy, thank you for always believing in and being so proud of me.
- To my son, Shadin, just know that the greatest gift I was ever given is the purity and sincerity of your love. The day you were born, I instantly wanted to become a better person.
- To my sister Madaleine, “There is no better friend than a sister; and there is no better sister than you.” (Source unknown) Thank you, sis, for always being there for me.
- To my beautiful niece, Zoë – Lee, Aunty thanks you “poppet” for understanding me, and giving me the space and silence when I needed to work.
- And last, but not least, praise and honour to our Lord, Jesus Christ, who has given me the wisdom, discipline and strength to complete this study.
## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Annual National Assessment</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPS</td>
<td>Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATA</td>
<td>Cape African Teachers’ Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATU</td>
<td>Cape African Teachers' Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSATU</td>
<td>Congress of South African Trade Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBE</td>
<td>Department of Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>ELPTU</td>
<td>East London Progressive Teachers’ Union</td>
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<td>ELRC</td>
<td>Education Labour Relations Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDE</td>
<td>Gauteng Department of Education</td>
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<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>Inkatha Freedom Party</td>
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<td>IRP</td>
<td>Institutional Revolutionary Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Monitoring Learner Assessment</td>
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<td>NAPTOSA</td>
<td>National Professional Teacher’s Organisation</td>
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<td>NECC</td>
<td>National Education Crisis Committee</td>
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<td>NEUSA</td>
<td>National Education Union of South Africa</td>
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<td>NP</td>
<td>National Party</td>
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<td>NTUF</td>
<td>National Teachers’ Unity Forum</td>
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<td>NUEW</td>
<td>National Union of Education Workers</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBE</td>
<td>Outcomes Based Education</td>
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<td>PAC</td>
<td>Pan African Congress</td>
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<td>PAM</td>
<td>Personnel Administrative Measures</td>
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<td>PSCBC</td>
<td>Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTU</td>
<td>Progressive Teachers’ Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>RNCS</td>
<td>Revised National Curriculum Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACE</td>
<td>South African Council for Educators</td>
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<td>SACMEQ</td>
<td>South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality</td>
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<td>SACP</td>
<td>South African Communist Party</td>
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<td>SACTU</td>
<td>South African Congress of Trade Unions</td>
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<td>SAIC</td>
<td>South African Indian Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADTU</td>
<td>South African Democratic Teacher’s Union</td>
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<td>SAOU</td>
<td>Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATA</td>
<td>South African Teachers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>TATA</td>
<td>Transvaal African Teachers’ Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIMMS</td>
<td>Trends in International Mathematics and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFC</td>
<td>Teachers’ Federal Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUATA</td>
<td>Transvaal United Teachers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>United Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCOPT</td>
<td>World Confederation of Professional Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WECTU</td>
<td>Western Cape Teachers’ Union</td>
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Chapter one

1.1 Introduction and motivation

The impetus to embark on this research exploration was derived from my personal interaction with and observation of colleagues, where I noticed an increase in union activities amongst some of them. Being a teacher in a management position at a township (previously black disadvantaged) school; and noticing that some of my colleagues becoming more unionised at some stage due to what I've perceived to be the influence of some new educators who had joined our staffing establishment, I decided to focus my study on teachers’ perceptions of the influence of teacher unions on curriculum delivery at a single primary township school. “Curriculum refers to the academic content that must be taught in a school” (Goniwe, 2016:3) and for the purpose of this research, curriculum denotes teaching and learning.

Prior to 1994, during the pre-democratic era, “parliament could make any law it wished; and no individual or establishment (including the courts) could contest the laws of Parliament” (Currie & de Waal, 2005:3). However, after the demise of Apartheid in 1994, South Africa became administered by the following fundamental values: “constitutionalism, the rule of law, democracy and accountability, separation of powers, checks and balances, co-operative governance and a decentralisation of power” (Currie et al., 2005:7). The decentralisation of powers post 1994, also gave all teacher unions the opportunity to be more closely involved with government which was not the case during the Apartheid era (Govender, 2004:267). This resulted in teacher unions being represented in co-operative policy-making frameworks such as the Education Labour relations Council (ELRC), “which is a registered bargaining council for the rights of educators” and deals with issues such as employees’ security of tenure, conditions of service and related benefits (Govender, 2004:267; Loock, Grobler & Mestry, 2009:98-100). Teacher unions are similarly represented in the South African Council for Educators (SACE), which is likewise a professional body for educators, and its basic role is to enhance the teaching profession, develop teachers and ensure that they abide by a professional conduct (Govender, 2004:267; Loock, et al. 2009:98). In addition, teacher unions are also represented in the Public Service, Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) (Govender, 2004:267). Furthermore, the
unions additionally have two delegates in the Department of Education (DoE) who are utilised to guarantee a co-ordinated effort and “sharing of ideas” particularly in respect to curriculum and its execution (Govender, 2004:267).

Presently, the four most well-known unions in the education sector are the South African Democratic Teacher’s Union (SADTU), the South African Teacher’s Association (SATA) (Oosthuizen, 2000:111), Die Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU) and the “National Professional Teacher’s Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA)” (Rossouw, 2005:45). Aside from the fact that all South African teacher unions are now much more represented in joint policy-making forums such as the ELRC, SACE and the PSBC as already described, Section 23 of the South African Constitution (South Africa, 1996) also enshrines the right for all South Africans to participate in union activities, which includes the right to strike. However, although it is teachers fundamental right to join in and participate in union activities as enshrined in the Constitution, the concern now is whether teacher unions, in their endeavour to secure better working conditions for their members, have come to violate learners’ educational rights to education.

1.2 Background, rationale and problem statement

Loock et al. (2009:99) notes the following principles to be generally pertinent to unions and has noticed that these principles, in many cases, shape portions of their constitutions. Those principles are:

- “The unalienable right of every child to quality education, within an equitable and non-discriminatory system of education
- A high level of professionalism from all educators
- The enhancement of all aspects of the working life of educators, and;
- A national organisation which will be non-racial, independent, autonomous and not politically aligned.”

However, although these constructive principles, by all accounts, appear to be a common thread among most unions, Loock et al. (2009:99) notes that teacher employment relations have become progressively more unionised in recent years. Moreover, it has further been noticed that ever since the declaration “of the Bill of Rights and the Labour Relations Act”, there has similarly been an increase in strike
action by teacher unions (Loock et al. 2009:101). Due to the perceived increase in unionised action and an upsurge in teacher strikes, teacher unions have been castigated by several educators, a fair amount of the South African public, key educational stakeholders, as well as researchers such as Letseka (2013:75), Irving (2012:399), Chisholm, Hoadley, Kivilu, Prinsloo, Brookes, Kgobe and Rule (2005:13) for bringing the education system into disrepute and not delivering on their mandates, as already described.

Some of the critics of teacher unions, such as Letseka (2013:75), postulate that unregulated teacher unionisation, which also includes teacher strikes during school hours, undermines the process of teaching and learning. Trevor Manuel, the Minister in the Presidency for the National Planning Commission from 2009 to 2014, has also cast his aspersions on teacher unions whom he felt was sabotaging the education system in order to accomplish their personal goals (Mail & Guardian, 2011). According to Manuel, “some teacher unions have become part of the problems that is bedevilling the education system” (Mail & Guardian, web source 2011). Manuel said that the responsibility of teacher unions should go beyond “representing their members against unfair labour practices” and that they should “emulate their counterparts abroad who strive for professionalism” and enhance the quality of education. Manuel proceeded by saying that educator unions should be about advancing “quality education, supporting weaker schools” giving proficient expert advice, guidance and “council to poorly performing schools and teachers” and in like manner, not be afraid to take extreme actions against villainous individuals who tarnish the image of the teaching profession (Mail & Guardian, web source 2011).

According to Jansen, (IOL News, 2009) “Many of the problems in South Africa’s education system stems from too much union involvement in schools …inferior training of teachers and fake marks”. Jansen (Moneyweb, web source 2012) further states that, “The schools of the poor are routinely disrupted by or thrashed by parents and by unions …without any effective intervention that delivers stable schools with predictable timetables.” He went on to say that, “Education in South Africa is in a state of crisis” and that “While many factors contributed to this, large-scale change was impossible if the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) led and the government followed, rather than the other way around” (Jansen, IOL News internet source 2015). It would appear that South Africa’s education system is indeed in a state
of crisis as hypothesized by Jansen (internet source 2015) for “The World Economic Forums’ competitiveness index for 2012-2013 ranked South Africa’s education system at 140 out of 144 countries, and its math and science education at 143 out of 144” (internet source 2016). In light of the above discussion, the issue to be explored in this specific minor dissertation therefore is, teachers’ perceptions on the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery.

1.3 Aims and objective of the research

This research has the objective of exploring teachers’ perceptions of the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. This includes:

- Describing the nature of teacher unionism in a primary township school.
- Investigating whether the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery is currently being managed and, if so, how?
- Eliciting teachers’ thoughts on how the influence of teacher unionism on the curriculum can best be managed.

1.4 Research methodology

Since the objective of my study was to explore teacher’s perceptions of the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery, I followed a generic qualitative research design that is located within the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive researchers aim to extract the underlying meanings and idiosyncratic belief systems of people that usually guide their actions (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:16, Creswell, 2009:8). The use of an interpretive paradigm was therefore suitable for this study as it provided for a rich and in-depth exploration of the research topic.

A case study methodology was employed which focussed on a single entity of a social phenomenon (Babbie, 2013:338) which in this context was the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery at a single township school in the Johannesburg South district. Data was collected by means of individual hour-long recordings of semi-structured intensive interviews with seven participants from the school. This methodology was appropriate for this study, for, “unlike the more structured interviewing that may be used in survey research, intensive or in-depth interviewing
relies on open-ended questions” (Check & Schutt, 2012:201) and thus afforded me the opportunity to find out more about the participants’ experiences, thoughts and feelings.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

Chapter one

Chapter one presents the research topic and specifies the impetus for the study as well as the background information. This comprises the motivation and grounds for the study, the problem statement, aims and objectives of the study; research questions as well as the methodology employed in this research exploration.

Chapter two

Chapter two provides an outline of the literature review. This includes a historical overview of teacher unionism in South Africa, the control and regulation of teacher’s work under racially segregated Apartheid, as well as the historical backdrop of and resistance to the oppressive Bantu education system provided to blacks during the Apartheid era. Furthermore, the view of whether researchers perceive teacher unions to have an influence on curriculum delivery, is likewise given in this section.

Chapter three

Chapter three offers a delineation and defence for the research approach employed. Moreover, it gives clarification of the research techniques utilised, the research design, data collection methods, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity as well as credibility.

Chapter four

Chapter four depicts teachers’ perceptions of the nature of teacher unionism at the school. The following segment then entails a presentation on teachers’ perceptions on how teacher unionism influences curriculum delivery. This is followed by a
presentation on whether the influence that teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery is being managed, and if so, how? Lastly there is a presentation on teachers’ views on how they think the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery can best be managed.

Chapter five

Chapter five focuses on a discussion of the main findings, recommendations for practise, suggestions for future research and ends with a conclusion.

1.6 Summary

This chapter provides the motivation for why I chose this particular research topic. In addition, it also provides an outline of how the minor dissertation is structured. In chapter two, I present an overview of the literature relevant to the questions and research topic.
2.1 Introduction

Machi and McEvoy (2009:4) postulate that “a literature review is a piece of writing that introduces a rationally argued case founded on comprehensive understanding of the present state of knowledge about a topic of study”. In accordance with this statement, I therefore begin this chapter with a brief historical outline of teacher unionism in South Africa (SA). The brief will contextualise how the political concept of Apartheid not only lead to an unequal provision of education to the various races in SA, but also lead to racially fragmented teachers’ unions with diverse ideologies in the post democratic era. This is followed by a discussion about the rise of SA’s militant teacher’s unionisation. In doing so, I will also review the literature on the influence of teacher union activities on curriculum delivery and leadership. I will then examine if this continued militant unionisation that permeates the culture of so many township schools currently, poses a threat to curriculum delivery, especially with regards to learners’ academic performance in the new democratic dispensation; and if it could be linked to poor learner results. I will conclude by explaining how my research is related to the need for small scale qualitative research in exploring the possibilities of alternative unionised action that will not only address the needs of educators, but would also not violate the learner’s constitutional right to education.

2.2 Historical overview of teacher unionism in South Africa

“A trade union is an agency and a medium of strength to address the disparities of power in the workplace” (Wood, 1999:7 in Heystek & Lethoko, 2001:223). Modern unionism in general is not a current event. For example, in the United States, the formation of modern labour unions came about due to the hostile conflict between owners and workers during “the early years of the 20th century” (Tucker, 2012:4). After World War Two, their European counterparts on the other hand, wanted to prevent Communism the opportunity of gaining any ground, so management and owners in many Western European countries gave labour a seat at the table (Tucker, 2012:5).
In South Africa teacher trade unionism in concrete, dates back prior to the 1900’s. Not only were the first unions divided according to race and language, but they were also divided along provincial lines (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001: 223). In spite of the fact that they viewed “themselves as professional associations, at that point; one could already see some activities that could be depicted as unionist functions” (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001:223). Myburgh (1999:25) described “the first unions as child centred with a more professional approach - than a worker orientated philosophy”. The year 1879, saw the dawn of the first black teacher’s union, named the Native Educational Association. (Govender, 1996:27). The primary motivation for the establishment of this association, was to not only deal with educational issues, such as the gloom-ridden working conditions, which included long working hours at dismal salaries as well as teaching in ill–equipped overcrowded classrooms that African teachers had to contend with for decade, but also to deal with the societal and political issues of the day’ (Garson, 2000:209; Heystek & Lethoko, 2001:223). For example, the consequences of the “pass laws on education provision as well as the prejudicial nature of the salaries paid to white teachers in comparison to those of their black peers who held similar qualifications” (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001:223).

2.2.1 The regulation of teachers works under Apartheid

The Apartheid regime legally enforced institutionalised segregated education to all races in SA with very noticeable inequitable disparities in the ways black and white teachers work were controlled (de Clercq, 2013:38). For example, white teachers enjoyed a reasonable degree of independence over their work and had well-resourced schools. This was also twinned with strong departmental structures to provide them with professional support (Chisholm, 1999:115). They were allowed to enjoy a significant amount of “representation in the policy-making processes at state level” whilst African teachers were excluded (Chisholm,1999:115). The latter were rather subjected to work under rigid governmental, hierarchic and dictatorial education systems whereby the choices and guidelines were devised for them mainly by white government bureaucrats (Govender, 2004:271). These hierarchic and imposing figures were represented in the forms of “inspectors and subject advisors, principals and head of departments”. It was their duty to ensure that the teaching and learning
done by African teachers was in strict adherence with the content specifications of the Apartheid curricula (Chisholm, 1999:115; Jansen, 2004:52). Jansen (2004:53) argues that the Apartheid curriculum “contained offensive content (e.g., racial stereotypes) celebrated European conquest, distorted African history, and simply omitted major events in the lives and struggles of ordinary African people”.

On the other side of this spectrum, white conservative teacher’s organisations were afforded the opportunity to express themselves through the powerful whites-only Teachers Federal Council (TFC) (Garson, 2000:205). The TFC’s roots went back to the 1920’s and was regarded as the ‘hotline’ to the education minister’s office (Garson, 2000:205). These unions and teachers’ associations, reflected the larger hierarchic social milieu that prevailed during their time. Prior to 1994; it would have been impossible for any mainly black teachers’ unions to air their grievances, let alone be afforded the opportunity to negotiate with the National Party government (Garson, 2000:205; Govender, 2004:271). Up until the 1980’s, when unions were afforded more, yet still, limited rights; the National Party government silenced any form of protest with repressive legislation and any black teacher who dared to criticise the government or any education department, would have been faced with immediate dismissal (Garson, 2000:205). However, although white teachers’ associations had freedom of expression via the TFC, this was also a limited freedom of expression as they could only register with recognised teachers’ organisations and were also forbidden to criticise any state department (Garson, 2000:205). The general identity of all South African teachers under the Apartheid system was that of consistent, submissive bureaucratic public servants, who had to implement the well-defined political instructional tasks of the National Party government according to the official syllabus and a “moderated” examination (Jansen, 2001:243). Needless to say, although these images were very powerful and rigidly imposed via a harsh inspection system, it did not create a uniformed teaching muscle (Jansen, 2001:243). These divisive “racial and ethnic frameworks of educational administration” could largely be depicted “as one of systemised control and regulation for white teachers” and one of altruistic disregard and condescension “for black teachers” (Jansen, 2001:243). Historically, this method of educational control lead to racially-splintered teachers’ organisations, and by the 1960’s disparate teacher organisations for Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Africans was entrenched (Govender, 2004:271).
Hyslop (1999 cited in de Clercq 2013) explains that the racially-divided teachers’ organisations all reacted in different ways to the “Apartheid education dispensation”. For example, the “legally recognised white teachers’ organisations concentrated on apolitical professional issues, whilst non-recognised Coloured, Indian and African teachers organised on a regional basis to voice their dissatisfactions against poor working conditions and oppressive treatment. It would have been unlikely for white teachers to complain anyway, or be inclined to militancy, as they had relatively little to complain about with regards to their working conditions and school facilities when being compared with their black colleagues”. (Govender, 1996:33). Besides fighting for basic bread and butter issues, such as better working conditions and equitable salaries, African teacher’s struggles were also very closely linked in their battles against the Apartheid state (Garson, 2000: 205). Not only did the early black teacher unions fight against the socially unjust Apartheid society they had to operate in; but they were also vehemently opposed to the implementation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Burrows, 1986: 14).

2.2.2 Bantu Education

In 1948 the National Party (NP) came to power and thereafter, introduced legislation to support the ideology of Apartheid (separate development) (Finnemore, 2009:32). The Nationalist government’s triumph signalled the end of an era of political sympathies known as “the age of the generals” which started when South Africa became a Union in 1910 (Kallaway, 2002:1). Their triumph was mainly because conservative white farmers, labourers and employers feared the perceived increase in the dominance of blacks in the labour markets, demanding more comprehensive democratic rights; as well as the heightening support for socialism (Finnemore,2009:32; Bloch: 2009:42). Subsequently the NP’s 1948 victory scored a conquest for the “conservative preservationist flank of Afrikaner Nationalism”, and an aggressive transition to white supremacy, especially for the Afrikaner (Finnemore, 2009:32). The NP “government wanted to keep South Africa White and wanted separation in all spheres to be applied to an increasing extent” (Horrel, 1964: 3). Kallaway (2009:44) concurs with Horrel by saying that “Apartheid was a demand for separation, for racially institutionalised superiority along with protectionism and affirmative action for whites
through the state.” People were not only separated based on their cultural differences, but in other spheres of their lives as well (Christie, 1994:84). In accordance with the Apartheid ideology, the Nationalist government then introduced “separation in regard to political representation, places of residence, the provision of amenities and employment, race classification and job reservation, and placed numerous deterrents in the way of inter-racial contact” (Horrel, 1964:157).

On the educational front, the dual medium education system for white children i.e. the schooling of white English– and Afrikaans-speaking children in the same school, which formed an integral part of the ideological settlement of the Union in 1910, was replaced and under the Apartheid dispensation, “Afrikaans children had to attend their “own” schools and be taught in their “own” language by teachers who “shared their culture” (Kallaway, 2002:2,11). Changes were also implemented in the provision of education to Africans. Prior to 1953, education for the black majority was mainly provided by the missionaries (Christie, 1994:78; Kallaway, 2002:2). However, in pursuance of the Apartheid political ideology, the incoming National Party government then appointed a Commission on ‘Native Education’ (African Education) headed by Dr. W. M. Eiselen, (hence the term; the Eiselen Commission), to make plans for “the education of the natives as an independent race” (Christie, 1994: 84; Horrel, 1964: 4). Meaning, the provision of education for black South Africans, under Apartheid.

In their findings, the Commission cited inefficiencies’ and wastages associated with missionary education (Fiske & Ladd, 2004: 42). The recommendations made by the Eiselen report made extensive use of the efficiency terminology invented by early twentieth – century American educational reformers (Kallaway, 2002: 42). As was expected, the commissioners also presented “evidence of the inefficiency” of the mission schools. For example, some of these “facts” showed that a large proportion of African children were kept back every year or dropped out of school in comparison to white pupils of the same age (Kallaway, 2002:42). Claims were also made that “black African children’s” intellectual capacity were different to those of whites, resulting in them being in need of a “special sort of education” (Msila, 2013:63). This “special” sort of education that Africans were supposed to receive, is better understood in the context in one of the Eiselen Commission’s findings when they reported that: “missionary schools were providing education for a relatively small proportion of a backward population that proved to be too academic for the African child” (Horrel,
The Nationalist government was of the opinion that African children should receive an education that was in line with their perceived limited intellectual abilities (Horrel, 1964:5). That it should rather “train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live” because outside their social enclaves, the African child would struggle to find employment besides menial work. The NP government was therefore of the opinion, that education should be cognisant of the employment problems they created for African children when providing them an education based on a European model (Horrel, 1964:5).

This recommendation from the Eiselen Commission was aptly displayed in a discourse by Dr. Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, when he stated:

“*The previous system of education had blindly produced pupils trained on a European model, thus creating the vain hope among the Bantu that they could occupy posts within the European community despite the country’s policy of Apartheid. In terms of this policy there was no place for them in the European community above the levels of certain forms of labour. Within their own areas, however, all doors were open.*”

(Quoted in Horrel, 1964:6)

Another central criticism cited against missionary education by the Commission was that it divorced Africans from their culture and that it included no social planning in its development (Kallaway, 2002:43). The Commission therefore strongly recommended that education for Africans be brought under the control of the government in order to ‘rebuild’ and extend the ‘Bantu culture’ (Christie, 1994). Based on the Eiselen Commission report, the Bantu Education Act was consequently drawn up and passed in 1953. In this manner, the provision of education for blacks was removed from the governance of the mission churches and brought under direct control of the Department of Native Affairs and the Department of Bantu Education (Kallaway, 2002:2, 12). In an effort to further embed Apartheid education, the expenditure per child for the different population groups was also characterised by pronounced inequalities, with a lot more resources allocated to whites than on the other racial groups (Christie, 1994: 109; Fiske & Ladd, 2004:44). The politically sanctioned racial segregated education, reflected white’s reasons for alarm of the transient ascent of blacks in the work market (Bloch, 2009:43) and was used in this manner to ‘keep Africans in their inferior position’ (Sono, 1999:46). These fears and prejudices were captured in the
discourse by the National Party MP, JN le Roux when he conveyed his discourse in the all-white parliament

“[Schools] should not give the native an academic education, as some people are prone to do. If we do this, we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans and who is going to do the manual labour in this country? ... I am thoroughly in agreement with the view that we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent he must be the labourer in the country…”


2.2.3 Opposition to Bantu Education

Despite the fact that education for Africans was now controlled by the NP government, the “black society and its allies did not timidly accept the imposition of Bantu Education”, and it was therefore met with criticism and discontent from students, teachers, churches and various liberation movements (Bloch, 2009:45; Christie, 1994: 228). A ‘Resist Apartheid Campaign’ was mounted by the African National Congress (ANC), the “South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the Franchise Action Committee” (Christie, 1994:229; Finnemore, 2009:33). The most salient discontent to Bantu Education originated from the teachers themselves as they “were immediately affected by the new education system” (Christie, 1994:228). Earlier 1950’s teacher’s organisations, such as the Transvaal African Teachers’ Association (TATA) and the Cape African Teachers’ Association (CATA) condemned Bantu Education (Christie, 1994: 228; Bloch, 2009: 45). Christie (1994) highlights the following:

“Bantu Education meant that teachers have to work for double sessions each day; class sizes would be larger; salaries would not be improved; and they would be government employees. In 1952 the Cape African Teachers’ Association (CATA) condemned the Eiselen Report, and called meetings to discuss ways of resisting Bantu Education”.

CATA, a very solid teachers’ association in the Eastern Cape, linked their grievances with other rural, societal and political issues. ‘They likewise called on teachers and parents to do their absolute best to oppose the new education system” (Christie, 1994:
As a mechanism of control, government withdrew CATA’s recognition as a teachers’ association, offered recognition to a newly established teachers’ association, named the Cape African Teachers’ Union (CATU) and dismissed militant teachers from schools (Christie, 1994:228; Bloch, 2009:45). Although TATA also called on teachers and parents to resist Bantu Education; their activities were less widespread than CATA’s and therefore not as many of their teachers were dismissed (Christie, 1994:228).

The early 1950’s became synonymous with intensive political mobilisation against the Apartheid system which involved a lot of ‘stay-away-from-work campaigns’ as well as school and bus boycotts (Christie, 1994: 229; Finnemore, 2009: 33). As tensions rose against the Apartheid system from the general public at large, and arrests and police action escalated, numerous incidents of unrest occurred. In order to quash any further opposition against the Apartheid policy, the NP government responded with the passing of the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950 (Finnemore, 2009: 32). In 1952, the ANC, SAIC and the Franchise Action Committee sent a final ultimatum to the Prime Minister, requesting a nullification of the “pass laws, the Group Areas Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the Voters Representation Act” (Finnemore, 2009:33). In response, the NP government counteracted with the passing of the Public Safety Act of 1953, thus enabling them to declare a state of emergency. Any person in contravention of this Act, subsequently faced a three-year prison sentence for civil disobedience (Finnemore, 2009:33). Through this Act, a large number of trade union leaders were either arrested or banned; and this included the political “organisations such as the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress (ANC)” which had supported many of the unions (Finnemore, 2009:32). Although the proclamation of this Act might have led to a temporary halt of the defiance campaign, this policy had unintended outcomes for the Apartheid government, as the strategy now constrained those organisations and unions allegiant to it, to operate from underground, in a manner uncontrolled by the law (Finnemore, 2009:33). By 1961, the ANC also committed itself to the armed struggle, meaning, instead of limiting themselves to the usual non-violent protests as a form of political opposition; they have now sought to gain state power by force, if necessary. Simultaneously, schools unrest had also continued throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s (Christie, 1994:235, Finnemore, 2009:33).
The most explosive and open defiance from black students against segregated education came in the form of the 1976 riots when the NP government enforced that half of the subjects from Standard 5 and Form 1 should be taught in the medium of Afrikaans (Christie, 1994:240, Bloch, 2009:27). The police retaliated with guns, teargas, dogs, armoured cars and helicopters. The students responded with violence and within weeks there was a countrywide uprising (Christie, 1994). Due to these circumstances, “in the ensuing years, the black unions paid attention to many other unsatisfactory conditions which accompanied the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and other Apartheid legislatures”, for example, they focussed also on ill resourced facilities for black schools, inadequate textbooks as well as poorly trained teachers (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001: 223). It would appear, “that from the onset, black teacher unions were” set up to be in conflict with “the government of the day” and that “even today the doctrines of those unions with a majority of black teachers contrasts from that of their white colleagues” (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001).

2.3 The rise of teacher militancy during the 1980’s

By the 1980’s the schooling and education struggles were at the centre of resistance as part of the wide-ranging pressures for change. “Teachers, students and parents fought for People’s Education under the banner of the National Education Crisis Committee” (NECC) (Bloch, 2009:27). This was also the time when Apartheid structures were beginning to thaw, and “there was a growing feeling among younger teachers in particular”, who advocated that teacher unions should take on a more head-on confrontational stance against the Apartheid government and use militancy, if necessary (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001:223). These young teachers were politicised when they were still students during the 1976 uprisings (Hartshorne, 1992:304). Garson (2000: 207) concurs and states that “the 1976 Soweto uprising and exploding crisis led to the growing politicisation of black teachers and drew stronger lines between militant and conservative teachers”. It was evident that these new younger radical black teaching corps were much more militant than their predecessors as many of them now openly supported the students’ protests, believing that it was linked to the resolution to overthrow the Apartheid government (Chisholm, 1999:114; Garson, 2000: 207). They dissociated themselves from the ideologies and policies of the older
teacher organisations who viewed themselves as professionals, thus avoiding militancy, as opposed to the younger generation, who described themselves as educational ‘workers’ proposing militancy to fight the Apartheid government (Chisholm, 1999:114).

The 1980’s saw a definite increase in teacher’s political activism which lead to a militant teacher’s unionisation in South Africa. The escalation of the political struggle for liberation lead to the emergence of several radical teachers’ unions known as the progressive teacher unions (Govender, 2015:190). The National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), the progenitor of the non-racial teacher organisations in 1980 was one of those progressive teachers’ unions (Amoako, 2014:150). In 1983, NEUSA “and the East London Progressive Teachers’ Union (ELPTU) directly affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF) which at the time dominated the liberation struggle” (Amoako, 2014:150; Garson, 2000:207). By 1985, a considerable amount of progressive unions had emerged, encompassing the “Progressive Teachers’ Union (PTU), the Western Cape Teachers’ Union (WECTU), and the East London Progressive Teachers’ Union (ELPU)”. (Amoako, 2014:150). Not only did these progressive unions come into conflict with the education authorities of the day, but also with the established teacher associations. The progressive unions viewed the established associations as complacent collaborators of the oppressive Apartheid education authorities. The established associations on the other hand, viewed the progressives as undifferentiated radicals, concerned only with freedom to the disadvantage of the learner (Chisholm, 1999:114). As more progressive unions emerged and started to mobilise teachers nationally, the NP state responded with rapid forceful repression. Many teachers were detained, restrictions were placed on other unions and NEUSA was banned (Garson, 2000:207).

However, instead of subduing teachers militant action, the draconian climate of the 1980’s rather set the stage for the adoption of “a new discourse around whether teachers were professionals or workers”, as many teachers now adopted the tenets of a working-class identity “which provided the mass component of the liberation struggle” (Chisholm, 1999:114; Govender, 1996:36). The decree of a ‘worker’ identity grasped a model of the school as an industry whereby teachers saw themselves as an educational working class, thus enabling them to join forces “with the major trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions” (COSATU). The
“teacher as worker identity, led to a concentration on workplace issues”, which is usually associated with collective action and bargaining (Chisholm, 1999:114). In 1989, preceding its official launch in 1990, teachers belonging to the South African Democratic Teacher’s Union (SADTU), who embraced the ‘worker’ identity, for the first time embarked on mass protest action against Apartheid education. This was not the first time that South African teachers embarked on a mass protest action. However, what was significant about this resistance, was the fact it was started by a teacher’s union, SADTU, and was conducted “on a mass rather than an individual” or localised scale (Chisholm, 1999:116). Chisholm (1999:113) noted, that amid the 1990’s, it was both SADTU and the National Association for Professional Teachers’ Association (NAPTOSA) who came to the fore as the two main distinct movements on the educational front.

2.3.1 Two main distinct unions during the early 1990’s

Both SADTU and NAPTOSA display discernible ideological dissimilarities and philosophies, which are imbedded in their histories (Chisholm, 1999:113). Hyslop (1986:91) foregrounds the disparities in the objectives of these teacher unions as a clash “between militancy and professionalism”. SADTU, with its majority black members was conceived in the years of the anti-Apartheid struggle and as a union, worried about issues more extensive “than the narrow workplace and salary concerns” which were in contrast to the previously “racially–based”, apolitical professional associations such as the African Teachers’ Association, the “Indian Teachers’ Association of South Africa, the Coloured Union of Teachers’ Association of South Africa and the white Teachers’ Federal Council” (Govender, 2015:190, Letseka, Bantwini & King – McKenzie, 2012: 1197). NAPTOSA arose in the “womb of Apartheid’s racially based education departments and was a federation of White, Coloured (mixed race) and Black teachers” organisations. It was less disposed to militancy, but rather tended to be more professionally orientated (Chisholm, 1999:114, Msila, 2013:260). In the following paragraph, a detailed explanation will follow with regards to both unions history, development, philosophies, alignment and their strategies.
2.3.2 Conception of the South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU)

In 1990, the South African Democratic Teacher’s Union (SADTU) was officially conceived through the unification of eighteen (COSATU) driven teacher trade unions affiliates and over 100 000 members, at a historical gathering called the National Teacher’s Unity Forum (NTUF) (Garson, 2000:208; Sono, 1999:170). This was not the first attempt to unify the various racially-fragmented teachers’ organisations into a unified non-racial union, as the discord amongst the progressive Black teacher unions and the conservative established associations, weakened their power in the broader battle against Apartheid education (Amoaka, 2014:150). Up until the 1980’s, teacher organisations, including the liberal ones, were still racially fragmented, largely because the conditions under which they taught were poles apart (Garson, 2000:207). Hence, in 1987, the “ANC and the World Confederation of Professional Teachers (WCOPT)” interceded and started the “teacher solidarity talks” to bring about teacher unison, referred to as the 1987 Harare Conference (Amoako, 2014:150). After the Harare Conference of 1987, the teacher unity talks took firm roots, which established the framework for future ‘teacher unity talks’, subsequent in the NTUF (Moll, 1989 in Amoako, 2014:150). The NTUF intended to unify the teaching profession as a single, non-racial union; with the intention of “contributing to the establishment of a non-racial, democratic system” (Amoako, 2014:149, Sono, 1999:170, Govender, 2004:271).

However, due to ideological differences, cracks in SADTU’s trailblazing formation soon showed, as moderate organisations were in protest against the new coalition with the ANC. They believed that the new teacher merger ought to remain politically non-aligned (Garson, 2000:208). These divisions further persisted over whether SADTU should be a “unified body based on unionism or professionalism” (Govender, 2004:271). The progressive organisations believed that an amalgamation that affiliated to COSATU would be far more efficacious in fighting against long working hours, low wages, job insecurity and victimisation of teachers (Govender, 1996:41). The moderate organisations however averred, believing that affiliation would marginalise the professional interests of the teacher, ‘they were suspicious of SADTU’s trade like identity and wanted to avoid any type of strike action (Garson, 2000:208). Another marked difference was the COSATU driven teacher trade unions insistence on the teacher’s right to strike, whereas the more traditional ‘professional’ teacher’s organisations stressed on the learners’ entitlement to uninterrupted learning
These ideological differences led to a split, resulting in the establishment of two broad formations, namely NAPTOSA, who was more conservative, describing themselves as ‘professionals’ and SADTU, with a more combative approach; who viewed themselves as educational ‘workers’ (Chisholm, 1999:114; Govender, 2004:271). Ultimately, the formation of SADTU comprised out of an amalgamation of organisations representing mostly Black teachers that had an alliance with COSATU, who simultaneously, also had an alliance with the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (Amoako, 2014:3; Hyslop, 1999; Letseka et al, 2012:1197; Sono, 1999:170). The only black teacher’s organisation who did not join SADTU at the NTUF, was the Transvaal United African Teachers Association (TUATA) (Sono, 1999:170). Just like NAPTOSA, they too were concerned with “SADTU’s identification with the broad national democratic movement and its leaning towards the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)” (Amoako, 2014:3; Sono, 1999:170).

2.3.3 SADTU as a social movement union

The COSATU aligned teachers unions like SADTU, were not only well known for their adoption of the characterisation of the liberation struggles of the ANC, but they were also guided by their popular programme, “the Freedom Charter (the democratic platform adopted by the ANC and the Congress Alliance)” whose defiance campaigns were synonymous with civil disobedience, industrial action and boycotts in the liberation struggle (Finnemore, 2002:23; Sithole & Ndlovu, 2006:241; Sono, 1999:170; Webster and Adler, 2001:127). The alliances between COSATU, the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) actually “built on the 1950s and 1960s tradition of union-party alliances in the liberation movement” (Buhlungu, 2005:702). These unions adopted the concept of “social movement unionism” where their activities “transcended the narrow confines of collective bargaining and workplace demands to engage with the wider political struggles for democratisation in all spheres of life” (Webster & Adler, 2001:122). Their alliances were characterised by twinning social democratic principles with national liberation struggles which happens in many developing societies who emerged from prolonged periods of colonial rule (Buhlungu,
Buhlengu (2005) highlights the following: These relationships all share certain elements.

- “First, most of these union-party relations emerged before the political party or liberation movement assumed political power. In other words, these alliances were initially oriented towards political mobilisation to win state power, which was seen as a decisive resource for the extension of the political influence of the unions and their allies.

- Second, these alliances pivoted on the notion of a ‘developmental’ or interventionist state as a vehicle for the extension of the political and developmental objectives of the unions and their allies.

- Third, the notion of union-political alliances has its origins in social democratic and Marxist political traditions”.

Even in those cases where neither the unions nor the party claims to be socially democratic or Marxist; one would always find observable features that can be associated with these political traditions (Buhlengu, 2005:701). For example, in South Africa, “it was the twin grievances of capitalist exploitation and the oppressive Apartheid system that compelled trade unions to seek both economic and political solutions to their member’s problems” (Webster & Adler, 2001:122).

Due to SADTU’s political alliance with COSATU and its affiliates, it automatically assimilated the tenets of ‘social movement unionism’, as it adhered to COSATU’s organisational models and political culture (Adler & Webster, 2001:122; Hirschsohn, 2011:285). SADTU’s assimilation of social movement unionism, pivoted mainly on three distinctive political traditions which influenced the contrasting viewpoints of labours relationship to politics (Webster & Adler, 2001:127). The three political “traditions are: the national democratic tradition, the shop-floor tradition; and the black consciousness/Africanist tradition” (Webster & Adler, 2001:127). These three divergent political perspectives will now be elaborated upon in the following paragraphs. It will not only reveal more insight into the idiosyncratic union-political alliance that exists between SADTU, COSATU and its other union affiliates as well as the ANC; but will also shed more light on why SADTU’s character was founded on these three divergent political traditions.
2.3.4 SADTU and the national democratic tradition

The “existence of democratic union structures and operations at the local or workplace level” afford grassroots members the opportunities to be direct participants when it comes to wielding substantial autonomy over their elected shop stewards and subsequently becoming secondary participants when it comes to the exertion of their influence over the union policies and office bearers at the local, provincial and national levels (Hirschsohn, 2011:281). This practise does not only afford members the opportunity to wield more sizeable autonomy over union policies, but additionally empowers them and enhance their confidence to participate more extensively in politics in their communities (Anderson, 1978 in Hirschsohn, 2011:282). In South Africa, this democratic tradition emanated mainly from the political unionism methods employed by the then banned South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the aligned ANC as a mechanism to depose the Apartheid government. SACTU’s method involved mobilising the “oppressed across class lines”, by applying no expressed class biasness, found on the ideological pronunciations of the ANC’s Freedom Charter of 1955 (Webster & Adler, 2001:127). This approach was based on the presupposition that South Africa “could not be understood in class terms, but that political change necessitated a national democratic struggle to liberate South Africa from white rule that was seen as a form of “colonialism of a special type” (Wolpe, 1988). After its launch in 1985, COSATU adopted this organisational model as a revival strategy to oppose the Apartheid government structures in the same way the 1970’s unions used this strategy to revive the 1950s unions (Hirschsohn, 2011:284). With the unbanning of political organisations in the early 1990’s, COSATU validated the political relationships established in the Mass Democratic Movement, by adopting the ANC’s Freedom Charter, in this way, entering in an official pact with the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP), known as the tripartite alliance (Adler & Webster, 1995:82). As a COSATU, ANC and SACP affiliate, it is within this alliance that SADTU’s character as a democratic teacher’s union was defined, hence forging a more powerful, unified strategy which formed part of the liberation struggle (Adler & Webster, 1995: 82, Sono, 1999:170).
2.3.5 SADTU and the shop-floor tradition

The “shop-floor” strategy was the second political tradition identified within the labour movement “which framed the different perspectives in its relationship to the liberation struggle” (Webster, 2014: 256). Emerging in 1973, the shop-floor system entailed mandating a shop-floor representative through democratic decision-making structures from members within the workplace (Webster & Adler, 2001:127; Buhlungu, 2006 in Hirschsohn, 2011:284). This system, gave workers leverage in the workplace, the capacity to be directly involved in “challenging managerial control over wages, working conditions and the organisation of production” (Webster & Adler, 2001: 127). As within any representative democracy, in the “shop-floor” system, the unions were accountable to the workers through the process of regular “report-backs” to its members, ensuring that important checks and balances take place (Hirschsohn, 2011:286). Though still part of the liberation struggle, the “shop-floor” system perspectives differed from the democratic-trade union tradition in the sense that they shunned political action outside the workplace and rejected the “community unions”, labelling them as “populists”. Concomitantly, they rather developed a “cautious policy towards the contribution in the broader political struggles” (Webster, 2014:257). Some within the “shop-floor” tradition further contended and expressed that the national-democratic tradition was in direct incongruities to working class politics (Webster, 2014:259).

Despite their disparate viewpoints, as the democratic struggle picked up force in the 1980’s, the shop stewards moved outside the industrial plants and into the communities (Webster & Adler, 2001:127). By now, COSATU affiliated unions went into joint action with “student and civic organisations in the 1984 November Transvaal ‘stay away’ (general strike). “This was made possible both by the overlapping membership of these organisations” and the powerful weight from union members, demanding action, notwithstanding rising rents, “transport costs, Bantu Education” and the harsh Apartheid government system (Webster, 2014:258). As part of their liberation struggle strategy, after the merger with the ANC, SACP, COSATU and its affiliated unions in the formation of the Tripartite Alliance, COSATU then blended these competing political thrusts into a working-class political project in the late 1980’s (Hirschsohn, 2011:281; Webster, 2014:258). As a COSATU allegiant, SADTU in this way likewise played a dynamic role, tackling the Apartheid government in the liberation
struggle (Webster, 2014:258). It is within these two main political traditions, namely the national democratic tradition and the shop-floor tradition, that COSATU, and subsequently SADTU as one of its affiliates, has positioned itself (Southall & Webster, 2010: 138).

According to Webster (2014:258) the Pan – Africanist Congress (PAC) never adopted the “multi-racial” tenets of the ANC’s Freedom Charter because that would have meant that they would have had to include the opinions of white liberals on the topic of Apartheid as well. For the PAC, one of the central tenets of the black (Africanist) consciousness perspective was the rejection of white liberal opinions on the pros and cons of black consciousness, as they found traditional white values towards the plight of the oppressed blacks “condescending”. These views of the PAC caused a disagreement amongst black anti-Apartheid activists, which subsequently lead to the PAC’s withdrawal and exclusion from COSATU at the time of their formation in 1985 and therefore naturally also not being a part of the Tripartite Alliance (Webster, 2014: 258). From the literature, it would therefore appear that it is because of the PAC’s withdrawal from COSATU and thus, automatically not forming part of the Tripartite Alliance, that SADTU, as a COSATU allegiant, positioned itself mainly within the perspectives of the national democratic tradition and the shop-floor tradition as described above.

2.3.6 The characterisation of SADTU during the 1990’s

In the 1990’s, FW de Klerk, the then president of SA released Nelson Mandela and other struggle stalwarts from prison. Nelson Mandela’s release followed the relaxation of many Apartheid laws as well as the unbanning of black political organisations. South Africa’s transition from ‘White’ minority (Apartheid) rule to ‘Black’ majority rule really started to take firm roots (Bauer & Taylor, 2005:9). This transition was however, propelled and marked by high levels of mass agitation in which workers and their unions, including teachers played a pivotal role (Amaoko, 2014:149). Not only on the political front, but also in education, the boat of the Apartheid education authorities started to rock (Amoako, 2014:150). After SADTU’s launch in October 1990 it concentrated on the recognition by the education departments, dismissals and victimization of teachers from the Department of Education and Training (DET), higher
salaries and improved conditions of service of teachers (Amoako, 2014:149). As previously discussed, the formation of SADTU changed the face of agitation in South Africa. SADTU fought for political and educational democracy as well as improved working conditions, hence adopting an acutely antagonistic attitude towards the Apartheid education structures (Amoako, 2014:3; Hyslop 1999). Due to their militant approach, the Apartheid government ensured that SADTU encountered many serious problems, thus making it very difficult for them to mobilise teachers in schools (Govender, 1996). However, protests action by teachers continued and during the period between 1992 and 1993, rather escalated. These protests were predominantly driven by SADTU (Garson, 2000:209). Prior to SADTU’s launch in 1990, most militant action was essentially driven by relatively unknown teacher organisations (Garson, 2000:209).

‘In 1993, strikes or “chalk down”, were, for the first time, the most prevalent form of protest’ (Garson, 2000:209). Other forms of protest manifested in the forms of ‘stay-aways’, rallies, public demonstrations and marches to regional offices, submissions of lists of grievances, picketing, sit-ins, and the expulsion of departmental officials as well as the prevention of departmental officials from visiting schools’ (Department of Education and Training, 1990:64, 66 in Chisholm, 1999:116; Garson, 2000:207). Although racially-based education departments (particularly the Department of Education and Training (DET) were usually the targets, many principals as well as inspectors were also at the receiving end due to the unpopular inspection system (Amoako, 2014:150; Garson, 2000:209). Teachers viewed the modus operandi of the inspection system as a form of espionage on teachers. They felt that instead of complementing their work, it was authoritarian and vindictive and not supportive and developmental at all (Amoako, 2014:150; Garson, 2000:207). Consequently, SADTU imposed a moratorium to be placed on inspection and evaluation until it was in a position to negotiate a commonly adequate accepted system of inspection (Amoako, 2014:150). All of these methods employed, were used to highlight grievances (Garson, 2000:207). Although launched in 1990, it was only in September 1992, after many different forms of contestations as described above, and many abortive attempts to meet with the state; that SADTU was recognised as a union by the Minister of Education (Amoako, 2014). Amoako (2014:149) contends, that there is little doubt that
SADTU’s agitations had deep-seated socio economic and political undertones, which found expression in the struggle to overthrow the Apartheid government.

2.3.7 The National Professional Teacher’s Association (NAPTOSA)

Following the failed teacher unity talks to form a single organisation, two separate bodies were subsequently formed: SADTU and NAPTOSA. NAPTOSA was established in 1991 because it was concerned with the “increased interference from politicians in educational policy matters at the expense of input of educationists, as well as the growth of “workerist” attitudes among sections of the nation’s teaching corps at the expense of the education of the child” (Sono, 1999:186). Like minded professional teacher’s associations were of the opinion that their collection of skills, experience, professional commitment and skills transference, that could have been used as critical input for the development of education; were rather being marginalised or else buried under the barrage of “political correctness” or doctrinarism (Sono, 1999:186). Resultantly, on 6 – 8 August 1993, fifty delegated members from these various aggrieved moderate teacher’s associations convened at the Roodeplaat Holiday resort to explore the possibilities of an amalgamation. A year later, in November 1994, NAPTOSA was officially inaugurated as a federation due to the amalgamation of sixteen moderate likeminded teacher’s associations based on the following three underlying principles as summarised:

- The non-negotiable right of every child to a high calibre, praiseworthy education, within an egalitarian education system that is free from any racial bias,
- A devotion to professionalism from all its members in the educational sector, and;
- A commitment to the cultivation of improved working conditions for all their members in the educational sector (Sono, 1999:187).

At the time of NAPTOSA’s launch, it espoused to “commit itself to being a non–racial, non-political body that would promote the professional interests of the teachers” (Garson, 2000:208). Besides describing itself as a professional independent union with no political affiliations, NAPTOSA also declares to be the only education sector union that is truly representative of the demographics of South Africa (NAPTOSA,
However, Govender (2015) contradicts NAPTOSA’s stance and argues that the characterisation of non-political and non-aligned association like unions such as NAPTOSA might be true in theory, but not in practise. Although NAPTOSA’s membership was principally politically conservative and many of its members known to be politically non-aligned, its members actually supported opposing political parties of the ruling ANC. For example, the Afrikaans speaking alliance of NAPTOSA supported the White National and Conservative parties such as the National Party (NP), the English-speaking affiliates supported the Democratic Party (DP) and the Zulu speaking component supported the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (Govender, 2008:326). Govender (2015:192) posits that during the Apartheid era, teacher organisations such as NAPTOSA who advocated to have had a professional attitude to education were privileged by the NP state. (Amoako (2014: 154) concurs by pointing out, that although SADTU was being subjected to a bureaucratic maze to gain government recognition during the early 1990’s, as well as a constant refusal to be met with, it was interesting to note, that it was after only one meeting with FW de Klerk on 25 April 1991, that NAPTOSA speedily received recognition before SADTU, early in 1992. This happened because the white Teachers’ Federal Council (TFC), who was a statutory body in the Apartheid educational structures, now formed an integral part of NAPTOSA (Rakometsi, 2008:388). NAPTOSA’s sudden recognition by the NP government during Apartheid should therefore not have been regarded as strange, because the NP government did not perceive them as a threat; as those Black and White teacher organisations that formed part of NAPTOSA, were still very indifferent to the political struggles of its time (Rakometsi, 2008:388). It was therefore much easier for the NP government to recognise NAPTOSA as a union due to the apolitical, almost complacent stance they took, in spite of the political turmoil that prevailed during that time (Amoako, 2014). Based on the literature, it would therefore appear that NAPTOSA and its affiliates, be it directly or indirectly, aligned themselves to political organisations.

2.4 The advent of Democracy in 1994

On 27 April 1994, South Africa finally transcended from an oppressive authoritarian system to democracy, ending 40 years of Apartheid (Christie, 2008:2). The advent of
democracy also meant that the newly elected ANC government had to overhaul the old oppressive Apartheid education system into a non-racial egalitarian education system for all (Christie, 2006:376). To restructure the old Apartheid education system, the ANC government started by dismantling all nineteen pre-democratic racially segregated Apartheid departments of education and restructured them into nine provincially based departments within an over-arching single unified national Department of Education (DoE) (Christie, 2008:129-130, Fiske & Ladd, 2004 in Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012:1211). In addition, a new curriculum in the form of Curriculum 2005 was adopted in March 1997, or Outcomes Based Education (OBE), as it was most commonly referred to (Mouton et al. 2012: 1212, Schäffer & Wilmot, 2012:42). “Outcomes-based education was an internationally borrowed form of standards-based national curriculum linked to formative and continuous rather than summative assessment” (Chisholm, 2005:80).

2.4.1 Curriculum reforms post 1994

Although the unions were not actively involved when it came to the implementation of the OBE, Govender (2004:283) notes that right from the outset, teacher unions were involved in the curriculum transformation process, whereby it initially started with the “cleansing” of the curriculum of all its supremacist and sexist content in 1994. However, although well intended, many deficiencies in the implementation of the OBE curriculum soon exhibited and escalated, thus making the implementation almost impossible, expensive as well as disastrous in the classroom (Mouton et al, 2012: 1212). It was the unions themselves who additionally also recognised problems that were broadly experienced by teachers in the classroom (Govender, 2004:284). This ranged from “unrealistic timeframes, the need for teacher training” as well as an absence of “basic infrastructure and resources” (Govender, 2004:284). As public pressure also started to increase (Govender, 2004:284), the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, appointed a Review Committee in 2000, to review OBE (Bantwini, 2010:85). Whilst NAPTOSA and the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie (SAOU) were in general very supportive to the review process, SADTU on the other hand, was apprehensive around a perceived diminution from the official OBE policy (Govender, 2004:284). During the review process, the Review Committee found
structural flaws in the OBE system that needed to be re-examined and recommended some fundamental changes in order to make it more comprehensible in South African classrooms (Chisholm, 2005:80). The review of OBE then subsequently lead to the introduction of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2002 (Bantwini, 2010:85). Chisholm, (2003 in Govender, 2004:284) notes that the impact of the unions guaranteed that the RNCS remained outcomes-based, which turned out to be more workable, mainstream as well as more receptive to poorer demographics.

However, although the objective of the RNCS was to simplify OBE so that teachers could easily comprehend and facilitate it in the classrooms, challenges popped up once again, as teachers expressed their concerns with the implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Bantwini, 2010:85). Some of the main challenges were that teachers perceived the RNCS as policy and administrative overload and considered the time spent on the overt administration attached to the RNCS as time wastage that could have been spent on teaching learners (Bantwini, 2010:86). Another challenge identified, although not so conspicuous at the time; was that of the teachers’ changing identities after Apartheid (Jansen 2001:243). Teachers changing identities after Apartheid would now be discussed in the following paragraph.

2.5 Expected role and identities of teachers after Apartheid

The expected role and identity of the teacher has now suddenly changed from that of subservient public servant during Apartheid, to that of liberator, post-Apartheid (Jansen, 2001:243). In addition, policy also had to create unshackling environments for the teacher to be developed and supported (Jansen, 2001:243). With the introduction of the RNCS, the teachers’ identity changed further to that of the “invisible facilitator” that has been relegated to the background (Jansen, 2001: 243). Ironically, the identities of teachers as facilitators of knowledge led them feeling disempowered as they were not the dominant force in the classroom anymore (Jansen, 2001:243). Jansen (2001:243) further comments that there was a definite mismatch between image and identity and between what was required and what teachers were actually experiencing in the classroom. As challenges mounted, the Minister of Basic Education (DBE), Angie Motsheka, appointed a task team to investigate and diagnose those challenges and burdens that negatively impacted on the quality of teaching in
schools (DBE, 2015). Based on their diagnosis, the ministerial task team recommended that the DBE “develop a clear and simple five-year plan to support the implementation of the RNCS and refine curriculum documents” (DBE, 2015). This resulted in a repackaged single comprehensive curriculum that came in the form of the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2015).

2.6 The current state of education in SA

Although the South African education system has changed since the advent of democracy in 1994 and new policy frameworks were introduced to redress the imbalances of the past, as well as improving poor performing schools, especially African township schools (previous disadvantaged black schools situated in areas reserved for blacks), South African schools are described as being in a crisis (Letseka, 2013: 74). Between 60% and 80% of South African schools are “dysfunctional” (Bloch, 2009: 17). This educational crisis can be likened to a “national disaster” (Bloch, 2009:58). The greater part of SA schools is just not delivering the results that are supposed to be their main goal (Bloch, 2009:58). International tests, such as The Trends in Mathematics and Science (TIMMS) study attest to this statement as it indicated that South African schooling produces poor student results and that its students also perform poorly in international assessments when being compared with countries such as Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius and Zimbabwe who spend less money on education than SA (Christie, 2008:147, 182, Letseka, 2013:75). For example, in the 2008 TIMMS study, whereby learners’ maths and science proficiency were tested, South African Grade 8 level learners came last out of the 50 participating countries (Christie, 2008: 147). In 2005, tests administered by the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), South Africa obtained ninth position out of 14 countries (Christie, 2008:147). In 1999, the UNESCO Monitoring Learner Assessment (MLA) reported a numeracy score of 30% for SA’s Grade 4 learners which was lower than Mauritius, Senegal and Malawi (Reddy, 2005 in Christie, 2008:147).

To improve students’ low attainment levels, the Department of Education (DBE) then introduced the Annual National Assessment (ANA) in 2011 as a national diagnostic tool to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The aim was to strengthen teaching methodologies, with the intent to improve student performance in
the education system (DBE, 2014). However, the 2014 ANA report by the DBE revealed that although the attempts to improve students’ low performance attainment levels might have improved slightly in certain grades and subjects, it has not yet yielded the desired outcomes anticipated (DBE, 2014). For example, the national average percentage marks in Grade 5 for Mathematics was 37%, Grade 6 was at 42% and an 11% pass rate was achieved by Grade 9’s (DBE, 2014). The English Home Language for these respective grades were 57% for Grade 5, 61% for Grade 6 and 49% for Grade 9’s (DBE, 2014).

Bloch, (2009:88) hypothesizes that there’s a “toxic mix of factors” as to why SA schools are in such a state of mishap. Historical factors described already, that’s influencing the present, as well as acute sociological factors such as HIV/AIDS, malnourishment amongst learners and “gangsterism” are some of the factors that contribute to the poor state of education in South Africa, especially in township schools (Bloch, 2009:58-89). Government likewise also holds a considerable amount of responsibility for the mishmash (Bloch, 2009:88). For example, poor decisions made with regard to policies and execution of these policies without proper consultation with various stakeholders and a lack of sound accountability and monitoring systems. “Policy posturing” with a focus more on politics than genuine educational didactical values, are only but a few reasons to mention (Bloch, 2009:88). However, “one of the greatest silences in education today is the discussion on the role of unions” (Bloch, 2009:106). South Africans are “scared to discuss the role of teacher unions in a constructive, supportive, but critical way” (Bloch, 2009:106). The influence of teacher union activities on curriculum delivery in South Africa is an issue that needs to be openly addressed (Letseka, 2013: 75). The following paragraphs will focus on the perceptions of academics and critics, regarding the influence of teacher union activities on the curriculum delivery, especially learner attainment.

2.7 Teachers’ unions and curriculum delivery

It is the vision of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) that each learner does well at school and leave their institutions with the necessary knowledge, aptitudes and capabilities that will give them the best opportunity with regards to success in their adult life. Accompanying this vision, the GDE’s mission is to guarantee that “quality
teaching and learning” occurs daily and consistently in the classroom (GDE, 2013). In order to realise these goals, implies a calling to “restore teaching to the noble profession” it once was (Bloch, 2009: 149). This would require a commitment not only from society in general, but also from teachers to be “in class, on time, teaching” (Bloch, 2009:149). The identity of such a teacher would be characterised as someone who is a “well-regulated proficient, professional performer”, someone whose activities are identifiable as well as quantifiable against a fixed set of criteria or “outcomes as determined by the state” Jansen, 2001:244). This would require a commitment to uninterrupted teaching and learning from all teachers. To improve education services, the support of the teachers’ unions in this effort therefore becomes key (Paddy, 2013:19). However, educational scholars such as Carnoy, Chisholm and Chilisa (2012:13) postulate that teacher unionism in SA constrains the ability of government to pursue its education policy objectives.

Currently there are four prominent unions in the education sector: The South African Democratic Teacher’s Union (SADTU), the South African Teacher’s Association (SATA) (Oosthuizen, 2000:111), the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU) and the National Professional Teacher’s Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) (Rossouw, 2005: 45). Although these unions are organised in different ways, it seems that matters such as labour relations disputes is of prime concern when it comes to teacher union activities (Bloch, 2009:84). Section 23 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) enshrines the right for all South Africans to participate in union activities, including the right to strike. Letseka (2013:75) posits that SADTU specifically, frequently conducts indeterminate strikes to demand regular salary increments with interconnected benefits, often to the disadvantage of teaching and learning. Although striking as a form of political protest can be argued to have been central to the demise of Apartheid, and might be a constitutional right of the teacher, Letseka (2013:75) advances that it may at this stage be violating the learner’s constitutional right to education, and that unregulated teacher unionisation that includes striking during school hours, undermines the process of teaching and learning. Strike actions, sometimes unofficial, consume as much as ten days a year (5% of the school time) (Irving, 2012: 399). It has also been noted, that holding union meetings during school time is also often a norm in many township schools and considered as a legitimate reason for teacher absence (Irving, 2012:399). These actions could pose a threat to
curriculum delivery, as uncontrollable teacher unionisation in township schools may be linked to poor academic achievement for it impairs teaching and learning (Letseka, 2013:75). For example, Black township schools, in particular, sometimes “report pass rates of less than 30% on required school exams” (Letseka, 2013:74).

Studies conducted by Chisholm, Hoadley, Kivulu, Brookes et al (2005:22) for the Human Sciences Research Council on educator workload, observed that noticeable dissimilarities existed between time spent on teaching in township (previous disadvantaged black schools) schools and former Model C (previous whites only public) schools. This leads to an unbalanced coverage of the syllabus (Chisholm et al. 2005:22). Whereas teachers in township schools spent an average of 15.8 hours on teaching per week, their former Model C counterparts spent an average of 19.11 hours on teaching per week. (Chisholm et al. 2005). Bloch (2009:84) is in accord and states that “the time spent on teaching in township schools is definitely lower than in the former Model C schools”. The failure of teachers not fulfilling their roles due to high absenteeism rates, sluggishness and ineffective teaching, thus causing inadequate student competencies, is a challenge that faces many developing countries in general and this includes South Africa as well (World Bank, 2010:20). The 2010 World Bank report refers to these inadequacies and poor service delivery as “quiet corruption”. Shanta Devarajaan, Chief Economist for the World Banks’ of Africa Region states that “Quiet corruption does not make the headlines the way bribery scandals do, but that it is just as corrosive to societies” (World Bank, 2010). However, it has been observed that fundamentally, it is not only absenteeism due to union activities that always impedes on teaching time in South Africa (Bloch, 2009:82). Variables such as, overt administration, extra-mural activities, pastoral care and managerial obligations such as, professional development and guidance and supervision of teachers’ work, are also amongst the most significant culprits that “crowd out teaching” (Bloch, 2009:84, Chisholm, 2005:22).

Poor management at school level has also been identified as one of the underlying reasons why schools are not producing the expected outcomes (Bloch, 2009:82). Zengele (2013:231) makes reference to cadre deployment as one of the contributors for ineffective management in many schools. Cadre deployment has led to the increase of a different type of educational leader, whereby the most fundamental criteria for promotion does not require the appropriate qualifications and a fitness to
lead, but “political connectedness” and an affiliation to a specific union (Zengele, 2013: 231). Cadre deployment as upheld by the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) is the expression that has been used by the ruling ANC government when reserving management and cabinet positions for loyal party members (Zengele, 2013: 232). Pattillo, (2012:72) alludes to cadre deployment as a practise assuming the semblance of an unwritten policy of “patronage-based political appointments to school leadership and top management positions”. In other words, partisanship for key loyal flag-wavers. Studies revealed that when it comes to promotion posts within the Department of Education (DoE), whether at school level, or as an official within the DoE, there is a strong behind the scenes lobbying culture from SADTU for the promotion of their key members to management positions in a very underhanded way (Diko and Letseka, 2009:232, Letseka, Bantwini & King-McKenzie, 2012:1199; Zengele, 2013: 231). The promotion processes are not only open to exploitation by powerful and dominant role players such as teacher unions, but by many education officials as well (Diko & Letseka, 2009). Paradoxically though, these are the very same officials who are responsible for ensuring that the filling of promotion posts is not tarnished by the deployment of cadres at all levels (Zengele, 2013:232). Principals at school levels have also been implicated (Diko & Letseka, 2009:232). “It was reported that if a principal wants a particular candidate in his/her staff complement, he/she would tailor-make the requirements for the post to suit the preferred candidate (Diko & Letseka, 2009:232). As a result, highly suitable and experienced teachers with Honours, Masters’ and Doctoral degrees are then disregarded when promotions are made (Diko & Letseka, 2009:231). What is also very peculiar, is the regular and somewhat odd conspicuous leakage of confidential information that places the unions’ preferred candidates at an advantage during interviews (Diko & Letseka, 2009232). This is cause for alarm, as undeserved promotions could lead to teacher attrition due to low morale (Diko & Letseka, 2009: 231). Teacher attrition places the South African education system, which has already been previously described by Bloch (2009) as a “national disaster”, in a more precarious position because it bears the possibility of steering excellent and worthy teachers to other professions (Zengele, 2013:232). In time this may bring about a total breakdown in education in a country that could already ill afford it (Zengele, 2013:232).
The flexing of SADTU's muscle, could be attributed to their historical links with the ruling ANC government as allies against Apartheid during the liberation struggle (Chisholm, 2003:7). With a membership comprising of more than 250 000 members, which is approximately two thirds of the country’s teachers across the nine provinces, SADTU is not only the largest teachers' union in SA (SADTU's website, 2014), but also the “most powerful and closest to government” (Chisholm, 2003: 7). As mentioned before, SADTU is an affiliate of COSATU, the trade union federation in South Africa, who in turn is a member of the ruling tripartite alliance encompassing the ANC, as well as the SACP (Letseka et al, 2012: 1197). With the emergence of democracy in April 1994, most of SADTU’s leadership was propelled to senior positions in the post-Apartheid government (Letseka et al, 2012:1197). This pattern of cadre deployment is not uncommon where teachers’ unions were established with the strong backing of the activist parties who came into power (Govender, 2004: 267). It has been observed that although the paradigms of teacher union-state relationships might vary, there is a tendency for the political facets to remain a dominant feature (Govender, 2015:185).

Govender (2015: 185) alludes to Mexico as an example where, in 1996, the National Union of Education Workers (NUEW), a teachers’ union was formed with the firm support of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (IRP). The teachers’ union then later assisted as a “political machine” to win the party elections. Consequently, in return for their cosy relationship with the ruling party, union leaders were remunerated with managerial positions at parliamentary and directing levels (Murillo, 1999: 40 in Govender, 2015:185).

This framework depicts the same relationship between SADTU and the ANC, after the ANC came into power post 1994 (Zengele, 2013:232). SADTU, as a member of COSATU played a vital role in helping the ANC “win the elections with the teachers’ votes” (Zengele, 2013). Consequently, as a repayment, the ruling party in this way offered key management positions for their backing amid the election campaign (Zengele, 2013). For example, when the ANC came into power in April 1994, Membathisi Mdladlana, the former president of SADTU became a Cabinet Minister (Zengele, 2013: 61). Another case in point is Duncan Hindle, also a former senior SADTU official who first joined the DoE in 1996 as chief director and then later promoted to the position of director general in 2005 (Letseka et al, 2012:1199). Zengele (2013:18) asserts that there are numerous senior positions within the DoE
that have been allocated to significant SADTU members. Consequently, it would appear that instead of investing more energy and time in class, a tendency has rather now developed amongst teachers to get themselves completely wrapped up in union work; keeping in mind the end goal of being remunerated with promotions. This prompts teachers to neglect their core obligations in the school and thus impeding the learners’ progress (Zengele, 2013:18).

It would also appear that The South African Council on Education (SACE), regarded as the most important statutory body to regulate the teaching profession, has had limited success in implementing education policy designed to uphold professional teaching standards (Jansen, 2004:54-58). For example, when the national policy on Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was introduced in June 2000, a regulatory measure that was introduced to monitor teachers and their teaching, with the intention to advance the quality of school based teacher performance, as well as develop the overall efficacy of schools in general, it was met with immediate resistance by SADTU (Jansen, 2004:51). Letseka (2013:75) asserts that teacher unionism, mostly SADTU, continuously trumps governments’ initiatives to improve learner attainment and improve quality education. And yet, without powerful and consistent support to improve teacher content knowledge and skills “the education reform agenda” will remain inhibited (Bloch, 2009:84). The need to focus on productivity and delivery of better services is especially pertinent to South Africa where the education system is dysfunctional, unemployment is high and inequality is rising (Letseka et al, 2012:1198). However, Jansen (2004:3) notes that the teachers’ classroom has rather become the site of a “new” resistance (the “old” resistance refers to teacher resistance against Apartheid schooling in the 1980s, which resulted in a general breakdown of schooling in SA) in many schools. This resistance can be related to two competing dominant discourses concerning teacher identity - teachers as professionals and teachers as unionists. Govender (2004:269) notes that a traditional “professional” identity relates to the management of teachers via policies instituted by education authorities, whereas a “unionist” identity relates to militant unionism that is mostly concerned with wage bargaining and general conditions of employment. I propose to use this distinction in teacher identities as the conceptual framework for my study specifically, in relation to unpacking the dynamics around effective curriculum delivery.
Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research is a data gathering process with the aim to answer a specific question(s) and these inquiries “generally relate to a need for knowledge that can facilitate problem solving” (O’ Leary, 2010:3). The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perceptions of the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. The research associated with this project therefore set out to:

- Describe the nature of teacher unionism in a township school.
- Investigate whether the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum is being managed and, if so, how.
- Elicit teachers’ thoughts on how the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery can best be managed.

This chapter will now provide a description and defence for the research approach employed. In doing so, an explanation will be given for the research method used, the research sample, methods of data collection, methods for data analysis and synthesis, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness; and the limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The term paradigm was first coined by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 in his book called: The structure of scientific revolutions (Mouton, 1996:203). “Research paradigms address the philosophical dimensions of social sciences” (Jonker & Pennink, 2010 in Wahyuini, 2012:69). A paradigm can be defined as an “integrated set of assumptions, beliefs, models of doing good research and techniques for gathering and analysing data” (Neuman, 2007:41).

A paradigm consists of “two main philosophical dimensions: namely, ontology and epistemology” (Laughlin 1995, Kalof, Dan & Dietz 2008, Saunders, Lewis & Thornbill 2009 in Wahyuini, 2012:69). Ontological assumptions are concerned with “the nature of reality” (Creswell, 1998:75). Epistemological assumptions are concerned with the
“philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know” (Henning et al, 2004:15). “Because there are different rules for knowing (epistemologies)”, and multiple concepts of what constructs reality, each of these paradigms is then also underpinned by its own ontological and philosophical assumptions (O’Leary, 2010:5).

As these paradigms then intrinsically contain different ontological and epistemological assumptions about reality and knowledge, it therefore also influences the different theories and approaches to social research (Neuman, 2003:69-90). This is mirrored in the specific methodological strategies and procedures linked to these assumptions (Bickman & Rog, 2009:224). For example, in quantitative research, the researcher wants to test a hypothesis, and the hypothesis will then drive the research. However, in qualitative research, the researcher will first identify a topic, group or phenomenon, and generate a hypothesis (if there is one), from the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:117). In short, paradigms provide researchers with ideas or recommendations on how to conduct the research, as well as guiding one’s thinking whilst doing the research (Bogden & Biklen, 1998:2 in Mackenzie & Knipe 2006).

### 3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

This research study followed a generic qualitative research design that involved an interpretive approach. Interpretive researchers aim to extract the underlying meanings and idiosyncratic belief systems of people that usually guide their actions (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:16, Creswell, 2009:8). Stringer (2004:16) concurs and adds that in qualitative research, interpretive paradigms give rise to “detailed descriptive accounts of peoples’ subjective experiences.”

An interpretivist approach to research believes that reality is socially constructed. Therefore, in order to understand the human social world of reality, researchers must not only look at the hard-objective facts, such as questionnaires, inventories and so on; but also, include the “ideas, beliefs and perceptions people hold about reality” (Neuman, 2007:43). In order to gain a deeper meaning and understanding of how people make sense about their perceptions of reality and experiences; interpretivist researchers therefore prefer to interact and engage in a dialogue with the participants under study (Wahyuni, 2012:71). The use of an interpretive paradigm was therefore
suitable for this study because it provided for a rich and in-depth exploration of teachers’ perceptions of the influence unionism has on curriculum delivery.

3.3 Research method

As my research study followed a generic qualitative research design that was located within the interpretive paradigm, a case study design was employed as a research method. This methodology seemed the most suited, as it allowed for an “in-depth description, and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009:39). Merriam (2009) describes a bounded system as a “single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries.” This system could be “a group of people – it may also be a set of documents or a television series” (Henning et al, 2004:32). In qualitative research, case study designs characteristically focus on a single entity “of some social phenomenon”, (Babbie, 2013:338), which in this context was the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery at a single township school.

As the researcher, I selected this case study methodology, because I wanted to gain a detailed and comprehensive understanding “of the situation and meaning for those involved” (Henning et al, 2004:41), referring to the teachers at the school. In line with typical qualitative research, I was not only concerned with the “what” and “how” things happen, but most importantly “why” events happen in a certain way (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:3). A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003:13-14). Being cognisant of this perspective, I therefore conducted the research in the participants’ natural setting, which was the school.

3.4 Research site and participant selection

The research study was conducted at a single primary township school, in the Johannesburg area. The choice of the site was based on convenience because I was teaching in the vicinity where the research was conducted. Furthermore, choosing the school as a research site also had a double benefit; because not only was it an opportunity for me to learn from, but it was also a delight when the principal of the school indicated that the findings of the research would add value to the institution, as
it will be used to improve the overall management of the school; especially when it comes to managing the influence of unionism on curriculum delivery.

In qualitative research, there is no detailed statistical formulas for the number of participants to be interviewed (Neuman, 2007:141). However, the researcher chooses a sample that is satisfactory to his/her needs (Cohen et al, 2011:156). The researcher places a lot of emphasis on the singularity, “idiographic and exclusive distinctiveness of the phenomenon, group or individuals in question” (Cohen et al, 2011:161). Therefore, the researcher only selects people that has relevance to the research topic (Flick, 2015:82). As this was a small-scale research study, I opted to include only seven participants in my sample size, because I assumed that they would provide sufficient data on the phenomenon being studied.

As the study was concerned about teachers’ perceptions of the influence of unionism on curriculum delivery, stratified purposive sampling was employed, as it enabled me to choose the “most knowledgeable” participants of the topic being explored. Unlike quantitative research, the goal in purposive sampling is not to find a large and representative sample, but to select individuals, places, or things that can provide the richest and most detailed information to help the researcher answers the research question/s (Lodico et al, 2010:134). Researchers employ purposive sampling methods when they want to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Neuman, 2007:143). In line with this view, I selected a specific group of people who was able to “shed optimal light” on the topic I was investigating (Henning et al, 2004:4). The selected participants were the principal of the school, two SADTU representatives, two NAPTOSA representatives and two non-aligned teachers. This allowed for balanced perspectives: firstly, from school leadership, secondly from teachers with alternative views of their roles and responsibilities; and thirdly, from the perspectives of a school insider/union outsider.

**3.5 Data gathering**

According to Bassey (2000:81) case study designs primarily rely on three major methods for data collection: interviews, observing events and reading documents. The data collection method employed in this research study were semi-structured interviews. Neuman (2003:293) defines an interview as a “short-term, secondary
social interaction between two strangers with the explicit purpose of one person obtaining information from the other.” Babbie (2013:346) concurs and defines a qualitative interview as “an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the inquirer has a general plan of inquiry.” I preferred using interviews as my data collection method, because the use of interviews provides for rich, in depth data. Interviews also enable the researcher to ask what they want, which simultaneously affords them the opportunity to ask the questions in the manner “they want”, for example, they get to choose “the wording, the order, the prompts, the probes” and so on (O’Leary, 2010:180).

In addressing the research questions, I conducted seven individual semi-structured intensive interviews with seven participants at a single school. The timeframe of the interviews ranged from between fifty minutes to one and a half hours with some of the participants. The reason why I only opted for individual interviews and did not include focus groups as part of my data collection method, was because the topic lends itself to being of a very sensitive and controversial nature. I therefore wanted to avoid a possible conflict situation between the various participants should I have included focus groups as well. The interviewees were asked a number of questions to describe the nature of teacher unionism at their school and also shared their views of the influence of teacher unionism on the curriculum delivery. The use of open ended semi-structured interviews not only enabled me to “deviate from the sequence of questions” when I needed to, but it also gave the respondents the opportunity to “reply as freely and extensively” as they wanted to, thus giving me rich descriptions (Flick, 2015:140). Bassey (2000:81) refers to adapting the questions during the interviews as thinking on one’s feet.

Six of the seven interviews were conducted at the interviewees’ workplace and one interview was conducted at the one interviewees’ place of residence, as that was the only time s/he could accommodate me. Most of the interviews took place in the school hall where it was quiet and some of the interviews were conducted in the interviewees’ classrooms after the learners have dismissed. Although all interviewees had agreed to participate in the research study, it was not so easy to interview them according to the appointed scheduled times due to their other unexpected school commitments that kept on popping up. With the result that most of the interviews had to be rescheduled quite a number of times, thus delaying my research study.
In line with Creswell’s (1998:126) protocol suggestions, I prepared my research questions in advance and with the interviewees’ permission, I also recorded their responses whilst interviewing them. This method suited me, because according to Bassey (2000:81), recordings give the researcher the advantage to “attend to the direction” of the interview instead of the detail, thus affording the researcher the opportunity to listen attentively afterwards. Fortunately, all recordings went well and after that I could proceed with my transcripts and analysis.

During the transcription stage, I transcribed everything that was on the tape. However, this was a long and arduous process, because, as mentioned by Bassey (2000:81), I discovered that many interviewees have the tendency to either repeat themselves, and then the researcher sits with a huge amount of redundant texts or interviewees “get side-tracked and delete sentences by leaving them unfinished.” However, I did not want to use the alternative method by paraphrasing the interviewees responses, thus transcribing a shortened version of the tapes, because, although this method would have been less time consuming; I “recognised that some of the nuances of the tape” would have been lost (Bassey, 2000:82). Subsequently, I read through all the transcripts whilst listening to the recordings and transcribed everything verbatim.

Henning et al (2004:76) suggests that it is advisable for researchers to transcribe as much of the data themselves, because it helps a lot when one has to do the analysis at a later stage. All interview transcriptions were then also labelled as interview one, two, three and so on, and then stored in a file on my computer, as suggested by Bassey (2000:82). As a back-up system, I also saved the file on Dropbox in case of a computer crash.

3.6 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis can be described as a process that entails “making sense of the data” based on the interpretations and opinions the participants perceive the situation to be, as well as “noting patterns, themes and categories” (Cohen et al, 2011:537). Holliday, (2001:100) in Henning et al (2004:107) describes the data analysis process as a “corpus of raw data” that must be systemised. Data analysis was done by means of coding. Lodico et al (2010:183) describe coding as “the process
of identifying different segments of the data that describe related themes and labelling these parts using broad category names”. Thereafter, central themes will be identified.

When doing the data analysis, I first started to read through all the interview transcripts. In this way, I not only familiarised myself with the data, but I also saw the “bigger picture” as suggested by Henning et al (2004:6). Next, I re-read all the transcripts individually and whilst re-reading; I colour coded all the selected parts of the data (sentences and phrases) that were relevant in answering the research question. Different codes were then generated and ascribed to the selected colour coded parts. I used an open coded system whereby I literally made up the codes as I was working through the data as mentioned by Henning et al (2004:105). This system was then followed for all interview transcripts.

Once the initial coding was done with all the transcripts, I then identified relationships amongst the open codes and grouped all the related codes into categories. This was an inductive process because I used the data as a guide to group the related codes into categories. I then took a second glance at all the codes and categories of all the interview transcripts, a process referred to as axial coding by Cohen et al (2011:561) whereby I then refined and renamed some of the codes and categories. In addition to generating the codes and categories, I also looked-for themes amongst the participants’ responses. I then made a table for myself and then copied the participants’ direct quotations in their respective categories that I generated. For example, I would count how many participants felt that unionism has a negative influence on curriculum and then count and copy some of the participants’ responses into those generated categories. Creswell (1998:170) refers to this method, as bringing in the voice of the participants. Finally, I grouped all the related categories into central themes and these themes will be discussed in chapter four.

3.7 Ethical considerations

In order to conduct the research study at the school, I first obtained permission from the official gatekeepers which was the Department of Education. I also ensured that I obtain permission from the principal to conduct my research study at the school. Henning et al (2004:73) suggests that it is crucial that all participants must know what the research will be used for. Therefore, before I commenced with my research, I was
honest and informed all participants what the research topic was about and informed them, that the information that they will be giving me, would be used for research purposes. Social research can sometimes also be of an intrusion in people’s personal lives, because very often the study might require participants to reveal personal information about themselves. It is therefore just ethical that participation in a research study should never be forced upon people (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:521). In line with this view, I informed all participants that their participation in the research study would be voluntary. I also ensured that I obtain both verbal as well as written consent from all participants to participate in the research study. Furthermore, since their participation was voluntary, all participants were then also informed that, they had the right to withdraw their consent to participate in the research study at any time with no negative consequences. Before the interviews took place, I also asked all participants’ permission to record the interviews. Moreover, all participants were also informed that they were under no obligation to answer any question/s that made them feel uncomfortable; and that all information divulged, would be kept confidential. Babbie and Mouton (2003:523) suggests that one of the greatest concerns, is to ensure the anonymity of all participants in a research study. Keeping this suggestion in mind, the anonymity of all participants was therefore ensured by providing pseudonyms for all of them during data collection, and also when the interview transcriptions were done.

### 3.8 Validity and credibility

Validity in qualitative research means that the researcher has to employ certain strategies to check for the correctness of the findings, whilst reliability shows that the researcher’s line of action was consistent across various researchers and diverse projects (Gibbs, 2007 in Creswell, 2009:190). For Henning, et al. (2004:147), qualitative validity means that we ask of ourselves “whether, by using certain methods, we are investigating what we say we are investigating”. Validity means that one should check for one’s own bias, to critically question all procedures and decisions, to theorise, meaning, that one must not only look for and address theoretical questions towards the end of the research project, but also for those that have arisen throughout the process (Henning et al, 2004:148-149). In short, researchers have to demonstrate that their findings are correct, valid and reliable. Creswell (2009:191) recommends the
use of various strategies that researchers could employ that would enhance their ability to assess the correctness of their findings as well as convincing their readers of that accuracy. “Intensive long-term involvement with participants, making use of rich thick descriptions, member checks, searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, triangulation of data amongst different sources, quasi-statistics as well as drawing comparisons from the different sources of data” are some of the strategies that researchers could employ to ensure that validity and reliability has been built into their qualitative research project (Bickman and Rog, 2009:244-245, Creswell, 2009:191-192). However, as all of these strategies cannot be employed in any given situation, and researchers therefore have to choose which strategy is appropriate for their situation (Bickman & Rog, 2009:243). In line with this suggestion, I made use of the following strategies to ensure that my findings were accurate, valid and reliable:

In order to avoid the risk of being bias and allowing my own “theories, values and preconceptions” (Bickman & Rog, 2009:243) I might have about the influence teacher unions could have on curriculum delivery, I ensured that during the planning stages for my interview questions, I stayed clear of bias words and questions that could lead the participants. The use of one on one intensive interviews also enabled me to extract “rich” data from all the participants involved in the study. This method further enabled me to obtain “detailed and varied enough data that provided me with a full and revealing picture of what was going on” (Bickman & Rog, 2009:244) at the school. Whilst interviewing the participants I also made sure that they constantly answer in their own words without me summarizing what they have said as summarizing also has the potential of me leading the participants. Because I had prior permission from the respondents to record them on tape, I had no need to summarise their responses in any case. After the interviews, all data generated was then typed verbatim.

Trustworthiness of the data was also achieved by triangulation. Henning et al. (2004:103) define triangulation as a “validation procedure, whereby researchers search for convergence and divergence among multiple sources of information in order to find the true position”. My multiple sources of information consisted of a stratified selection of participants, comprising of the principal, participants from different unions and non-unionised participants. To enhance the credibility of the study findings, I then compared the experiences of the various participants and looked for consistent patterns of agreement as well as divergence. Finally, to member check, I
took copies of all the interview transcriptions to the participants and they were asked to verify the accuracy of their interview transcripts as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985:313-316, Bassey, 2000:76).

3.9 Summary

In chapter three I provided an outline of my research approach. I described the interpretive paradigm and also provided my rationale as to why I used the interpretive paradigm. In addition, I then explained that I employed a case study design as my research method. A brief outline was then also given with regards to the research site and participant selection. This was then followed with an explanation of the data gathering methods employed, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity and reliability.

Chapter 4 will now be a presentation of the data that was collected during the interviews.
Chapter four

Data Presentation

4.1 Introduction

The motivation behind this study was to explore teacher’s perceptions with regards to the influence that teacher union activities have on curriculum delivery in a single township primary in the Johannesburg South school district. In this chapter, I will present the themes and categories that emerged from the data. I will first start by depicting teachers’ perceptions of the nature of teacher unionism at the school. The following segment will then be a presentation on the discussion of teacher’s perceptions, with respect to the influence teacher unionism has on the curriculum. This is followed by a presentation on whether the influence of teachers’ unionism on curriculum delivery is being managed, and if so, how? Lastly there is a presentation on teachers’ thoughts on how they think the influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery can best be managed through an alternative form of unionism that will not only address the needs of teachers, but does not violate the learners constitutional right to education.

At the school where the study was conducted, only two teachers were non-union aligned and the rest of the staff were either affiliated to NAPTOSA or SADTU. Although the sample of participants comprised of a blend group of non-union aligned teachers, NAPTOSA and SADTU affiliates to provide balanced perspectives as well as the principal of the school to give insights from a leadership perspective, when participants were asked to describe their experiences on the nature of teacher unionism at the school, all participants indicated that teacher unionism at the school manifested in a variety of ways that sounded fundamentally very similar at first. For example, the union actions incorporated the attendance of union meetings, picketing, go-slow’s – which refers to reduced productivity from the teacher’s side, dialogue with government in the form of negotiations in the bargaining chamber and teacher strikes which is colloquially referred to as chalk-down’s. However, what became very conspicuous during these interviews, were the constant comparisons that respondents made between the two unions (NAPTOSA and SADTU) in their responses. As the researcher, I could see that it was the perspective of all respondents that there’s a very distinct differentiation
between the modus operandi of NAPTOSA’s style of unionism, and the modus operandi of SADTU’s style of unionism. In the following section, I will present those main categories that reflect teachers’ perceptions of the nature of teacher unionism at the school.

4.2 Teachers perceptions of the nature of unionism at the school

4.2.1 Conservative teacher unionism

Most respondents, (non-union aligned and NAPTOSA) perceived NAPTOSA’s style of unionism to be very moderate and conservative in their modus operandi, with one NAPTOSA respondent saying, “NAPTOSA is not so radical like SADTU. Most of the time NAPTOSA will back SADTU in principle, but they do not expect us to be rallying, or be out of the classroom or whatever.” (interviewee 6, Q 11, p5). A few respondents (non-union aligned & NAPTOSA) also described NAPTOSA to be a professional union. By professional union it meant that it was perceived as a union who’s putting the curriculum needs of the child first and as a union that does not call meetings during learners teaching time, as this was viewed as impacting negatively on the learning and teaching time. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent expressed that, “NAPTOSA for me is a very professional union. NAPTOSA, it’s actually -if I can put it in so many words, is totally against playing with the children’s contact time.” (interviewee 3, Q 14, p9). NAPTOSA’s professionalism was additionally associated by some respondents (NAPTOSA) with teacher development in the form of workshops for teachers with one NAPTOSA respondent saying that “They call for professional meetings (err) they are there to develop the staff.” (interviewee 7, Q 9, p5). However, although most respondents indicated that NAPTOSA provide regular workshops to its members, one respondent did express that the NAPTOSA workshops tend to be costly at times and that teachers do not always have the financial means to attend these workshops, “And because teachers sometimes do not have the money to pay for these workshops, many teachers sometimes don’t attend the workshops provided by NAPTOSA.” (interviewee 3, Q 7, p6).
4.2.2 Collective democratic decision making

The NAPTOSA respondents also viewed NAPTOSA’s nature of unionism to be very democratic. Democratic in the sense that there’s always membership consultation and voting thereafter whenever major decisions have to be taken, especially when negotiating with government in the bargaining chambers. “They will rather come back to the union members, have (err) a vote to say whether they will continue negotiating in the bargaining chambers or whether they will go take other actions.” (interviewee 7, Q11, p6). Another NAPTOSA aligned respondent explained that, “They leave it up to the individual to decide for themselves. It’s very democratic.” (interviewee 6, Q 11, p5).

When it came to voting procedures, there was also a perception that the NAPTOSA aligned teachers often use technology to facilitate the voting process, using the short message service on their cell phones to vote whilst in their classrooms. One NAPTOSA respondent said, “Like I said, we will vote via SMS messages. They even send enough newsletters informing us of these things that’s happening and telling us the way forward, what we should do and it’s up to us. We never forced to do anything.” These democratic principles, coupled with the view that the union always tries its best to negotiate for better working conditions and salary packages for its members, were also linked to union satisfaction by the NAPTOSA aligned respondents. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent expressed that “I sometimes feel that the union that I belong to does enough, but at the end of the day, for them to go into negotiations, at the end of the day, they negotiate against a powerful power, which is the Government.” (interviewee 3, Q 12, p8).

4.2.3 Militancy

Whereas NAPTOSA was perceived to be a very moderate and conservative union at the school, most respondents perceived SADTU to be a very radical and militant union. Militant in the sense that it was viewed as a union with a very combative style of unionism. One NAPTOSA respondent expressed that, “The dominant one with militant action is the SADTU union.” (interviewee 7, Q17, p19). Some respondents (non-union aligned, NAPTOSA and SADTU) additionally associated SADTU’s militancy with violent action from some individuals, at times, with one non-union aligned respondent explaining that, “NAPTOSA they quite a quiet union when being compared to SADTU.
SADTU was actually a very violent union.” (interviewee 2, Q26, p10). This perception of SADTU’s militancy was then also validated by a SADTU respondent when s/he said that, “In terms of militancy, they’re very good and clever in getting around the system.” (interviewee 5, Q32, p16). Apart from being perceived as militant by most respondents, SADTU was also perceived as the dominant union at the school, which will now be expounded on in the following section.

4.2.4 Dominance

As previously mentioned, the majority of teachers were SADTU affiliated. This consequently made SADTU the dominant teachers’ union at the school. All respondents also confirmed that SADTU literally is the dominant union at the school with one SADTU aligned respondent saying, “SADTU dominates all schools, so there’s very few NAPTOSA members at most of our schools.” (interviewee 4, Q 8, p3). A few respondents (non-union aligned and NAPTOSA) felt that in light of the fact that SADTU was the predominant union at the school, various SADTU individuals additionally had the propensity to at times act heavy handed when some teachers were not in concurrence with their perspectives or method of doing things. One non-union aligned respondent expressed that, “SADTU people would impose their views on other people whose disagreeing with them.” (interviewee 2, Q 29, p11). A SADTU aligned respondent concurred with this perception when s/he expressed that, “SADTU does not allow any room for democracy.” (interviewee 4, Q 8, p4). Further on, during the interview, the same SADTU aligned respondent expressed that, “Here at the school, your democratic voice is silenced by SADTU. You are being forced to do things here that is against your will.” (interviewee 4, Q9, p5).

4.2.5 Coercion

Notwithstanding the perceptions that various SADTU individuals as being domineering at the school, a few respondents (non-union aligned, NAPTOSA and SADTU) were additionally of the opinion that SADTU’s militant and domineering tendencies, is moreover exhibited through coercive strategies by some SADTU affiliated individuals. One non-union aligned respondent explained that, “SADTU people will actually try and
force the, the NAPTOSA union people to join in the strike no matter what the NAPTOSA union decided.” (interviewee 2, Q 29, p11). Another SADTU aligned respondent expressed that, “Sometimes it feels like they (SADTU) are forcing or coercing you to do something against your will.” (interviewee 4, Q9, p5). However, another SADTU aligned respondent described SADTU as being similar to that of a social union, clarifying that it’s a union through which much socialisation between members is taking place. When I then informed the respondent that the vast majority of alternate respondents had a different perspective and felt that a significant number of SADTU individuals are perceived to be using coercive tactics when attempting to accomplish their objectives, for instance, when they negotiate for better salary packages, the response was, “When it comes to the implementation of salary increases, and so and so will benefit; but never took part in fighting for the rights and salaries of better wages but he’s getting the benefits and reaping the cream and tasting the cream. So, that person will be dealt with somehow.” (interviewee 5, Q 38, p18). The greater part of respondents (NAPTOSA and SADTU) in like manner, associated these coercive tactics depicted, with a climate of creating fear to comply, which will now be discussed in the following section.

4.2.6 Creating a climate of fear and deliberate disruptions

It was the general perception by most respondents that SADTU creates a climate of fear in order to achieve their goals. Most respondents identified verbal harassment as one technique to create fear in teachers, especially during the strike season. Instilling fear in educators to comply, created distrust amongst colleagues, even if they belonged to the same union. In the following quote, a visibly fearful SADTU respondent, who at one stage froze with fear during the interview and had to reassured by the researcher of the confidentiality clause, depicts what happens when not all teachers are striking at the school. The respondent stated that, “If you are not in agreement with them, then you are being told that you are a sell-out. You are then branded as a traitor.” (interviewee 4, Q 9, p5). Verbal harassment was also perceived by some respondents (NAPTOSA and SADTU) to run hand in glove with intimidation with the view that, “SADTU will intimidate the teachers who are at work, even for their own SADTU members that also want to work, they will also be intimidated.”
Besides the verbal harassment and intimidation, both NAPTOSA and SADTU aligned respondents additionally felt that these activities sometimes overflowed to physical harassment, where one SADTU aligned respondent expressed that, “They even come to schools to see who is there, and they ask the principal to release their members. If members do not want to go, then they start fighting. People’s cars have been thrown at, stoned and whatever, bricks…” (interviewee 4, Q 8, p4). Creating fear in teachers to consent was likewise identified by most NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents as a strategy utilised by numerous SADTU members. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent said, “You were afraid that they would damage your car or even hurt you as a person, so…” (interviewee 6, Q 16, p9).

A few respondents also felt that SADTU members creating a climate of fear, was also synonymous with creating deliberate disruptions at the school, especially during the build-up to a strike, in order for the employer to give in to their demands. The following quote serves as an interesting example of this when one SADTU respondent says that, “The learners must be left stranded so that the government can wake up and say, to avoid being sued, to avoid from getting cases that goes to court because teachers were not in class, to avoid fighting with the union and the staff members that you have, the principal will just have to make arrangements for the school to dismiss early or inform parents it’s no longer safe to bring your learners to school.” (interviewee 5, Q 27, p13).

4.2.7 Membership protection

In addition to seeing SADTU seen as militant, and as utilizing coercive strategies to accomplish their objectives by creating a climate of fear, a few respondents (non-union aligned and SADTU) additionally associated SADTU with fierce membership protection. One non-union aligned respondent expressed this notion in the following way, “I must say that SADTU fight for their members. Ja, (Yes) (Pause…) they help their members a lot.” (interviewee no 1, Q19, p7). It would also appear that this membership protection is not only for innocent SADTU members, but that it is also extended to transgressing members as well, which made it very difficult for the principal sometimes to discipline teachers who transgressed. One SADTU aligned respondent said, “It’s very vigilant in terms of (hmm) representing members, when
members have transgressed and find themselves on the other side of the law. They can really negotiate for you and save your face and save your employment contract.” (interviewee 5, Q 32, p16).

4.2.8 Perceived post rigging

Apart from being associated with fierce membership protection of transgressing teachers, most respondents likewise felt that SADTU members in general, are extensively involved in post rigging. The assertions of post rigging in this context, as conjectured by the respondents’, were that some deceptive SADTU aligned individuals would exert unscrupulous measures and influence using an assortment of tactics, to ensure that specific SADTU aligned teachers are guaranteed to get posts. One SADTU aligned respondent conveyed that some of those tactics include bribery (not stating who gets bribed) as well as influencing the interview panel where the respondent explained that, “People will be bribed; (err) people will be influenced. The panel can also be influenced and swayed to a certain position in such a way that the outside people won’t realise that a specific person has already been reserved for a particular post, but it does happen like that.” (interviewee 5, Q 13, p7). As the researcher, I then posed the question to the respondent that if this practice was perceived as part of the nature or culture of SADTU’s teacher unionism behind the scenes, does it mean that perhaps the right candidate for the job does not get appointed? To which the respondent replied, “It depends what you mean with the right candidate mam. The right candidate for the school or the right candidate for the union or the right candidate for himself? (interviewee 5, Q 20, p10). It would appear that this practise of post rigging is most marked when it comes to the filling of promotion posts. One non-union aligned respondent explained that s/he observed this practise even when s/he was teaching at his/her previous school, “There was a promotion post that a NAPTOSA and a SADTU member both applied for. Although a person could see that the NAPTOSA teacher was a stronger candidate and deserved that post, all the SADTU people, or maybe I should say the majority of the SADTU members didn’t want the NAPTOSA candidate to get the post.” (interviewee 1, Q 29, p8). Another NAPTOSA aligned respondent said, “SADTU union members cry and fight these days to put specific people in posts.” (interviewee 3, Q22, p19). The respondent then
continued, saying that s/he personally was a casualty of one of these alleged deceitful acts by a SADTU member when the respondent applied for a promotion post at his/her current school of employment and s/he could clearly see that s/he was being disadvantaged when a specific SADTU member came as an observer to the interview process and the following explanation was given. The respondent stated that, “When he saw me then, his first words to me were, he specifically said, “Is X person already here?” And I asked him then, “Who is this person?” whereby he replied “No this person is a SADTU member and I am coming for this person.” (interviewee 3, Q23, p7). The respondent was of the opinion, that this specific action of the SADTU observer had put him/her at a disposition where the promotion post was concerned, for it did not seem that the SADTU observer came to observe, but to lobby for a specific candidate. In the following accompanying quote, the respondent then said, “That made me realise already that I’m being put in a disadvantaged position because you now going to be in an interview where you already know that this observer only came to lobby for one specific individual.” (interviewee 3, Q 23. P20). What was thought-provoking, was that these viewpoints were not contradicted by any SADTU aligned respondent. It also became evident, that these actions by SADTU; as reported by respondents, has lowered teachers’ morale. One SADTU aligned respondent expressed that, “To tell you the truth, people have their own people that they want to put in certain positions and they will make sure that the person that was earmarked must get that post that has been reserved for that particular person.” (interviewee 5, Q 13, p7). This presumed undue influence, when it comes to the filling of promotion posts as depicted, was then additionally connected to nepotism by a non-union aligned, NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents whereby one SADTU aligned respondent felt that it would appear that one must only belong to a certain clique or inner circle of SADTU in order to get a promotion post in a specific area. The respondent expressed that it would appear that in that specific area where they are teaching, “It is mostly the ************ Sports Committee members, the exec members of the Sports Committee to be specific, who are getting principals posts. That makes one sceptical and wonder a lot… Must one only belong to a sports group or a certain clique within SADTU here within the area to become a principal one day?” (interviewee 4, Q 8, p4). The same SADTU aligned respondent was then likewise also of the opinion that this apparent nepotism is additionally closely linked to gender inequity as well, where it was observed that SADTU habitually only fought for the promotional advancement of their male
members. In the accompanying quote the respondent expressed that, “I have noticed with SADTU is that they are mostly advocating or fighting for the men to get principal’s posts than for the females. I therefore think that SADTU does not apply gender equity.” (interview 4, Q 8, p4). It would appear that there’s likewise a variety of strategies being employed when this perceived nepotism and associated filling of promotion posts occur. One very visible strategy mentioned, is the lodging of excessive grievances until the “desired SADTU” candidate gets the post. One SADTU aligned respondent explained that, “If the union don’t want that person, if they don’t want to take him, then they just lodge a grievance; and it will go to labour, they will win the appeal and then the process will start again.” (interviewee 5, Q 20, p10). The respondent then continued by saying that, “An appeal will be lodged as to prolong the interview process so that it must fail and another one must take place at a later stage until they get the right person.” (interviewee 5, Q 17, p8). What became very conspicuous during the interviews, was that the perceived nepotism and post rigging that SADTU has been associated with as portrayed by most respondents thus far, was not only to benefit certain individuals that belong to SADTU’s inner circle of friends, but that the perceived post rigging comes with an expected trade off. Trade off in the sense that the person/s who got the promotion post through the perceived post rigging, will then be skilfully manipulated by those SADTU members who made the promotion for those individuals possible. One SADTU aligned respondent explained that, “SADTU use people like pawns. It’s a matter of we put you in that position then we can easily manipulate you, we can easily have you in our corner to bet for us whenever we need you. They want that kind of thing through the positions” (interviewee 5, Q22, p10).

4.2.9 Self-serving interests

Not only did the majority of respondents perceived SADTU’s nature of unionism to be militant as well as vigilant, enforcing coercive tactics and creating a climate of fear to obtain their goals; but it was likewise also viewed by most respondents as a teachers’ union whereby many members are just there to serve their own interests and that many of them do not really have the member’s interest at heart. A few NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents were similarly of the view that several of the members in SADTU’s top echelons were involved in unionism mainly to “feather their own nests”.
This can either be in the form of gaining promotional advancement within the educational sector or being launched into a top government post. One non-union aligned respondent expressed that, "What I have also noticed is that most SADTU members were fighting more for promotion posts instead of fighting for their members in general." (interviewee 1, Q 20, p8). This perception was affirmed by one of the SADTU aligned respondents who said that, “SADTU is just tailing the members along and make them believe it's going to be ok. The top brass that are negotiating in the negotiating chamber, they are actually (err), if I can put it blatantly, they are looking for posts and they are marketing themselves so that the government can give them top posts within government." (interviewee 5, Q 12, p6).

4.2.10 Political patronage system

A few NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents correspondingly felt that this self-serving interest was connected to political patronage in the country. Political patronage in this sense meant, that those SADTU members who seem by all accounts to be excellent in crusading for government votes, especially amid the time of elections, apparently seem to secure top government jobs. One SADTU aligned respondent said that, “If you a unionist and you wave the (SA) flag very high, then it's easy to get a promotion post within government. As long as you can be very vocal and as long as they see you are able to convince or mobilise the masses, then the government can easily give you a post.” (interviewee 5, Q 12, p7). It was also the perception of some NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents that this political patronage system as described above, is likewise connected and intertwined with the political tripartite system in SA. The tripartite system refers to the politically three-part alliance that encompasses the ruling ANC government, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). SADTU is an affiliate of COSATU, and therefore indirectly forms part of the tripartite system in South Africa (Letseka et al, 2012:1197). Some NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents were of the opinion that it is because of this tripartite system, that some members in SADTU’s top structure does not have the conviction to properly fight for their members on grassroots level against the government because they are then indirectly forming part of the tripartite system themselves. One SADTU aligned respondent said, “As long as there’s a tripartite
alliance between SADTU, COSATU and the government, then we won’t get a better deal out of the negotiations anytime from now. SADTU will never do enough because it is in bed with the Government. The Government needs SADTU’s votes on any election.” (interviewee 5, Q 12, p7).

4.2.11 Union dissatisfaction

A specific level of union dissatisfaction was likewise sensed from the SADTU aligned respondents due to the assumed political influence and patronage system that exists between some SADTU aligned individuals and government. There was a discernment from a few respondents that numerous individuals in SADTU’s top structure lacks the leadership and willpower to genuinely address the educators concerns on grassroots level because they would not like to be seen as the ones “biting the master’s hand”. This view was demonstrated in the following accompanying quote by one SADTU aligned respondent who indicated that, “If you are benefitting from the government somehow, how are you going to stand up and fight against your master?” (interviewee 5, Q 12, p6).

4.2.12 Influence of teacher unionism on teacher relationships

It would appear that the dichotomy of having two types of teacher unionism in one school as portrayed up to this point, then likewise has an influence on teacher relationships in terms of group dynamics at the school. A few NAPTOSA aligned respondents felt that the two-differentiating modus operandi of unionism that exist at the school can sometimes lead to negative group dynamics which can take some time to mend long after the incident has happened. The observation was that negative group dynamics can many times throttle the educational growth of a school in terms of building a school of excellence due to the fact that there is not always solidarity, because of divergent ideologies and a difference in the modus operandi of the two unions. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent explained it in the context of the national strike that happened in 2010 in South Africa. Some NAPTOSA aligned teachers who came to school on a certain day during that time were then harassed and physically removed from the school premises by a mob of unknown SADTU members from other
schools as well as a few of the school’s own staff members. On the same day, one unknown SADTU member grabbed the principal’s phone and wanted to break it. Although no one was physically injured on that day, due to some individuals from the immediate community and a few SADTU members from the mob who prevented it, the incident caused negative group dynamics and distrust amongst staff members at the school long after the incident has happened. The respondent explained that, “After that incident, the school was really split in two for quite a long time. And when a school has no unity then there’s very little (err) “samewerking”, I can’t get to the word now, (err) co-operation.” (interviewee 3, Q 5, p12). It was the viewpoint of some NAPTOSA aligned respondents that negative group dynamics is also linked to a covert negative subculture. The general understanding of a covert negative subculture, refers to unobservable negative ideologies, perceptions, agendas as well as behaviour by some individuals. It is covert, because it cannot be seen with the naked eye in the way one would see the school’s fax machine, for example. Although this negative subculture cannot be seen, because it is hidden, it was the opinion of some respondents (non-union aligned and NAPTOSA) that it is the cause of discord amongst staff members sometimes, which in turn is not healthy for harmonious school relationships and team work. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent explained that, “It’s almost like a… I don’t know exactly how to explain it, but it feels like a hidden undercurrent of negativity. You know something is there, but you just can’t put your finger on it.” (interviewee 3, Q 15, p12). It would appear that this covert negative subculture also affects the camaraderie between staff members at school, with another NAPTOSA aligned respondent expressing that, “They give a front that they are, (err) there is (err) union, there is camaraderie, but in reality, I don’t see it. I myself, I don’t see the camaraderie.” (interviewee 6, Q 19, p10).

4.2.13 Clandestine meetings

Undoubtedly this negative subculture as depicted above can in like manner be found in the secret clandestine meetings that are sometimes held at school. Some respondents (union-aligned and NAPTOSA) indicated that they were aware that the SADTU members sometimes conduct secret meetings at the school with the objective of devising a plan of action against NAPTOSA members, especially when they know
that NAPTOSA members might oppose them on certain union issues that will affect the learners negatively. These union issues could possibly be when some SADTU individuals want to coerce NAPTOSA members in joining them in a strike, or in some cases it could simply be when SADTU members want to leave the learners unattended and they know that they will get opposition from NAPTOSA members. This perception that SADTU members sometimes have secret meeting to strategise how they will oppose NAPTOSA members on certain union differences was not mitigated by any SADTU respondent. One SADTU aligned respondent concurred by saying “They” (referring to SADTU leadership at the school), “will conduct secret meetings with other SADTU members here at the school, and then people will decide that they will do this or that.” (interviewee 4, Q 10, p6).

4.2.14 Influence of teacher unionism on teaching and learning

It was the view of all respondents that teacher union activities impacted negatively on teaching and learning at school, because that would mean that teachers were not teaching their full specified hours and learners did not receive their allotted teaching time according to policy. This would in turn affect learners’ results negatively because it obstructs curriculum delivery. Nonetheless, it should likewise be stated, that most respondents felt that the level of influence teacher unionism has on the curriculum delivery, were only dependent on how involved some teachers were in union activities; and that it was only a minority of teachers who contributed to this curriculum delivery disturbance at the school. For example, the general perceptions were that those teachers who were the most visibly involved in unionism contributed the most to curriculum delivery disruption at the school. The following accompanying quote portrays this perception aptly when a NAPTOSA aligned respondent said that, “We had two deputies here who were very active SADTU members. Those people would be, in a week of five days, they might be gone from the school for two days. And then the subjects that they were teaching would just stand dead still, because nobody would teach those subjects” (interviewee 3, Q 21, p15). The perceptions from all participants were that these curriculum delivery disturbances lead to school disturbances in general, such as early school dismissals. Most respondents which included the non-union aligned, NAPTOSA and SADTU aligned teachers felt that this situation was only
created by a few SADTU aligned teachers who constantly wanted to attend union meetings during contact time. Most respondents (non-union aligned, NAPTOSA and SADTU) indicated that attending meetings formed part of union activities at the school. However, attending excessive union meetings, meaning, attending meetings more than what is necessary by some radical unionised teachers during contact time, was also cited as one of the main culprits that lead to curriculum delivery disturbance at the school by a few teachers. It was also the perception by all respondents that it is only the SADTU union that schedule union meetings during contact time. This perception was validated by some respondents when a NAPTOSA aligned respondent said that, “SADTU for instance always have union meetings during contact hours and it is a hampering factor on the curriculum.” (interviewee 3, Q 21, p15). Another non-union aligned respondent concurred with the perception that NAPTOSA’s meetings never encroaches on the learner’s allocated teaching time when the respondent said that, “I have noticed that the NAPTOSA people hardly attend any union meetings and if they do, the members usually leave so at 2pm.” (interviewee 2, Q21, p7). One SADTU respondent concurred that SADTU meetings are indeed scheduled during learners contact time, stating that, “SADTU meetings usually, that are organised for a strike, they normally start at twelve o’clock in halls. So, if a meeting starts twelve o’clock, then it means you need to leave an hour ahead before twelve so that you can go and attend the meeting.” (interviewee 5, Q29, p14). With more than half of the staff being SADTU members, this would mean that many classes would then be left unattended by teachers who opted to attend SADTU meetings. When the same respondent was then asked about the large number of classes that would be left unattended, and that there’s a general perception by most respondents that these disturbances causes school disruptions for both teaching and learning as well as a great possibility of a curriculum backlog, the respondent replied that, “Whether the curriculum is suffering or not suffering that is not SADTU’s business. Whoever is in charge of the school, which is obviously the principal, must come up with measures to ensure his or her school does not go down for curriculum delivery” (interviewee 5, Q 22, p11).

From the respondents’ reply above, as well as the perceptions of other respondents (non-union aligned and NAPTOSA), it would appear that quite a number of SADTU aligned teachers in general, place emphasis on addressing the needs of the educators.
first indicated by the excessive meeting attendance during contact time. This is at the cost of learners’ educational rights to education. Not only did some SADTU individuals violate learners’ right to education on a regular basis by attending constant meetings during contact time, but learners’ educational rights were also infringed upon when some SADTU representatives were repeatedly not seen teaching in their own classes; due to the fact that they were always at another school. This was either to intimidate principals when specific SADTU members did not get a promotion post; or they were representing transgressive teachers who have violated the GDE regulations and policies. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent clarified it in the following way by stating that, “But they never even did anything here at school because they were hardly at school, because they were forever in other principal’s offices of other schools; trying to intimidate those principals if their buddies didn’t get any promotion posts or if they felt a principal intimidated their comrades, as they would put it.” (interviewee 3, Q 21, p16)

Both the NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents were of the opinion that these curriculum disturbances are also done deliberately by some SADTU members, so as to make schools ungovernable in general, not only for shock value, but also to grab the attention of Government and the Department of Education with the aim of gaining the upper hand, especially during the time of intense union negotiations. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent expressed that, “You can see they (SADTU) have an attitude of, I’m not going to call a parent to come and look after my class. I want things to be disrupted so that there’s chaos, so that we can be heard and seen. That’s most of the time the attitude of union members, especially, and I’m speaking from experience, especially as a SADTU member.” (interviewee 6, Q20, p11). Furthermore, it was the perception of most respondents that when this pandemonium is occasionally created at school, it is done with the intent of ensuring that the principal or school management team (SMT) does not have sufficient time to put contingency plans in place, for example; such as notifying parents a day before to inform them that the school will dismiss early the following day; or getting community members in to supervise the classes to avoid a chaotic situation at the school. A SADTU member explains the motivation for this, stating that, “The aim of the whole process is to paralyse the system so that teaching and learning does not take place. So, you cannot be pro-active and go and inform someone to prepare themselves that the worst is
coming. They (meaning the SADTU union) want to make the system, (err) bring it to a full stop.” (interviewee 5, Q 27, p13)

4.2.15 Abusing leave procedures

Not only did the majority of respondents feel that radical unionism by certain teachers causes curriculum delivery disturbances at school; and that it is caused only by some SADTU members as already discussed, but the majority of the respondents were furthermore of the understanding that attending endless excessive meetings by a few SADTU individuals is also linked to the abuse of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) leave procedure policies in order to attend those ad hoc meetings as scheduled by SADTU. Those respondents were of the view that abusing the GDE leave policies also had a negative impact on the curriculum delivery because that would mean that teachers were not in class to teach. Most respondents were of the opinion that SADTU meetings can start anytime from between 11 am – 12 am with one NAPTOSA aligned respondent expressing that, “SADTU has this thing that their meetings will have to start at 11 am, because in their understanding, if you are three hours at school it’s sufficient time. They use the debate that according to GDE policy you are present at school because you have spent three hours at school” (interviewee 3, Q 14, p 9-10). Another SADTU respondent concurred with the NAPTOSA respondent when s/he said that, “Teachers will abuse the rule of the Department that states that if you are present at school for 3 hours or more then you must be marked as present. You have served your full day shift then you can dismiss. So they picket after their 3 – hour shift at work and then they dismiss for the rest of the day.” (interviewee 5, Q 25, p12) One NAPTOSA aligned respondent was of the opinion that some teachers not only abuse the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) policy on leave procedures whereby one is regarded as being present if you have spent at least three hours at school, so that they can be involved in excessive union activities such as arranging teacher strikes, meeting attendance, attending to other union issues during learner contact time, amongst other activities, but that some teachers also abuse the policy to dismiss early, possibly for their own private affairs, stating that, “People would sign that they are going to meetings, but I know for a fact that they are not going.” (interviewee 6, Q 19, p10). Another NAPTOSA aligned respondent was in agreement and said that, “They
(SADTU) make use of that opportunity to get out of the classroom to go to those meetings. They don’t deliver. And from this school, it’s the SADTU members.” (interviewee 7, Q 18, p20-21). Although most respondents (NAPTOSA and SADTU) were of the opinion that it is only SADTU members that have the propensity to abuse the leave procedures, mention was also made that those teachers are in the minority and that the majority of staff members comply. One of the respondents indicated that, “There’s a few that are taking those actions.” But furthermore, (err) the others, I don’t have any concerns.” (interviewee 7, Q 18, p20 – 21).

4.2.16 Poor academic results

Not only was it the perception of most respondents (non-union aligned, NAPTOSA and SADTU) that constant meetings attendance by some radical SADTU members at school not only causes school disruptions for learning and teaching as already described, but the majority of respondents (NAPTOSA and SADTU) also felt these disruptions are also the cause for poor academic learner results of those teachers who are extremely involved in union activities. This perception is demonstrated in the following quote from one of the respondents when s/he says that, “The one deputy was teaching Grade 6 Maths and I remember very well, for that year his Maths ANA (Annual National Assessment) results were at 22%. At our school we have never had such putrid ANA results before that man came here. Therefore, I would definitely say that there’s a relationship between union action and curriculum delivery.” (interviewee 3, Q 21, p16) Although this was the observation of a NAPTOSA member, it was interesting to note that a SADTU respondent was in accord with this perception when the respondent said that, “If you are lazy and teachers are on strike or are out of classes a lot due to union action, then it will definitely affect the learners progress or their results negatively and things will become worse” (interviewee 4, Q 17, p8). It would also appear that when learners’ academic results are weak, those few individuals who tend to infringe on learners’ educational rights are not really worried, as they know that the GDE will question the principal by virtue of his/her role as the accounting officer of the school. This perception is confirmed by the following accompanying quote by one of the SADTU respondents when s/he said that, “The principal must take the rap for everything that goes wrong because he or she is the
accounting officer to the Department. The principal’s signature is the final signature that goes on in everything that goes on in this game.” (Interviewee 5, Q 24, p11).

4.2.17 Academic catch-up programmes

In light of the perceived influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery as explained above, during all the interviews; the question was then posed to the respondent as to whether the school had any academic catch-up programmes in place for learners who had lost out on work due to any type of union action, especially after a teachers’ strike. All respondents indicated that the school had no academic catch-up programmes in place. Respondents cited various reasons why attempting to put in place a catch-up programme had no success at the school in the past. The reasons ranged from learner fatigue in the afternoon, to the school having an already packed curriculum to follow and that the teacher’s lesson plans made room for intervention for struggling learners in any case. Another reason cited was that many learners commuted to school and that even though, a few years ago, when the school did attempt to put an academic catch-up programme in place after a strike, it was still unsuccessful, because the majority of the taxi drivers were not willing to wait for learners. One SADTU aligned respondent also explained that the majority of teachers felt that because monies were deducted from their salaries in any case due to the “no work no pay” rule, they did not see any reason why they should punish themselves even further to either stay late after school, or come to school on a Saturday for academic catch-up programmes when the GDE had already punished them. The quote captures the respondents’ sentiments: “People just feel; my money was deducted. Why must I work double for what I’ve already been penalised for?” (interviewee 5, Q 31, p15). The principal also affirmed what the previous respondent said with respect to the majority of teachers’ negative attitude towards the catch-up programmes, indicating that once they (the teachers) know that monies had been deducted from their salaries, teachers did not want to partake in any form of academic recovery programme. S/he explained the following: “We had a discussion about catch-up programmes and the attitude was negative. Teachers didn’t want to be involved with catching up. No one is going to want to catch up, because they feel it’s their right
to strike, they are losing salary, so why must they catch up?” (interviewee 7, Q 21, p24).

4.3 Managing the influence of teacher unionism on the curriculum delivery

The study revealed that although there’s a definite attempt by management to manage the influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery, it was a challenge to do so most of the time. One of the main reasons cited for this challenge by most respondents was that the SADTU union, who had the majority membership at the school, is not very good at informing schools or management timeously when there’s going to be a meeting or public demonstration or any union related activity that might affect the management of the school negatively. One non-union aligned respondent explained that, “If I would compare SADTU to NAPTOSA, then I would say that NAPTOSA is very good with relaying information to their members. With SADTU, people didn’t get so many Newsletters and if they did, the letters were mostly about mass meetings and strikes.” (interviewee 1, Q 19, p7). From a leadership perspective, the principal was in accord with this view stating that, “And when the (err) SADTU gets the information, they will give me a notice at the last minute and will say, There’s now a meeting today.” (interviewee 7, Q 12, p8).

4.3.1 Learner supervision

One method of managing the influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery is by dividing learners amongst teachers that remain at school when their counterparts leave suddenly to attend meetings. A SADTU respondent explained that sometimes, as an emergency measure, older learners had to supervise younger learners, when too many teachers leave the school unexpectedly and there were not enough teachers remaining to supervise. The respondent stated that, “Sometimes the poor prefects will be the ones that’s left with managing the class, their peers because there won’t be any teacher in the class” (interviewee 5, Q40, p19). On these rare occasions, the school would have to be dismissed earlier as too many unsupervised learners would create pandemonium at school. Another NAPTOSA aligned respondent explained that some teachers would at times arrange supervision for their own classes, but those teachers
were in the minority. Some respondents also indicated that parents would at times be called in and asked to supervise learners. However, this posed a financial challenge to the school as many parents expected to be financially reimbursed for supervising the learners. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent expressed that, “The problem with that system is that the parents expect money from the school to look after the learners and we are in an area where finances is a big, big problem. We hardly get school fees in.” (interviewee 3, Q16, p13).

4.3.2 Negotiating with staff members

From a management point of view, the principal indicated that on a few occasions s/he did compromise with teachers who wanted to attend meetings, especially in those instances where the matter appeared to be very urgent. For example, in cases where important discussions that would affect all teachers took place, or when a strike was imminent and the principal needed to relay that information to parents. On those days, the principal would have a staff meeting and negotiate for a delegation of two to three teachers to attend the meetings, in order to prevent chaos at school. Those teachers would then need to report back to the staff the outcomes of the meeting, the following day. The principal said, “There are times when it comes to SADTU members where I will see, no, this is a relevant meeting, I would also like to get feedback. Then I will agree (err) go to this meeting, if it’s during contact time; and I will organise supervision because this is an interesting topic they going to talk about.” (interviewee 7, Q22, p28).

4.3.3 Monitoring

The monitoring of teacher’s time at school, which requires teachers to sign out at a particular time, followed by calculating and documenting the amount of time that the teacher spent attending to union-related activities, is another method through which management seeks to curtail the influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery. The principal explained how s/he goes about doing this: “Usually when there’s a meeting called by SADTU, I will take the opportunity to call a staff meeting. I will then say, “Here’s a meeting by SADTU, all members can't attend because your classes will be unattended”. Then I just need to know who will be attending. Then I will
also check the time they are leaving.” (Interviewee 7, Q12, p9). On a few occasions when a few SADTU aligned teachers did not adhere to the policy of signing out for attending union related activities during learner contact time, leaving their learners unattended in order to attend SADTU meetings without the express permission or without informing a Senior Management Team (SMT) member at the school, the principal mentioned that s/he called those SADTU aligned transgressing teachers to a disciplinary hearing in the office. Those teacher’s names were also submitted to the GDE and their salaries subsequently deducted. The principal said, “I handed in their names to the department and they didn’t get a salary for two days. (err) It seems to me when you make an example, it works. So, managers have to be strong to take that stance.” (interviewee 7, Q22, p29). The principal explained, that once those educators’ salaries were deducted, similar incidents did not recur. Once the principal also laid a formal complaint of intimidation at the GDE against the SADTU chairperson in the schools’ vicinity. The principal explained that the person had the habit of constantly barging into the office, demanding that teachers leave immediately for union related matters: “I mean the worst of worst here was the chairperson of the local SADTU branch here who was the one who wanted to come and intimidate the teachers here. Who was calling meetings during school times and come and raises his voice.” (interviewee 7, Q 24, p35).

4.3.4 Filling in of leave forms

Quite a number of teachers were also asked to fill in leave forms on various occasions when it was noticed that they were routinely away from school due to union activity. On one occasion, the principal also filled in leave-without-pay forms, for two senior teachers who were actively involved in union activity. These senior teachers were said to have totally disregarded their teaching duties. Parents were constantly contacting the school to complain about the poor results the learners of these teacher achieved due to the fact that they were hardly at school. One NAPTOSA aligned respondent explained, “Those two deputies who were teaching here at our school would go for three weeks in succession, every day, from eight o’ clock to four o’ clock in the afternoon dealing with union related matters, forgetting that they have classes to teach here at school; and before that they are in that unionism of them, they are first a
teacher before they are unionists. That’s how they were.” (interviewee 3, Q 21, p15-16). These incidents were corroborated by another NAPTOSA respondent who’s on the school’s management team (SMT) and who explained that, “I had to consult the labour relations officer to guide me and telling them I have two deputies; and both of them belonging to SADTU and on the executive committee and they taking advantage to leave anytime.” (interviewee 7, Q23, p31). Subsequently, the principal then completed leave-without-pay forms for the two senior teachers and submitted the forms to the GDE. In retaliation, for the principal completing these forms, and their monies consequently being deducted, the two teachers laid a false complaint at the GDE of financial mismanagement against the principal. As with all formal complaints, the GDE had to investigate the matter. However, following the investigation, the principal was exonerated and it was indicated that there was no merit in the case.

4.5 Teachers perceptions of how the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery can best be managed

When respondents were questioned on how they thought the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery can best be managed, without violating learners’ rights to education; it became obvious that all respondents had never really given that idea much thought up until they were posed the question. For example, whilst I was interviewing the principal of the school, s/he said that, “Now that I’m being interviewed I think we need to look into this.” (interviewee 7, Q 17, p14-15). Nonetheless, although it seemed that this question caught all respondents by surprise, most respondents, except for one SADTU aligned respondent, gave their views on alternative forms of union activity that could possibly address the needs of the teachers, without violating the learners’ constitutional rights to education. Some non-union aligned and NAPTOSA respondents suggested that the educational needs of learners should always be put first. Another suggestion was to build positive relationships with staff members, as it was felt that people comply much better when good relationships exists. Less strikes were also suggested and if a strike should take place, that teachers should attempt to find a balance between their right to strike and the learners’ right to education, in order not to infringe too much on learners’ contact time. For example, picketing after learners’ contact time, was suggested. However, the same respondent
who suggested that picketing should take place after contact time, also felt that to disrupt schools occasionally, is the only options unions have at times to broker a better deal from government. According to the respondent, “When teachers fight for better salaries and working conditions they know the only way they can make the Government listen to them properly is to disrupt the school.” (interviewee 1, Q 23, p9).

There were also suggestions that unions make their Management Plans available, in advance, to all schools, especially for meetings. This would give schools ample time to make provision for learner supervision should teachers be leaving for any union related activities. Another suggestion was that all unions, Government and the Department of Education should also notify all schools timeously when salary negotiations with unions will be taking place, as this will assist SMT’s to put in place plans for learner supervision. The one SADTU aligned respondent who did not have any views on alternative forms of unionism, felt that it was very difficult for unions to balance the scale between addressing teachers needs without violating the learners’ rights to education. The respondent felt that everything depended solely on government and said, “It’s very difficult to balance the two, because on the one hand you want the learners to get the best education and on the other hand you want the teachers to have the best working conditions and salary demands that matches their skills. So, this one actually hangs in the hands of the employer.” (interviewee 5, Q 44, p21).

4.6 Summary

In chapter four, the themes and categories that emerged from the data were presented. In order for the reader to hear the respondents’ voices, I quoted freely from the raw data and then presented the data in a narrative form. Chapter five will now be a discussion on the main findings that emerged from the data in chapter four.
Chapter 5
Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This thesis had the aim of exploring teachers’ perceptions of the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. The research addressed three questions:

- What is the nature of teacher unionism in township schools?
- Is the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery being managed and, if so, how?
- How do teachers think the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery can best be managed?

Research was conducted through in depth semi-structured individual interviews with seven participants at a single township school. This chapter focuses on a discussion of the main findings, recommendations for practise, suggestions for further research, and ends with a conclusion.

I begin by addressing the first research question concerning the nature of teacher unionism in a township school. This is followed by discussions that address the second and third research questions, respectively.

5.2 Research objective one

Finding out what the nature of teacher unionism in a township primary school is

It is evident that two very distinct and contrasting ideologies of unionism exist at the school. On the one side, there’s the dominant radicalised SADTU with its majority membership and on the other side there’s the more conservative NAPTOSA who’s in the minority.

Although this is not a comparative study, the data leads me to discuss briefly the little teachers had to say about their perceptions of the influence of NAPTOSA on curriculum delivery before I devote the bulk of the discussion to what teachers mostly
wanted to talk about, namely their perceptions of the influence of SADTU on curriculum delivery. I begin with the NAPTOSA discussion.

5.2.1 Conservative teacher unionism

Most participants perceived NAPTOSA to be a conservative union and associated it with professionalism. Professionalism in the sense that the union is constantly empowering its members in the form of providing regular workshops to empower teachers in the classroom as well as those in management positions. These findings are generally in accord with researchers such as Heystek and Lethoko (2001:226); who noticed that NAPTOSA organised seminars and conferences for teachers to improve their teaching strategies, as well as organising competitions, especially in underperforming township schools, all with the intention of improving learners’ results. Most respondents also reported that NAPTOSA always put the curriculum needs of the learner first and therefore never calls for teacher union meetings during teaching time as this would mean that curriculum delivery to learners would be compromised. Therefore, in line with this principle, the respondents reported that the NAPTOSA affiliated teachers at the school never attend union meetings during learners’ contact time, resulting in the NAPTOSA aligned teachers never impacting negatively on curriculum delivery at the school. Although this was the general perception, the data does indicate that NAPTOSA members had joined SADTU in teacher strikes on certain occasions. However, in general, teachers’ perceptions of NAPTOSA’s style of unionism was mostly in accord with what researchers such as Myburg (1999:25) in Heystek and Lethoko (2001:223) and Masenya (2013:31) refer to as “child-centred” with a more professional approach than a worker-oriented philosophy.

5.2.2 Collective decision making

In addition to the NAPTOSA members at the school being viewed as generally staying committed to their union’s basic principles, most respondents also reported that the union truly subscribed to democratic principles when it came to decision making regarding union matters. This applied to both minor or serious union matters such as salary negotiations or a teacher strike or other union related activities, such as
picketing, work to rule policies, referred to as a “go slow”, teacher marches and so on, which is usually regarded as a prelude to a teacher strike. Although the NAPTOSA aligned teachers have, on rare occasions, engaged in these type of union related activities, the data has shown that those are strategies the NAPTOSA union members only employ as a last resort, when all other communication strategies embarked up with their employers, has failed. These findings are generally in harmony with Zengele (2013:75) who noticed that both NAPTOSA and the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie (SAOU) joined SADTU in a teacher’s strike in August 1999 and 2007 when they demanded an improvement in teachers working conditions. Zengele (2013:75) further surmises that the reason why NAPTOSA joined other unions in strike actions in the past, could have been that, just like the other unions, their members must have noticed that the Department of Education (DoE) only take unions seriously when they see that there’s a prominent threat of industrial action.

The data further shows that democratic principles, as applied by NAPTOSA, is done via membership consultation and a buy in from all stakeholders. This implies that NAPTOSA empowers its members to own all decision-making processes. It is reported that the members input will either be given via a democratic voting process at a meeting convened by the local NAPTOSA executive at a time that does not impact teaching and learning negatively, or members will vote telephonically via short message services. Moreover, unlike SADTU, there was also an observation that NAPTOSA made more use of technology by, for example, casting their votes pertaining to important union decisions via short message services. A possible reason for this could be that their teachers do not have to leave their classes to go and vote at a mass meeting, thus minimising the impact on curriculum delivery.

The data further indicate, that when NAPTOSA members at the school engage in any of the union activities described above, it is done with a respect and understanding of other teachers at the school. This applies to their own NAPTOSA members; teachers who are SADTU aligned or non-union aligned teachers who might have opposing views with regards to their method of dealing with union related matters. Furthermore, respondents reported that NAPTOSA members at the school do not engage in any type of coercive strategies, be it verbal or physical threats or attacks in order for other teachers at the school to comply with their views. However, based on most participants’ responses during the interviews, the data reveals that most respondents
have a contrasting view about the majority of the SADTU aligned teachers’ style of unionism. These perceptions are unpacked in the following section.

5.2.3 Militancy

Most participants reported the SADTU aligned teachers’ style of unionism to be very militant and combative in nature. The data additionally reveals that a fair amount of SADTU aligned teachers at the school have the tendency of wanting to impose their views and acting heavy handed towards those teachers who hold different views to theirs. This tendency suggests that a moderate amount of SADTU aligned teachers have the proclivity to silence teachers’ democratic voices. These findings imply that there is a large gap between SADTU’s constitution and what is happening at the school level. In its constitution SADTU states that their aim is to “observe and act in accordance with the spirit and principle of democracy in all the Union’s activities” (SADTU, 2010:6). SADTU silencing teacher’s democratic voices at the school, may have something to do with their large membership. Research conducted by Dlamini (2014:223) revealed that the SADTU aligned principals, who are also union leaders, praise and celebrate their union as a union who can bull-doze anyone due to their large membership.

SADTU has a membership of more than 250 000 teachers across the country, making it the largest teachers union in South Africa (SADTU, 2014:1). During the Apartheid era, in the 1980’s, smaller unions which later merged to form SADTU in 1990, adopted a very radical and militant style of unionism. SADTU was compelled to do the same and possibly also involuntarily obligated to utilise bull-dozing tactics because they were not only fighting for the black teacher to enjoy the same conditions of service as their white counterparts, but their fight also addressed the abolition of the oppressive Apartheid system, that simultaneously called for an education restructuring in general (Amoako, 2014:148, Heystek and Lethoko, 2001:223). However, since Apartheid was abolished in 1994, and all teachers received parity, and the education system was restructured, the question now remains if this radical and militant style of unionism that SADTU is being associated with, still has a place in South Africa today. Research conducted by Masenya (2013:130-131) unveils that SADTU’s radical and militant ways
of dealing with unionism is to be viewed as one of the primary drivers of contention between school managers and site committees at school level, which in part, contributes to learners’ low attainment levels due to the lack of unity that the strife causes.

5.2.4 A climate of fear

Data revealed that an assortment of coercive strategies such as verbal intimidation and physical harassment are utilised to create a climate of fear and scare teachers into compliance. The verbal intimidation could take the form of calling their fellow SADTU members “sell-outs” or “traitors” in SADTU meetings, should they be perceived as to not siding with their comrades. The data further shows that verbal intimidation can also be in the form of threatening phone calls to the school, or calling teachers on their personal cell phones. Then there’s the physical harassment, such as damaging of teachers’ personal property such as their cell phones or cars, or sometimes even physical assault. These findings are largely in accord with Fleisch’s (2010:123) observation, who notes that SADTU members are willing to utilise intimidation and threatening tactics in order for people with opposing views to comply.

Although teachers might comply under this type of duress, the data reveals that creating a climate of fear in teachers to comply causes distrust amongst staff members, in general. The distrust does not only come from some of the NAPTOSA members or non-union aligned teachers towards SADTU members, but distrust was also reported amongst SADTU’s own membership. These findings are in accord with the widely-expressed views of researchers such as Leithwood, Anderson, Mascall and Strauss (2010:19) who advance that distrust amongst staff members poses a challenge when it comes to improving learner attainment. Recent studies in schools have indicated that although variables such as a learners’ background and prior achievement play a very big part when it comes to learner attainment, it has also been found that if trust exist in schools amongst all stakeholders, this is a firm “predictor of student achievement.” (Leithwood, et al. 2010:19).
If a country such as SA, who’s 2014 Annual National Assessments (ANA) results, which is the strategy introduced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2011 to improve the countries low learner attainment levels, still shows signs that its implementation has not yielded the desired outcomes as anticipated by the DBE (DBE, 2014), and still reveals “severe underperformances among South Africa’s primary school learners” (Letseka, 2013:74), it is safe to surmise that unions cannot afford to cause distrust amongst teachers at schools, in general, as this could be counterproductive to improving learner results.

5.2.5 Membership protection

Data collected from the interviews reveals that SADTU fiercely protect its members. There was an observation that fierce membership protection is not only available for teachers who might be innocent, but that it was also readily and easily available for teachers making themselves guilty of misconduct. These findings concur with Monare (2011) in Letseka, Bantwini and King-Mckenzie (2012:1200) who contends that SADTU misuses black education by utilising it as a negotiating tool to protect its members. Misusing education, by utilising it as a negotiation tool, can hamper the principals’ efforts to improve learner results, for Taylor (2008:23) advances that if schools want to improve their learner outcomes, then principals need to establish and maintain an atmosphere in the school which shows that it values teaching and learning as the most central tasks of the institution in achieving success as reflected by learner performance. One would therefore assume that in order to improve a school’s learner outcomes, unions should rather work as partners with all education stakeholders and this includes principals, as postulated by Msila (2013:263). When unions have to work as education partners with principals to improve the effectiveness of a school, there is almost a natural assumption that this would also include assisting the principal in disciplining a transgressing teacher as well, when the need arises. However, if a union has the tendency of constantly protecting transgressing teachers as reported by participants, one could assume that this sort of protectionist conduct from SADTU, could make it extremely difficult for principals to discipline a transgressing teacher, which in turn could lead to the school not improving on the general learner outcomes, especially if the teacher fails to perform in class.
5.2.6 Perceived post rigging

Although section 3.2.1 (d) of Collective Agreement No 2 of 2005 clearly states that union members are only to have observer status when it comes to the filling of educators’ posts; and that it is the School Governing Bodies (SGB’s) who are supposed to be involved in the shortlisting process, interviewing of the short-listed candidates; as well as drawing up the list of their preferred candidates that must then be submitted to the Head of Department (HOD), the data has shown that some SADTU members are making themselves guilty of nepotism via post rigging. They reportedly do this by inappropriately involving themselves when it comes to the filling of educators’ posts. Respondents observed the inappropriate meddling to be most marked when it comes to the filling of promotion posts. Further data has shown that the inappropriate meddling will include a variety of tactics including bribery as indicated by one SADTU respondent. Another strategy reported, would be the lodging of excessive grievances until SADTU’s preferred candidate gets the post. Most participants gave reports of observers trying to exert undue influence over the interview panel with the intention to influence the SGB’s decisions of choosing a candidate that the union prefers. Based on the participants’ observations, it would appear that SADTU does not consider the curriculum needs of the school, a candidate’s competence, suitable qualifications, experience, management skills and an ability to lead when they try to manipulate SGB’s in choosing their preferred candidates for management positions. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Zengele (2013:88), Diko and Letseka (2009:323) and Fleisch (2010:127) who all concur that SADTU is inappropriately interfering with the appointment processes when it comes to the filling of management posts.

Furthermore, a report by a Ministerial Task Team, commissioned by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, to investigate allegations of an article published by the City Press in 2014 of a “Jobs for cash” syndicate amongst members of teacher unions and department officials, uncovered that a network does exist that is offering teachers posts for cash (DBE, 2016:20). The Ministerial Task Team, headed by Professor J, Volmink further uncovered SADTU officials or representatives as the only union to have “exerted improper influences” (DBE, 2016:20) when it comes to promotion posts.
Appointing an unsuitable person in a management position could become a curriculum delivery challenge, which in turn could affect learner results negatively; as “schools require effective teachers, leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students” (Bush, 2008:1, in Bush, Bell and Middlewood, 2010:132). For example, Heads of Department at school level ought to be selected based on the “strength of their subject expertise” as it would be relied upon the individual to take the lead and provide opportunities for teachers “to improve their subject and pedagogic knowledge” as well as monitoring and mentoring the teachers within their group with the intention to improve the learner outcomes at a school, in general (Taylor, 2008:23). However, if a person has been appointed in a position based on nepotism due to certain union connections, as opposed to having the best credentials, expertise and applicable experience and an ability to lead as reported, it creates great doubt as to whether the appointed individual will have the capacity and expertise to lead his or her subordinates in terms of curriculum delivery; which are essential qualities to possess if one wants to improve the learner results and contribute to the improvement of the country’s current poor learner results. Zengele (2013:92) and Bloch (2009:82) notes that poor management and nepotism leads to an inability of a school to address the needs of learners’ and thus fails to produce the expected outcomes. This poses a threat to a country like South Africa, who has an education system that is in a state of crisis (Pattillo, 2012:24); and that has been described by Bloch (2009:58) as a “national disaster.” The appointment of unsuitable individuals into management positions as described above, could be linked to a perceived self-interest amongst key members within SADTU’s top hierarchy which would be clarified in the following section.

5.2.7 Self – serving interests

Data revealed the SADTU aligned respondents are of the opinion that the majority of their leaderships’ involvement in unionism has very little to do with serving their members at grassroots level. By grassroots, I refer to teachers occupying the lower ranks of SADTU’s hierarchy, but that union involvement is embarked upon to mainly serve their own interests. There was a perception that SADTU’s high ranking hierarchy serve their own interests of either gaining promotional posts within the education
sector or for advancement into high ranking government positions. Both the NAPTOSA and SADTU respondents correspondingly perceive this self-serving interest as being exhibited by key members in the SADTU’s leadership and that this is interconnected with political patronage in the country. The data shows that political patronage, as comprehended by the respondents, means that that those SADTU members who seem, by all accounts, to be excellent in campaigning for government votes, especially during the time of elections, are rewarded with high ranking government positions. The findings reveal that this situation causes dissatisfaction from SADTU’s lower ranking members toward their leadership as well as lowering the teachers’ morale, as most respondents opinionated that if one is not aligned to the inner circle of SADTU’s leadership, then the union will never fight for you to get a promotion post.

These findings are mostly in line with Govender’s (2004:267) observation, citing Ginsburg, Kamat and Weaver (1995) and Murillo (1999:40); who noticed that SADTU’s close political ties with the ruling African National Congress (ANC), due to the tripartite alliance between the ANC, SACP and COSATU, of which SADTU is an affiliate, is very similar to that of the national teachers’ union in Korea (KFTA) and in Mexico. In these states the teachers’ unions were seen as serving to legitimise the decisions of the state’s select few and not the interest of the educators. Although these findings appear to be political in nature and not related to curriculum delivery at all, Zengele (2014:471) observed that this type of transactional leadership style between the ANC government and SADTU, where key members of SADTU are purportedly getting first preference when it comes to promotion posts above good meriting teachers has an indirect negative effect on curriculum delivery as it leads to a low teacher morale. In my research exploration, the data reveals similar findings to those of Zengele (2013:61) as already described. A low teacher morale has the possibility of leading to poor teacher performance, which in turn could lead to low learner attainment levels. Diko and Letseka (2009:231) advance that a low teacher morale may lead to teacher attrition. A country like South Africa, that already does not have enough “inspired, knowledgeable, dedicated and committed teachers” (Bloch, 2009:168) can ill afford to lose knowledgeable and dedicated teachers due to a low teacher morale as this could exacerbate the country’s current low learner outcomes.
5.2.8 Giving precedence to the Constitutional rights of the teacher

Section 23 of the Constitution enshrines the right for all South Africans to unionise and to strike, whilst section 17 grants everyone the freedom to assembly and to protest providing that these activities would take place in a peaceful and unarmed manner. Whilst the Constitution grants all SA citizens the right to unionise and strike, section 29 of the Constitution simultaneously state that all learners have the fundamental right to a basic education (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:1249-1259). However, although all children have a basic right to education, as enshrined in section 29 of the Constitution, the data shows that most participants are of the view that the SADTU aligned teachers at the school have the tendency of violating learners’ educational rights by giving precedence to their own constitutional rights, above the educational rights of the learners that they are teaching. Most participants observed that the violation of learners’ educational rights manifests in a variety of ways. Purportedly, there are the obvious unionised actions that is easy for the general public and media to observe. These would-be teacher strikes, picketing and marches during teaching time, which usually occur during a strike. These findings are consistent with previous researchers such as Letseka (2013:75), and Lelliot and Mbabela (2010) in Letseka, Bantwini and McKenzie (2012:1199) who postulate that SADTU, in particular, has the propensity of frequently conducting indefinite strikes to demand regular salary increments with interconnected benefits, which is often a detriment to teaching and learning.

Then, besides the obvious union actions such as teacher strikes, picketing, marches and so on during school hours, the data further reveals that there are not so obvious union actions, which are not so easy for the general public or media to observe. One example that is not so easy for the general public or media to observe, is teachers wanting to conduct union meetings at the school during teaching time. Although the data reveals for these meetings are usually scheduled during first or second break, the findings indicate that teachers seldom stop conducting the meeting immediately after the bell has gone for the break to be over; resulting in some teachers continuing with their meetings. Also, leaving the school as early as 10 am or 11 am to attend SADTU mass meetings that would start at any time between 11 am or 12 noon was also reported as another way in which teachers prioritise their own rights above those of the learners. These findings concur with those of Irving (2012:399) who noted that
holding union meetings during school time is often the norm in many township schools and is also considered as a legitimate reason for teacher absence.

The data further reveals that when it comes to these meeting attendances during teaching time, most SADTU aligned teachers also have the tendency of wanting to leave the school an hour before the time, claiming that they need to be on time for the meetings. Reports indicate that quite a number of SADTU teachers will then abandon their classes without making prior arrangements for any form of supervision of their learners. These actions, in general, points to poor service delivery on the part of the SADTU aligned teachers and has the potential to lead to insufficient curriculum delivery. It also ties in with what has been described in the 2010 World Bank report as “quiet corruption” (World Bank, 2010). According to Shanta Devarajaan, “Quiet corruption does not make the headlines the way bribery scandals do, but is just as corrosive to societies” (World Bank, 2010).

The majority of teachers at the school are affiliated to SADTU, and reports indicated that when the bulk of teachers leave the school early to attend union meetings, it not only negatively impacts on curriculum delivery due to the loss of teaching and learning time; but additionally, causes disciplinary problems as there would not be enough teachers remaining to supervise the learners. Reports indicate that on quite a number of occasions in the past, the principal was compelled to dismiss the school early due to a lack of learner supervision and also for fear that unsupervised learners might be injured. These findings generally conform to research conducted by Chisholm, Hoadley, Prinsloo, Brookes, Kgobe and Rule’s (2005:171), who found unionised teachers to be spending very little time in class teaching. Teachers spending very little time in class teaching, is akin to teacher absenteeism. The failure of teachers not fulfilling their expected roles due to high absenteeism, sluggishness and ineffective teaching gives rise to inadequate learner competencies (World Bank, 2010:20). This leads one to ask the following pertinent question: Can a country like South Africa, who’s students in 1995, 1999 and 2003 scored the lowest among all participating countries in the International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMMS), (Carnoy, Chisholm & Chilisa, 2012:9) allow its students to be inadequately competent?
5.2.9 Obligation to unionism instead of teaching

Data obtained during the interviews further unveils that violating learners’ educational rights, does not only manifest in the form of some SADTU aligned teachers leaving the school premises early during teaching time to attend union meetings, but additionally, also uncovered a few SADTU members appearing to be more obligated to unionism instead of teaching. Most participants observed that some union representatives abuse the fact that the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document lawfully afford union representatives time off for doing union work. However, although the PAM document makes provision for union representatives at a school to take time off to represent union members during disciplinary hearings, grievances, disputes and retrenchment procedures as well as dismissals; section 3.1.4.2 (b) in chapter F of the PAM document clearly states that the amount of time off allowed for these type of union activities should not exceed a maximum of 3 school days at a time. It further states, that the entitlement is only limited to a maximum of 12 school days per annum (PAM, 2016:167). However, reports indicate that two of the schools’ previous senior teachers, who both happened to have been SADTU union representatives at the school in the past, would sometimes be absent for three weeks in succession whereby they attended to union related matters. Data reveals that absenteeism from the school of the union representatives to attend to various union related issues, such as representing teachers during disciplinary meetings at other schools, or attending grievances and disputes for promotion posts for comrades and so forth have impacted so negatively on the learner results that the school’s grade six Mathematics ANA pass rate was a lowly 22% during one year. These poor results do not even come close to the Department of Basic Education’s 2013 average target of 60% set for both Home Language and Mathematics for grades three, six and nines respectively (DBE, 2013). Moreover, a 22% Maths pass rate, is even less than the 30% pass rate Letseka (2013:74) attained by some black township schools. Most respondents viewed these poor results as an eye opener at the time, and is therefore of the view that there’s a definite relationship between unionised teachers and curriculum delivery. These results motivate one to reconsider Letseka’s (2013:75) suggestion to openly address the influence that teacher union activities have on the curriculum delivery in South Arica.
5.3 Research objective two

Investigating whether the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery is currently being managed and, if so, how?

From the data generated by the participant’s responses during the interviews, it would seem that there are efforts by management to manage the influence that teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery. However, the findings also suggest, that although the schools’ management is making a concerted effort to manage the influence teacher unionism has on the curriculum delivery, the management finds it a challenge at times since most participants reported the SADTU members as having a pattern of habitually notifying the school management very late about any union related activities that could disrupt teaching and learning. These disruptions are reportedly most noticeable during the build-up of a possible strike. This resulted in management at times not having sufficient time to put contingency plans in place in order to minimise the disruptions of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery.

A possible reason for SADTU members creating these disruptions, especially during the build-up of a strike, could be that their members do this deliberately, for unlike most normal strikes, where only the employers and employees are affected, a teacher strike affects three parties, as the learners also tend to become casualties, or collateral damage, due to the fact that they are not being taught. Learners not being taught for a while, has the possibility of not only drawing a lot of media attention, but also has the potential for making parents panic as well. Panicked parents, coupled with a lot of media attention, could result in pressure being exerted on employers to negotiate quickly, and therefore maybe adopting a more accommodating behaviour during the negotiation process in order to end the strikes quickly. Loock, Grobler and Mestry (2009:47) assert that when one party adopts an accommodating behavioural style during conflict resolution, it tends to create a “win-lose” situation, on the grounds that the one party would attempt to fulfil “the interests of the other party at their own expense”. This implies that only “one party will get what they want, and the other gets nothing except the resolution of the conflict” (Loock et al. 2009:47). From the participants’ responses during the interviews, it would appear that SADTU wants to create a “win-lose” situation, with the union emerging as the victor.
5.3.1 Learner supervision

Learner supervision was identified as one method the school management employs to manage the influence that teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery. Reportedly, the learners of those teachers who have left their classes unattended for any union-related activities, would be divided up amongst the few remaining teachers at the school. Accounts were also given of parents occasionally assisting with the learner supervision. As an emergency measure, management will occasionally also use older learners at times to supervise the younger learners. However, although learner supervision has been provided as one method the management employs to manage the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery, these methods described, rather look like strategies management employ to minimise disruption caused when there are not enough teachers to teach the learners. The data does not indicate that teaching and learning is taking place during learner supervision.

5.3.2 Negotiation with staff members

The data reveal that adopting a diplomatic and collaborative approach by utilising negotiation strategies with staff members, in order to avoid a possible conflict situation; is another method management employs to manage the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. Accounts were given of the principal calling a staff meeting and negotiating with staff members, that instead of everyone attending a meeting, a delegation of two to three teachers to attend union meetings on behalf of the staff. The delegation will then report back, the following day, to the rest of the staff on the union-related issues discussed at the meetings. This management style of negotiating with staff members, is in accord with what Loock, Grobler and Mestry (2009:47) refer to as a collaborative approach to handle conflict. A collaborative approach to handling conflict is when both sides attempt to satisfy each other’s interests and this subsequently leads to a “win-win” situation because both parties get the greater part of what they want (Loock, Grobler & Mestry, 2009:47).
5.3.3 Monitoring

Participants’ responses also indicate that a monitoring approach, where management make staff members sign in the school’s early leaving book and then monitor the time teachers spend on union related activities, is also used as a strategy to manage the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. The monitoring approach appears to be quite effective, for it is reported that when some SADTU members on a few occasions, left their classes unattended to attend a union meeting early in the morning and did not returning to school on the said day, the principal submitted their names to the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and their salaries were subsequently deducted. A similar incident did not occur again at the school.

5.3.4 Filling in of leave forms

Accounts were given of management consulting the Labour Relations Unit at the district office in order to provide guidance on how to deal with some teachers who were routinely absent to attend to various union related activities. For example, in addressing the behaviour of the two mentioned senior teachers, who would stay absent for three consecutive weeks, resulted in the principal completing leave-without-pay forms for those teachers, following the guidance provided by the Labour Relations Unit. The salaries of the teachers were consequently deducted, for, as previously mentioned, section 3.1.4.2 (b), chapter F of the PAM document clearly state that the amount of time off allowed for trade union activities should not exceed a maximum of three school days at a time, and also, not exceed the amount of 12 days per annum (PAM, 2016:167). The principal consulting with the Labour Relations Unit on how to deal with the matter demonstrates that legislation and processes do exist to assist in managing the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. However, it appears that the principal was not very well versed when it comes to the legislative knowledge and applying the legislation and regulations that could minimise the possible negative influence that teacher unionism could have on the curriculum delivery; hence, advise from the districts’ labour relations unit was needed.
5.4 Research objective three

Eliciting teachers’ thoughts on how they think the influence of teacher unionism on the curriculum delivery can best be managed

In light of the participants’ responses during the interviews, it became evident that all of the respondents had not considered how the influence that teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery could be managed, until the question was posed to them. A possible reason why participants never thought about alternative forms of unionism, may have something to do with SADTU’s large membership and the union being synonymous for its militant and combative discourse. This could have caused teachers to be under the impression that even if they wanted to adopt a more collaborating style of unionism, it would have very little impact due to SADTUs huge following at the school and, as the data already revealed, the use of intimidation and coercive tactics by individual members of the union. However, although it appears that this question came as a surprise to most participants, the data reveal that all of them, except for one, was able to give various suggestions on how to manage the influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery.

One participant recommended building positive relationships with staff members, as the participant was of the view that individuals are considerably more accommodative when good relationships exist. Another participant suggested fewer strikes, and if strikes or picketing did occur, teachers should attempt to find a balance where their actions did not infringe too much on curriculum delivery. However, it must be mentioned that the very same participant also indicated that sometimes unions have no other option, but to occasionally disrupt the schools when they see that that as the only way that they can broker a better deal with government. This remark is once again in accord with Zengele’s (2013:75) previous mentioned observation, who noticed that unions usually to resort to strike action because they could have realised that the DoE only take unions seriously once there’s a prominent threat of industrial action.

A suggestion was also given that unions should make their management or year plans available in advance to all schools, especially the dates of their meetings, for in that way, schools will have enough time to make plans for learner supervision. The same participant was also of the view, that all unions, Government and the DoE, should notify all schools timeously when salary negotiations are to take place, as the
participant thought that having that information; will also assist SMT’s to put contingency plans in place for learner supervision when some union representatives are absent from school to attend meetings related to the salary negotiations. These findings fit in with what Stevenson and Carter (2007) in Stevenson (212:955) refer to as “new unionism.” New unionism rejects adversarial relationships and rather encourages “more collaborative forms of working between employers and unions” (Stevenson, 2012:955).

As previously mentioned, the data indicated that most participants were unable to give suggestions on how they thought the influence teacher unionism has on the curriculum, can best be managed. From the participants’ responses, it was clear that some of them were of the opinion that it is difficult for teachers to balance unionism and learners’ constitutional rights to education, because although teachers want the best education for their learners, they likewise also want the best working conditions and salaries that match their skills and that it’s very difficult to balance the two. Furthermore, a few participants were also of the view that everything depends solely on the government. The reason why a few participants felt this way, may have something to do with what one participant, in particular, expressed as teachers in general being expected to conduct themselves not only in a professional manner, but are also expected to be highly qualified just like other professionals in other disciplines. However, unlike the respect, status and high salaries that one usually associates professionalism with, one finds that this is not the case for South African teachers in general (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001:223). There is the sense, as expressed by the respondent, that it depends on the government as the employer to ensure that teachers’ salaries are on par with professionals in other fields and that they are given the same status and respect as their counterparts in other disciplines.

5.5 Recommendations

This research had the aim of exploring teachers’ perceptions of the influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery at a single township primary school. A key finding in this research exploration unveiled that two very distinct and contrasting ideologies of unionism exist at the school between that of NAPTOSA and SADTU and that participants perceived these diverse styles of unionism to have dissimilar influences
on curriculum delivery. In light of the key findings of this research project, recommendations will now be discussed in the following section.

### 5.5.1 Adopting a more collaborative form of unionism

What I found was that most participants associated the NAPTOSA teachers’ style of unionism with professionalism. Professionalism in the sense that the union is constantly empowering its members in the form of providing regular workshops to empower its teachers in the classroom, as well as those in management positions, all with the intention to improve learner results and to manage schools effectively as an organisation. There was also a general perception that the NAPTOSA aligned teachers always put the curriculum needs of the learners first and therefore never influencing the curriculum delivery negatively. However, most participants had a contrasting view of the SADTU aligned teachers style of unionism. Most participants perceived the majority of the SADTU aligned teachers’ style of unionism to be militant and combative; constantly putting their own needs first at the expense of the learner’s educational right to education, especially those teachers who are perceived to be extremely unionised. In line with these perceptions, most participants therefore viewed quite a number of SADTU aligned teachers style of unionism to have a negative influence on the curriculum delivery of the school. These findings are broadly in line with researchers such as Carnoy, Chisholm and Chilisa (2012:13), who postulate that unionism in SA constrains the ability of government to pursue its education policy objectives. Based on these negative perceptions most participants hold about SADTU, it was recommended that unions, specifically SADTU, adopt a more collaborative form of unionism. This refers to unionism that not only addresses the needs of the teachers, but that also does not violate the learners’ right to education.

### 5.5.2 Workshops and support on how to manage industrial actions

Schools need “effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students and learners” (Bush, 2008:1, in Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010:132). Part of effective leadership implies that school principals also need to understand the general principles of industrial actions and relations, as well as the
various acts of legislation and how to apply those acts and procedures as postulated by Loock, et al., (2009:105); for it could assist principals and SMT’s to minimise any negative influences that teacher unionism could have on curriculum delivery. However, another key finding was, that the principal was not very well versed with regards to the various acts and legislation and how to apply those acts and procedures, particularly the regulation described in the PAM, pertaining to the time that union representatives are allowed away from school to conduct union activities. It therefore appears that this is one possible reason why union representatives in the past could be away from the school for three weeks in succession. Based on this finding, I therefore recommend that the DoE provide regular workshops and support programmes to principals, SMT’s and SGB’s on legislation and policy pertaining to industrial action, and how to manage industrial actions in general.

5.5.3 Training and development support programmes for SGB’s

In light of the finding that some SADTU observers sometimes try to exert undue influence over the interview panels and the SGB’s decisions to choose a union sanctioned candidate, especially in the case of filling promotion posts, I further recommend that the DoE provide regular training and development support programmes to SGB’s, especially with regards to the filling of educator posts. This is important because if schools want to improve their learner attainment levels, then teachers, especially those applying for management positions, should be selected on the “strength of their subject expertise” and their abilities to lead, as it would be relied upon the manager or immediate senior to take the lead and provide opportunities to their colleagues “to improve their subject and pedagogic knowledge”, with the aim to improve the learner outcomes at the school (Taylor, 2008:23). This implies that school managers and senior management at a school, usually referred to as Head of Departments (HOD’s) and deputy principals, cannot be appointed on the basis of nepotism or their affiliation to a specific union. Zengele (2013:92) and Bloch (2009:82) further notes that poor management and nepotism leads to an inability of schools to address the needs of their learners’ which in turn leads to a failure to produce the expected learner outcomes.
5.5.4 Creating open and effective lines of communication

Found on the participants' responses during the interviews, it became evident that there’s a need for the creation of open and effective communication lines between unions, the GDE and schools. It is recommended that unions make their year or management plans available to schools, especially pertaining to their mass meetings and during the time of salary negotiations, so that schools can utilise that information to put contingency plans in place to minimise the disruptions these union activities have on teaching and learning. Likewise, it is also recommended that the GDE make their year plans available to schools, especially during the time of salary negotiations with unions, for salary negotiations also mean that union representatives are absent from school which means that the learners of those teachers are not being taught. However, if schools are armed with the knowledge of when union representatives will be absent to attend salary negotiation meetings, then that information can also assist schools to be proactive in their plans to minimise the disruption that these types of union activities can have on curriculum delivery.

5.5.5 Further research

In this thesis, I attempted to explore teachers' perception of the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. The findings indicate that all participants felt that there’s a definite relationship between unionism and curriculum delivery. I found that the SADTU aligned teachers style of unionism was perceived as having a negative influence on curriculum delivery, especially those teachers that the participants perceived to be the most involved in union activities. However, having said that, I must emphasize that my research was only limited to a single primary township school with seven participants and that these findings should therefore not be considered as the perceptions of most teachers at most township primary schools. It is therefore suggested that a similar study on a larger scale be conducted.

5.5.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion on the exploration of teachers’ perceptions of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery. It is evident that two very distinct and
contrasting styles as well as ideologies of unionism exist at the school between that of NAPTOSA and SADTU. Participants perceived the SADTU aligned teachers’ style of unionism, especially those teachers who are perceived to be the most unionised, to have a negative influence on curriculum delivery at the school. The negative influence teacher unionism has on curriculum delivery implies that principals and SMT’s need to be workshopped and supported by the GDE pertaining to the legislation and procedures on how to manage any negative influences teacher unionism could have on curriculum delivery. Lastly, since this was a small-scale study, it is suggested that it would be beneficial to repeat this research on a larger scale; in order to get a wider perspective regarding teachers' perceptions of the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery, for Letseka (2013:75) suggests that the influence teacher union activities have on curriculum delivery; is an issue that needs to be addressed in South Africa. Furthermore, Pattillo (2012:17) mentions that there’s very little known about the actual roles of teacher unions in South African schools.
Reference List


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Appendix A

Ethical Clearance
ETHICS CLEARANCE

Dear K Kara

Ethical Clearance Number: 2015-047

Teachers’ perceptions of the influence of teacher unions on curriculum delivery

Ethical clearance for this study is granted subject to the following conditions:

- If there are major revisions to the research proposal based on recommendations from the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
- If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, it remains the duty of the student to submit a new application.
- It remains the student’s responsibility to ensure that all ethical forms and documents related to the research are kept in a safe and secure facility and are available on demand.
- Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents.

The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee has decided to

- [X] Grant ethical clearance for the proposed research.
- [ ] Provisionally grant ethical clearance for the proposed research
- [ ] Recommend revision and resubmission of the ethical clearance documents

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Prof Geoffrey Lautenbach
Chair: FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
8 October 2015
Appendix B

GDE Research Approval
GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date: 7 December 2015
Validity of Research Approval: 8 February 2016 to 30 September 2016
Name of Researcher: Kara K.S.
Address of Researcher: 38 Inandas Complex; Le Roux Street; Suideroord; 2091
Telephone / Fax Numbers: 011 680 5312; 083 406 3805
Email address: karenkara6@gmail.com
Research Topic: Teachers perceptions of the influence of Teacher Union activities on curriculum delivery
Number and type of schools: SEVEN Primary Schools
District/aHQ: Johannesburg Central

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school’s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However, participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Officials concerned, the Principals and the chairpersons of the School Governing Body (SGB) must be presented with a copy of this letter.
2. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid.
3. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researchers may carry out their research at the site that they manage.

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

P.O. Box 111, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel (011) 355 0506
Email: Candi.Makhulu@gdplaning.gov.za
Website: www.education.gos.za
4. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the third quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.

5. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

6. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGBs; principals, educators, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.

7. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her own research resources, such as stationary, photocopiers, transport, taxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution/s, staff and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.

8. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.

9. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template).

10. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

11. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director's and school's concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2015/12/28

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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Appendix C

Participants Consent Form
Informed Consent to participate in interviews

Project Title:

Teachers perceptions of the influence of teacher unions on the curriculum delivery

Researcher: Karen Kara

I, __________________________ hereby agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant. The research information has been explained to me and I understand the nature of the research and my involvement in it. I have had the opportunity to ask about my involvement in this study. It was explained to me, that the information obtained would be used for research purposes. I understand that my personal details (and my identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential. I was also informed that I do have the right to withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time with no penalty. In conclusion, I willingly provide my consent for using audio recording during the interviews.

| Please allow me to review the report prior to publication. I supply my details below for this purpose. |
| Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose. |
| I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher. |

Name:_________________________________________

Phone or Cell number_________________________________________
e-mail:_________________________________________

Signature:_________________________________________

Date:_________________________________________
Appendix D

Interview Schedule
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Name: _______________                                                 Date _______________
Time: _______________

**Intention of the project:**
- Describe the nature of teacher unionism in a township school.
- Investigate whether the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery is being managed and, if so, how.
- Elicit teachers’ thoughts on how the influence of teacher unionism on curriculum delivery can best be managed

1. How long have you been in the teaching profession?

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2. Please tell me what your teaching experience has been like for you since you started teaching?

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3. To which union do you belong to?

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4. Does the union that you belong to provide any professional development for its members?

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5. Could you give me examples of the professional development the union provides that you belong to?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
6. Do you attend any of those professional development workshops your union provides?

7. When does the union usually provide these workshops?

8. What happens to your classes should the workshops be conducted during contact time?

9. Please describe in detail your typical week with regards to your workload at school?

10. How would you describe your workload in relation to your salary per month?

11. When dealing with government, do you feel that the union that you belong to is advocating sufficiently for its members when it comes to negotiating for better working conditions and a living wage?
12. Could you give examples of the various actions union members belonging to your union take when advocating for better working conditions and salaries for its members?

13. To which teachers’ union do the majority of teachers belong to at your school?

14. How would you describe the general nature of teacher unionism of the union that you belong to?

15. Could you describe the general nature of teacher unionism at your specific school? **Unionism in general – both sides.** (E.g. union meeting attendance during contact time. What practices do you notice between the different unions, their modus operandi etc.)

16. What happens to the learners when teachers are out of classes during any union activities?

17. Do you think that there’s a relationship between union action in general and curriculum delivery? **E.g. does union action influences learner results and if so - how?**

18. How do you think the influence of teacher unionism should best be managed whereby the teachers’ needs could be addressed but learners are also not denied the right to a quality education?

19. We have come to the end of this interview, is there anything you would like to add?
Teachers perceptions of the influence of teacher unions on the curriculum delivery

Researcher: Karen Kara

I, _________________________ hereby verify that the transcribed data collected from me for the research study via an interview is correct.

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Phone or Cell number: __________________________________________________

e-mail address: _________________________________________________________

Signature: _____________________________________________________________

Date: _________________________________________________________________