

**THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TEACHERS'
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

by

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my maternal uncle Alhaji Sakariyau Olaoye Olaobaju, who passed away at the time this thesis was being written. In life you were a bridge builder. You dedicated your life to helping both family members and non- family members. As one of your beneficiaries while you were here on mother earth, this achievement of mine will make you proud.

ACRONYMS

AIT	African Immigrant Teachers
ATAPTIE	Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience (ATAPTIE)
CASS	Continuous Assessment
DoE	Department of Education
ETEP	Extended Teacher Education Program
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
ITN	International Teachers Networks
OBE	Outcome Based Education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SGB	School Governing Body
UNISA	University of South Africa

ABSTRACT

This research attempts to explore how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstructed their professional identities. In this study African immigrant teachers are those teachers who have undergone teacher professional training in an African country other than South Africa. The study was qualitative in nature and utilized narrative inquiry and the case study approach. Data-gathering techniques included a mix of semi-structured interviews, observations, focus group interviews, field notes and a researcher's journal (multiple variable sampling of five different South African public schools- one African immigrant teacher per school; school principals and focus group interviews of learners who were students of the immigrant teachers). Data analysis made use of grounded theory and content analysis.

Findings from the study were fourfold: First, African immigrant teachers in South African schools cultivated good relationships with colleagues and administrators in order to reconstruct their professional identities. Second, they developed special traits such as perseverance and resilience. Third, access to opportunities, resources and materials in their schools were useful. Fourth, immediate employment on arrival in South Africa was available. Apart from factors that promoted the reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities, there are also factors that opposed the reconstruction of their professional identities, namely their immigration status, their employment status and the attitudes of indigenous learners towards them.

The new knowledge that was generated indicated that African immigrant teachers in South African schools are considered desirable and indispensable partners by employers, colleagues, administrators and learners. This is in contrast to the general perception in the literature that immigrant teachers are mere work seekers; opportunists and desperate individuals who are not an asset to the host country.

KEYWORDS

Immigrant teachers

Professional identity

Reconstruction

Xenophobia

South African schools

African immigrant teachers

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LANGUAGE EDITING

I, ARLEN KEITH WELMAN, hereby certify that I have revised the language of the dissertation “The reconstruction of African immigrant teachers’ professional identities in South African schools” written by Elufisan Kolawole, and have found the standard of the language acceptable provided the indicated corrections have been made.

(signed)

A.K. Welman M.A. (English), B.Ed. (UP)

Pretoria

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

“If immigrants are so valuable to our nation, then how come they can’t make their own homelands prosper? I have children and I am not going to sell out their future to a bunch of immigrant invaders who can steal their birthright” (Ryan, 2002:16).

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstruct their professional identities. Internationally there have been many studies on immigrant teachers (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Phillion, 2003; Michael, 2006; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Bascia 1996; Walsh & Brigham, 2007). Most studies that were conducted in Australia, Canada, United States and Israel examined the challenges that immigrant teachers contend with in their new territories. However, there are few studies on this subject in South Africa. To date we have not seen a study conducted in South Africa on how immigrant teachers from the African continent reconstruct their professional identities when they arrive in South Africa. Understandably immigration from African countries to South Africa is a relatively a new phenomenon occurring after 1994.

Since the collapse of apartheid¹ in 1994 there has been a consistent increase in the number of immigrants from all over the world to South Africa, especially immigrants from the African continent. It is estimated that nationals from some hundred countries now live in the Republic of South Africa (Adepoju, 2003). South Africa has been pointed out by literature as one of the countries that receives large numbers of illegal or legal immigrants (Weiner & Munz, 1997). Among the immigrants from the African continent, legal or illegal, are highly skilled professionals such as teachers who have found their way into South African classrooms. It has been made known in various international studies that the process of transition of immigrant teachers is not as smooth as assumed or expected (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Phillion, 2003).

¹ Apartheid is a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race or colour. It was practiced in South Africa from 1948-1993.

Consequently this study looks at how African immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools.

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a synopsis of the research study as a whole. It begins with a presentation of the background context to the research study followed by the rationale for the study, statement of the research problem and the research questions. Included in the chapter are also the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study, the research design and methodology for the collection and analysis of data, research assumptions, definition of key terms, and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with an outline of the various chapters in the report.

1.2 Background context

Before the collapse of the apartheid government in 1994 immigration to South Africa was exclusively reserved for white immigrants from Europe, because the immigration policy was designed in the apartheid era to enhance white domination (SAMP, 2000). During the twentieth century the apartheid government actively sought out white settlers, but strictly limited African immigrants² to no more than temporary legal entry under the migrant labour system (Klotz, 2000). In the early 1970s, Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique were the main suppliers of unskilled labour such as farm labourers and mine workers to apartheid South Africa (Adepoju, 2003). Klotz (2000:834) mentioned two reasons for the non-migration of Africans to South Africa during the apartheid era. Firstly, the apartheid system forestalled non-white immigration by creating an inhospitable environment for Africans and secondly sanctions from international communities insulated South Africa from changes such as professional migration.

After the collapse of apartheid in 1994 different African nationals started considering South Africa as a viable destination for immigrants. From West Africa came highly skilled

² African immigrants are citizens of other African countries who came to South Africa for the purpose of employment.

professionals from Nigeria and Ghana, along with tradesmen from Senegal and Mali, including street vendors and small traders. These joined their counterparts from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe to enlarge the informal sector (Adepoju, 2003).

The reason for the unprecedented increase in the wave of immigration to South Africa is understandable. In the continent of Africa, South Africa is regarded as a rich country because the economy is perceived as the most advanced in sub-Saharan Africa (Appleton, Morgan & Sives, 2006). It has a per capita income of more than 5000 U.S. dollars per annum, compared with less than 1000 U.S. dollars for most of its neighbours. Due to this, the country is a preferred destination for most immigrants from African countries, especially those that find it very difficult to gain entry into European countries. Consequently there has been an increase in the number of immigrant teachers from the African continent who perceived South Africa as a land of opportunity due to the remarkable transition to a democratic state³.

Researchers investigating immigrant teachers and their experiences in countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel and United States confirm that immigrant teachers are confronted with challenges, obstacles and hindrances in reconstructing their professional identities (Michael, 2006; Phillion, 2003; Remennick, 2002; Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Pollock, 2010). As a result of this, the process of reconstruction of professional identity by immigrant teachers in the countries mentioned was seemingly not totally free of obstacles and hindrances.

In the study conducted by Michael (2006) and Phillion (2003) immigrant teachers were confronted with the challenges of re-certification and re-credentialling. Their former qualifications were considered inadequate for teaching in the new country. Hence they were forced to abandon some or all of their qualifications. This process was considered an affront to immigrant teachers' professional identities because it made them appear inferior to their local colleagues. Remennick (2002) and Walsh and Brigham (2007) mentioned the challenge

³ South Africa became a democratic state in 1994 after decades of an apartheid system of government.

of lack of employment as one of the obstacles to the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities. They claimed that immigrant teachers suffered from discrimination in the area of employment. Their local colleagues were always preferred to them in terms of employment even when immigrant teachers were better qualified and more experienced than their local colleagues.

Kostogriz and Peeler (2007) and Pollock (2010) confirmed that immigrant teachers suffered professional and cultural marginalization. One of the ways they were marginalized was to be given fewer hours and classes to teach than they would have preferred. They were also not considered in decision-making processes in the school and they did not have access to professional enrichment courses (Michael, 2006). Lastly, immigrant teachers in the study of Bascia (1996) and Hutchison (2006) felt they were professionally and culturally isolated in the scheme of things because they were in the minority. Immigrant teachers who encountered some or all of the obstacles mentioned above complained that this compromised their sense of professional identity.

In South Africa there have been limited or few studies on African immigrant teachers, their experiences and how they reconstruct their professional identities. The paucity of information in this study is understandable because immigration to South Africa from African countries is a relatively new phenomenon. It may also be partly due to the fact that the research field everywhere including South Africa is still preoccupied with investigating educational contexts using the mainstream of teachers (Simon-Maeda, 2004), hence less studies on immigrant teachers who are regarded outside the mainstream. Immigrant teachers generally belong to the marginalized and non-mainstream group; they are mostly minorities in their adopted countries (Phillion, 2003).

1.3 Rationale for the study

In May 2008 South Africa witnessed xenophobic attacks on immigrants, specifically those from other African countries. This culminated in physical attacks, burning of property and

leaving sixty people dead and many thousands displaced, homeless and destitute (Sharp, 2008; Steinberg, 2008). This was condemned by civil groups, both locally and internationally, and put South Africa in the spotlight. It is not the scope of this study to determine the causes of the xenophobic attacks on African immigrants generally and the effect on them. This study may only help us to explore the effect of this kind of attack on the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities.

Looking at this unfortunate incident from the perspective of an immigrant from an African country undergoing training to become a teacher in South Africa, I was motivated to explore different strategies used by African immigrant teachers in South Africa to survive in the host country. Kostogriz (2004) argues that one's construction of self is situational and determined by others present, or with whom one interacts in a particular place and time. In his study Busher (2005:137) argues that although identities may be a function of people's personal lives and histories, their relationships with other people in their workplace and work-related experiences also have an influence.

A person's professional identity is based on his/her personal perceptions of self-image and self-efficacy in relation to their working context.

Immigrant teachers will have to interact with local people in their day-to-day endeavours. It has been reported in the literature that teachers who have negative feelings about personal self will not be able to teach satisfactorily in the class. This is because there is an existence of a thin line between personal and professional identities (Day *et al.*, 2006). Inasmuch that immigrant teachers will work with new people in a new environment, which has different values and cultures, it will be worthwhile to investigate how these immigrant teachers negotiate their professional identities in South African schools.

1.4 Statement of the research problem

There are more African immigrant teachers in South African high schools presently than when compared with the pre-1994 period (Gauteng Department of Education, 2011). This assertion was based on the data received from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). In the

three areas that formed the sampling population used in this research (Tshwane North, Tshwane South and Tshwane West), there are a total of 137 African immigrant teachers officially documented. Probably the number may be even higher considering the fact there are no statistics for those that are employed through other avenues such as the School Governing Body (SGB)⁴. Generally, in the process of reconstructing their professional identities, immigrant teachers encountered problems in their new-found territories. Challenges such as unemployment, re-credentialling, marginalization and isolation have been reported by immigrant teachers as obstacles to the reconstruction of their professional identities (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Phillion, 2003; Remennick, 2002; Sabar, 2004).

To combat the challenges and obstacles and help immigrant teachers to reconstruct their professional identities, developed countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel and the United States have conducted studies on this issue (Hutchison & Jazaar, 2007; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997, Myles, Cheng & Wang, 2006; Rhone, 2007). They have also put in place coping mechanisms such as teacher education in the form of mentoring to assist new immigrant teachers in their quest to reconstruct their professional identities (Peeler & Jane, 2003; Sabar, 2004). Yet in South Africa no such formal arrangement exists. Immigrant teachers do not pass through any formal transitional professional training such as mentoring or induction. Still, immigrant teachers from other African countries working in South African schools are expected to adjust to the new environment.

Accordingly, based on the hindrances that acted as a bottleneck to the reconstruction of professional identities of immigrant teachers in other countries, I am now interested in exploring how African immigrant teachers, who are from backgrounds that are different in culture, language and religious beliefs, reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools.

⁴ School Governing Body (SGB) is a body made up of parents, learners, educators and community members. It is a body that has been constitutionally formed. They make vital decisions on behalf of the school and they ensure proper administration.

1.5 Research questions

My main research question is:

How do African immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools?

My sub-questions are:

- *What factors promote the reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools?*
- *What factors oppose or retard the reconstruction of professional identities of African immigrant teachers in South African schools?*

1.6 Theoretical frameworks

The theoretical frameworks that underpin this study are communities of practice and reconstructivist theory. A brief overview of these theoretical frameworks is provided in this chapter. A more detailed account is provided in Chapter 2 (see 2.6.1 and 2.6.2).

1.6.1 Communities of practice (COP)

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better. It was stated further that communities of practice are groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and a passion for joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998).

The reconstruction of professional identities by immigrant teachers is a process to which immigrant teachers must subject themselves to knowing and learning. The reason for this subjectivity is apparent because of the new educational environment in which they find themselves. This is totally different from the one from which they came with or with which they are familiar with. Hence they encounter challenges in the process of transition.

In order for immigrant teachers to fit into the new system, access to communities of practice might be helpful in the reconstruction of professional identities and a key to improving performances. It has been argued that an effective transition of immigrants is an evolutionary process that connects newcomers to the profession and helps them to appropriate the skills and knowledge that they require (Ball, 2000). Wenger (1998:145) confirms that community of practice allows for learning and social participation and also that issues of identity are an integral aspect of a social theory of learning and thus inseparable from issues of practice, community and meaning. Various researchers agreed that identities are not about someone waking up one day and having his/her identity already formed. Rather identities are shaped in social practice (Holland *et al.*, 1998; Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2001). For the identity to remain vibrant in the person, it requires considerable participation and social work in and for the person (Wenger, 1998)

Participation here refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but also a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities (Wenger, 1998). The concept of participation postulated by Wenger (1998) will be useful for me to investigate how immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools.

1.6.2 Reconstructivist theory

The fundamental beliefs of reconstructivists is that we can create a better society that is free of all the negative ills of the society such as racism, inequality, oppression, ignorance, poverty and disease. They went on to say that the only weapon that could be used to dismantle this negative structural phenomenon was education (Mosier, 1951; Stone, 1994). The place where the education is received, which is the school was compared with a mechanic workshop where engines are fixed (Mosier, 1951). Therefore schools should act as a social vanguard. The vanguardism of the reconstructionist presupposes, then, that the school should lead society, be the social vanguard, in the task of reconstruction (Mosier, 1951).

Teacher education that will be received by future teachers should be designed in a way that it will fulfill the yearnings of the people by being culturally relevant (Hesch, 1999). It should prepare the teachers to be able to contribute to the betterment of their society by fighting the societal ills such as racism, inequality, oppression and poverty mentioned earlier. This theory will be useful in this study because education could provide opportunities for marginalized people such as the African immigrant teachers in this study to act as change agents in society if they are afforded the opportunities to participate.

1.7 Research design and methodology

This is a qualitative research study that relied both on individual interviews, focus-group interviews and observation of participants for data gathering. The participants in this study were five African immigrant teachers selected from five different schools having different historical backgrounds in the Tshwane⁵ area of Gauteng⁶ province, South Africa. In this study, the principals of those selected schools and the learners who are taught by immigrant teachers also participated.

1.7.1 Meta-theoretical paradigm

The paradigm within which this study is located is social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (McMahon, 1997). Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning (Kim, 2001). The social constructivist believes that reality cannot be discovered, that it does not exist prior to its social invention but that reality is constructed through human activity, i.e. a knowledge product that emerges from social activity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Individuals create meaning through their interaction with each one another and with the environment they

⁵ Tshwane also known as the city of Tshwane is a metropolitan municipality that forms the local government of northern Gauteng Province, and includes city of Pretoria.

⁶ Gauteng is one of the provinces of South Africa.

live in and their knowledge is a human product socially and culturally constructed (Prawat & Folden, 1994). In other words it is the individual who imposes meaning on the world rather than the meaning being imposed on the individual (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005). Furthermore, meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities which indicate that learning is a social process. Being a social process it does not take place only within an individual, nor is it a passive development of behaviours that are shaped by external forces (McMahon, 1997). The meta-theoretical paradigm is discussed extensively in chapter three under subsection 3.2.1.

1.7.2 Methodological paradigm

A qualitative approach was selected for my research study because Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) note that

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self.

I used a qualitative approach for three reasons. First, to capture the individual's point of view; second, to examine the constraints of everyday life and third, to secure rich descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This approach was desirable because my research was interested in the lived experiences of people with the aim of bringing about change (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In this study I will be making use of narrative inquiry and case study approach as strategy of inquiry. Both strategies are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 under sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

1.7.3 Data collection methods

Data was captured in this study through the use of interviews and observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with immigrant teachers (Appendix E) and principals (Appendix F). Focus group interviews (Appendix G) were conducted with the learners. Observation of immigrant teachers both inside and outside the classroom was also used in data

collection. In-depth interviews gave the researcher an opportunity to understand the experiences of immigrant teachers and the meaning they gave to those experiences (Seidman, 1998). The data collection methods are discussed extensively under sections 3.6.2, 3.6.3 and 3.6.4

Interviews allowed the researcher to listen to the stories of participants, which acted as a social critique, and offered insights into each teacher's ongoing process of self-definition (Goodson, 1998). Interviews also helped the researcher to gather descriptive data in the immigrant teacher's own words, so that the researcher could develop insights into how immigrant teachers interpreted some piece of the world, which was their new environment (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998:94).

The data that were gathered from the observations added to the understanding of the researcher and it helped the researcher to analyze the interviews in their context. Observations helped understand the subjects, the reconstruction of various speech inflections and urban slang, the accounts of particular events, the depiction of activities, the observer's behaviour and the description of the physical setting (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998).

1.7.4 Participant, site and subject selection

The participants in this study were five African immigrant teachers, five principals and five different focus groups, each focus group consisted of six learners. The focus groups are made up of learners that are taught by the immigrant teachers. The principals of the school where the immigrant teachers are teaching also participated in the study. Criteria that were used to choose the immigrant teachers were that they were born and followed a teacher education program in an African country other than South Africa. It was also important that they had had teaching experience either in private or public schools in their countries of birth before immigrating to South Africa. The experience would have given participants minimal insights into, and experiences regarding teaching practices in their country of birth.

Interviews were conducted at the work place of the participants which in this case was the school where the immigrant teacher and the principal are employed. The focus group interviews for the learners were conducted on the school premises. The duration of each interview of the immigrant teachers was between 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interview of the principal and focus group interview for students lasted approximately 45 minutes. Because immigrant teachers were the main focus of this study, the researcher observed them repeatedly over a period of time to see how they were negotiating their space in their place of work. In choosing participants for this study, the researcher obtained a list of African immigrant teachers from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)⁷. It was from this list where potential participants for the study were selected. Second, personal contacts through word of mouth were used to approach potential participants. Third, various high schools in the Tshwane area were visited and the help of principals of those schools were solicited to recommend potential participants among their staff. The last method was through snowballing. There were some participants who also gave me the names of other immigrant teachers that they thought might be interested in the study.

1.7.5 Data analysis

The bulk of the data for this study was generated through interviews of the participants. Therefore grounded theory and content analysis were used to analyze the data that were gathered. Grounded theory and content analysis are discussed in detail in section 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 in Chapter 3.

1.8 Research assumptions

The following research assumptions emerged from the literature review. First, it was assumed that the reconstruction of professional identities of immigrant teachers was complex and not straightforward (Hutchison, 2006; Remennick, 2002). The second assumption was that

⁷ Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) is a provincial department established to ensure that quality learning and teaching takes place in the classroom everyday in Gauteng Province of South Africa.

immigrant teachers were confronted with challenges of re-certification and re-credentialing in the host country which affected the reconstruction of their professional identities (Michael, 2006; Phillion, 2003). Third, that it was difficult if not impossible for immigrant teachers to secure teaching jobs in host countries because their formal training and experiences were considered inadequate or insufficient and were therefore disregarded (Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Beynon *et al.*, 2004). Lastly it was also assumed that the immigrant teachers were subject to subtle discrimination by colleagues and the society which ultimately led to their marginalization and isolation (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Pollock, 2003).

1.9 Quality measures of the research

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study certain steps had to be taken before commencing it. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), data trustworthiness entails the researcher participants' dependence, honesty, the precise presentation and interpretation of solicited statements by the researcher. These factors boost the thoroughness of qualitative research.

1.9.1 Trustworthiness of the research

Trustworthiness is a criterion employed to test the quality of a research design (Yin, 1994). In qualitative research trustworthiness consists of four factors, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility refers to the conscious effort to establish confidence in an accurate interpretation of the meaning of the data (Carboni, 1995). To ensure credibility this study made use of prolonged engagement at site, peer debriefing, persistent observation, triangulation and member checks (Guba, 1981:84-86). Transferability is defined as the range and limitations for application of the study findings, beyond the context in which the study was done (Malterud, 2001). In this study purposive sampling and collection of plentiful and descriptive data were employed to enhance transferability (Guba, 1981:86). Dependability is defined to mean stability after discounting conscious and unpredictable (but rational and logical) changes (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). To make the result of this study dependable an audit trail was used by allowing the research

supervisor to have access to the research journal (Guba, 1981:87). Confirmability is the process whereby data that are collected in the research field could be confirmed in different ways through different means (Guba, 1981). There are two steps taken during this study in order to fulfill this process, namely triangulation and practicing reflexivity (Guba, 1981:87).

1.9.2 Ethical considerations

Prior to the commencement of this study, various steps were taken in order to maintain the highest ethical standards. After the research proposal was successfully defended at the departmental level, the researcher requested research approval from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) as the study was conducted in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The Ethics Committee of Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria made it mandatory that necessary approval from all stakeholders were sought and received before any researcher could contact participants in a research project. The letter of approval to proceed with the research was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) (Appendix J).

After the defense of the research proposal, it was also expected that ethical clearance would be obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education. The purpose of this was to protect both the researcher and the participants. Application for the ethical clearance for this study was reviewed by the research ethics committee, and ethical clearance was granted (Appendix I).

Prior to the commencement of the data collection for this study the researcher approached the principals of each of the schools that were used as research sites. The intent and purpose of the study was explained to principals and permission was sought to engage teachers and learners to participate in the study. To obtain consent from participants the researcher took the time to explain the overall aims and objectives of the study first to the principal and other participants such as teachers and learners. According to Louw and Delpont (2006:42) for consent to be genuine, researchers must do their best to communicate information accurately and in an understandable and appropriate way.

The researcher also ensured that the participants were fully briefed on the concept of informed consent. It was explained to them that participation in the study was voluntary and they could quit the study at any stage if they felt uncomfortable about it. It was reiterated that no participant would be punished based on non-participation or withdrawal. To confirm this assertion consent forms were distributed to the principals (Appendix A), teachers (Appendix B) learners (Appendix C) and parents of the learners (Appendix D). The reason the consent of the parents of the learners was sought was because learners under 18 years of age were regarded as minors. Loue (1995:13) affirmed that the principle of respect for persons encompasses the process of informed consent.

1.9.3 Pilot study or pilot test

A pilot test was conducted prior to the research to test the interview protocol. The reason a researcher conducts a pretest of the data collection method such as interview protocol was to check the efficacy and relevancy of the questions, and to see if amendments have to be made. In this study the interview protocol that was used as an instrument to gather data from participants was put to the test before it was deployed in the field. The reason was to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation. Babbie (1990:223) articulates that pilot testing involves the testing of the data collection method on a few people with the same characteristics as the participants. The researcher conducted a one-to-one interview with an African immigrant teacher. The pilot study was conducted with the same categories of participants in the main study and it was conducted under the same conditions. The reason for this was to avoid discrepancies or variations that occur when a study is conducted under different conditions using the same participants. The participants involved in the pilot study were not used again in the main study.

1.10 Definition of key terms

It has been pointed out that researchers do no justice to their studies when they fail to define their terms (Anderson & Arsenault, 2002). They went further to explain that educational

concepts are complex in nature and their language usage is imprecise. Due to this results that might appear clear to the researcher could mean different things to the reader. In order to avoid confusion for the reader, the following are the key terms as used in this study mean the following:

Immigrant teachers

Immigrant teachers are women and men who for various reasons have moved to a new country and undertaken to teach in a culture that is different from the one in which they themselves were educated (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004:388). In other literature which I referred to in this study, this group of individuals has been referred to by other names, which I replaced with immigrant teachers. Examples of such names are ‘immigrant educators’ (Rhone, 2007), ‘foreign trained teachers’ (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997), ‘internationally educated teachers’ (Deters, 2006), ‘international transition teachers’ (Hutchison, 2006), ‘overseas born teachers’ (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007), ‘foreign accredited teachers’ (Phillion, 2003), overseas trained teachers (Sutherland & Rees, 1995) and ‘minority teachers’ (Flores, 2001).

African immigrant teachers

This term as used in this study refer to teachers of African descent and who are teachers in South Africa, but have had their teacher education and work experience in other African countries before immigrating to South Africa. The five participants who participated in this study were of African descent, had formal education and teaching experience in their countries of origin. Three participants are from Zimbabwe, whereas the other two are from Nigeria. At the onset of this study it was my intention to have variations in terms of countries of origin of immigrant teachers. The reason for the chosen sample is clearly stated in section 3.5.1.

Professional identity

Whereas the concept of professional identity has been considered to be poorly defined in the literature (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000), in this study it refers to how African immigrant teachers explain or view themselves as a result of their interaction with the students, local colleagues, administrators and the community at large. One characteristic that

is common to this concept was that it is unstable or dynamic and that it has to be negotiated in a social setting depending on the circumstances that prevail at a particular time i.e. it is influenced by context (Wenger, 1998; Vandeyar, 2008). It would appear that for immigrant teachers to be successful both inside and outside school they needed to develop skills required to negotiate their professional identities. In Chapter 2 of this study, I discussed the characteristics of teachers' professional identity, its importance and how immigrant teachers in the literature both internationally and locally reconstruct their professional identities.

Xenophobia

This refers to an intense dislike or fear of strangers or people from other countries (Crowther, 1995:1385). This dislike or fear may manifest itself in different ways such as abuse, physical attack and discrimination (subtle or entrenched).

Reconstruction

Reconstruction is defined as rebuilding something that has been damaged or destroyed. In this study the word "reconstruction" is used based on different studies conducted earlier that showed that there are different factors that are rendered useless to immigrant teachers' experience, qualifications, expertise and beliefs of being professionals. In order to regain their lost professional identities immigrant teachers had to embark on some sort of rebuilding or reconstruction.

South African schools

South African schools in this study are government-owned public schools where learners are enrolled primarily for educational purposes. Most learners that are enrolled in these schools are from the middle and lower economic class. Reason for this is that the fee structure at such schools is comparatively lower than that of private schools. Public schools in South Africa employ many African immigrant teachers in their service though mainly on a temporary or contractual basis.

1.11 Limitations of the study

The following limitations served to focus the study namely, the study was limited to selected high schools in the Tshwane area of the Gauteng province and did not cover the entire province or the country. Furthermore, subjects of the study were limited to immigrant teachers from the African continent and did not include immigrant teachers from other parts of the world.

1.12 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1: Orientation to the study

The focus of this chapter was on background information leading to the study. The researcher also discussed in detail: the rationale for the study, statement of the research problem and the research question/s. The chapter also briefly introduced the two theoretical frameworks used in the study, research design and methodology, research assumptions, quality measure, definition of key terms, limitations of the study and the outline of chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical frameworks

This chapter consists of relevant literature, both locally and internationally on professional identity. The concept of professional identity was explored using different studies in the literature. Its characteristics and importance were also discussed. An attempt was also made to answer the main research question by looking at how immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities on the international scene. The summary of findings from the literature review was also discussed. To present a balanced view in this study, an attempt was made to answer the main research question from the perspective of the South African scenario. The two theoretical frameworks that underpin this study were also discussed. A rich conclusion was drawn at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter explores the paradigmatic assumption and methodological paradigm of the study. A case study and narrative research approach was used as a strategy of inquiry. Participants

were selected from five different schools using purposive sampling. The participants were immigrant teachers, learners and principals. Data were collected using various means such as observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, field notes and a reflective journal. The data obtained from participants were analyzed by means of grounded theory and content analysis. Quality measures such as data trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were discussed in great depth. Ethical considerations of access, informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity also presented.

Chapter 4: Findings of the study

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the fieldwork. The life story of each of the participants is presented in chronological order (Tawanda, Bolanle, Tafadwa, Weza and Adewale). Using a narrative approach, different themes and subthemes emerged from the stories presented by all the participants. In all of the five cases that are presented, the narratives presented by immigrant teachers provided the lead way while those from learners and principals are used as corroborative evidences. Hence the themes that surfaced share relationship to multiple case studies and are corroborated by the stories from different participants.

Chapter 5: Discussion and analysis of findings

In this chapter the researcher situated the findings of his study within the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 so as to ascertain his findings based on the work of other researchers in literature. Evidences that emerged in similar studies in the literature but failed to surface in this study were discussed. Finally, the new knowledge that was generated from the study was presented.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and conclusion

This chapter concludes the study and it allowed the researcher the opportunity to present the summary of emerging themes and findings. A number of factors that could limit the study were identified and discussed. The significance of the study and its contribution towards generation of knowledge, policy and practice were discussed. The assumptions that were made in Chapter 1 of this study were revisited to ascertain whether they are in consonance

with the current reality or not. The chapter concluded by offering recommendations for future research.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed and comprehensive introduction to the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature review by examining the concept of professional identity, its characteristics and its importance to teachers. From viewpoint of literature review next chapter also explores how immigrant teachers both locally and internationally reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 2007:10).

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 of this study I shall review the literature to shed more light on the meaning of professional identity in order to increase our knowledge base on the notion of professional identity and its implications for immigrant teachers. We have seen in the literature that it is not only learner identities that are shaped by markers of identity such as gender, ethnicity, race or social class, but also teacher identities (Allard & Santoro, 2006). The markers of identity especially ethnicity and race, also have a role to play in the reconstruction of immigrant teachers’ professional identities. According to Allard and Santoro (2006:119) ethnicity can be used as a marker of national belonging, of culture, of country of birth, or language spoken. In the study of Kostogriz and Peeler (2007:112) race or nationality was used for excluding immigrant teachers.

Coming to the education system in Australia, they’re (overseas born teachers) already experienced teachers, they couldn’t get into the system because they are not Australian, they are newcomers.

Immigrant teachers under study belong to a different nationality, different culture. They speak a different language and they belonged to a different place before they immigrated to the new country. The need to pay attention to the role of place in teaching has been eloquently presented in the literature (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004). The role of place is obvious in this study because immigrant teachers have left their place of origin and moved to a new place where they will have to re-establish their professional status. It has been argued in the literature that re-establishing one’s professional status in a new environment is not just a matter of one’s own will; it also depends on other external factors (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). In this review I will also be looking at those other factors both internal and external that hinders or promotes the reconstruction of professional identities of immigrant teachers.

For the purpose of this study, immigrant teachers are women and men who, for various reasons, have moved to a new country and undertaken to teach in a culture different from the one in which they themselves were educated (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004:388). These women and men (immigrant teachers) have been shown by the literature to be troubled by markers of identity in their daily professional lives (Seah & Bishop, 2001; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Remennick, 2002). He (2002), in her own research studied teachers making the transition between China and Canada and she found that the process of reconstruction of professional identities by these teachers was not a straight-forward and easy tasks but a complex process.

2.2 The concept of professional identity

Professional identity as a concept has been regarded as poorly defined (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). The reason for this assertion as claimed by researchers was only that little research has been done on teachers' professional identity (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Pavlenko, 2003) and little attention has been given to understanding the process of identity formation (Tsui, 2007) . Despite this assertion different researchers have tried to explain the concept of professional identity from their own point of view as related to their study. In this study I will review some of the work of the researchers in the literature to provide a comprehensive view and meaning of professional identity.

Volkman and Anderson (1998) perceived professional identity as a complex and dynamic equilibrium between personal self-image and teacher roles one feels obliged to play. The aim of the study was to describe the creation of professional identity as a science teacher. The study concludes that to create a professional identity as a science teacher is not direct and straight-forward. They went on to say further that one will be confronted with a series of teaching dilemmas in the process of constructing professional identity.

Coldron and Smith (1999) in their study concurred that professional identity is not fixed or unitary. They argue further that it is not a stable entity that people have, but a way to make sense of themselves in relation to other people and contexts. In the study they also joined the

debate by emphasizing the tension between the role of agency and structure. The result of their findings confirms that the professional identity of teachers reflects the landscape the teacher is part of, that it is manifested in classroom practice and is to some extent unique and striving for uniformity and conformity threatens teachers' active location (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000).

In the study of Cheung (2008:375) professional identity is defined as the commitment of teachers to their profession and that teacher identity affects various aspects of education in addition to commitment. The aim of the study was to develop a reliable instrument to measure the professional identity of Hong Kong in-service teachers. It is believed that the more committed the teachers are to their practices; the more likely they are to identify themselves as professional teachers (Cheung, 2008). In supporting this assertion Woods (1981) and Ball and Godson (1985) confirm that there is a relationship that exists between the professional identity of teachers and their commitment. When teachers are satisfied with their work, they develop a positive professional identity. Hence there is an increment in their commitment towards work (Nias, 1981).

In the study of Antonek, McCormick and Donato (1997), there was no explicit definition of professional identity but it was mentioned that professional identity is something that one shapes through self-reflection. It was argued in the study that student teacher portfolios are a viable, effective, and appropriate tool in documenting teacher growth and development and in promoting reflective, thoughtful practice. In their conclusion, it was discovered that portfolio can go beyond a gate-keeping function to a means of informing teacher educators and forming the identity of beginning teachers. Therefore keeping portfolio can assist teachers in changing their own practice and constructing their own professional identities.

In this study I am utilising the lens which supposes that professional identity of the teacher is not measured only in terms of the mastery of pedagogical and content knowledge, but also in terms of the degree of interaction with other people. Beijaard (2006) argues that teachers' professional identity implies both a cognitive psychological and a sociological perspective.

Teachers develop their professional identity in interaction with other people (sociological perspective), but express their professional identity in their perceptions of who they are and who they want to become as a result of this interaction (cognitive psychological perspective) (Beijaard, 2006).

2.2.1 Characteristics of teachers' professional identity

Earlier works suggested that professional identity was fixed and unchanging, but later opinions suggested otherwise (Currie, 1998; Watson, 2006). One basic characteristic of professional identity that is widely accepted in the literature these days is that identity is unstable. It is an ongoing process of negotiation, not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon (Allard & Cooper, 2001; Watson, 2006; Wenger, 1998; Vandeyar, 2008; Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Professional identity is not a stable entity; it cannot be interpreted as fixed or unitary (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Cheung, 2008). Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004:107) confirm that “identity is not something one has, but something that continues to develop during one’s whole life”. Peeler and Jane (2003) in their study argue convincingly that each person’s identity evolves and changes as they move through life. MacLure (1993:12) contends that “identity should not be seen as a stable entity, it is not something that people have”. Smith (2007) also concurs that professional identities are now seen as multiple, disjointed and prone to change.

Identity formation is conceived as an ongoing process that involves the interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences as one lives through them (Kerby, 1991). Identities are fluid, dynamic, troubling and complex, changing and changeable in different contexts and times (Allard & Cooper, 2001; Allard & Santoro, 2006; Santoro, Reid & Kamler, 2001b; Vandeyar, 2008). Wenger (1998) argues convincingly that our identity is not something we acquire at some stage in the same way that at a certain age, we grow a set of permanent teeth. Gee (2001) affirms that identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can best be characterized as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a definite kind of person and being recognised as such in a given context.

2.2.2 Importance of professional identity

Forming a professional identity is a central process in becoming an effective teacher (Alsup, 2005; Grion & Varisco, 2007). It has been argued that no matter what profession people are in, it is important that they understand the construction, transformation and commitment of their professional identities (Cheung, 2008). The reason for this according to Watson (2006) is because it was assumed that what who we think we are influences what we do, i.e. a link exists between professional identity and professional action.

As a teacher constructing a sustainable identity continually is part of the experience of teaching (Coldron & Smith, 1999). The construction of professional identity by teachers is more important because they have a significant impact on learners (Beckett & Gough, 2004; Krejsler, 2005).

2.3 International Landscape: How do immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities?

A review of the voluminous literature reveals that numerous international studies have been conducted on immigrant teachers. The majority of the studies were conducted in countries heavily influenced by immigration such as Canada, Australia, Israel and the United States (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Bascia, 1996; Phillion, 2003; Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa 2001; 2004; Case, 2004; Cruickshank, 2004; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Hutchison, Butler & Fuller, 2005; Michael, 2006; Myles, Cheng & Wang, 2006; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Ross, 2003; Remennick, 2002; Santoro, Reid & Kamler, 2001). Among the studies a significant numbers of them only examined the obstacles that immigrant teachers contend with in their new territory before entering the teaching profession (Phillion, 2003; Myles, Cheng & Wang, 2006; Bascia, 1996, Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004). The study of Mawhinney and Xu (1997) went a step further to illuminate the challenges facing immigrant teachers that have already been absorbed into the system, thereby giving us insight into how immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in a working context.

Apart from discussing the challenges and hindrances faced by immigrant teachers, these authors have also prescribed remedies that will help immigrant teachers to overcome the obstacles either before entering the profession in order to gain entrance or to remain in the profession. One remedy that is frequently mentioned and that is common to virtually all the literature is teacher education in the form of mentoring or an induction programme (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Remennick, 1999; Sabar, 2004; Cruickshank, 2004; Peeler & Jane, 2003).

2.3.1 Factors that promote the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities

In this subsection I will be discussing the coping mechanisms that could help immigrant teachers to reconstruct their professional identities under the following headings: teacher education, absorption through negotiation, volunteering and relational agency, support and acceptance by colleagues and administrators and access to professional organization and networks. The purpose of this subsection is to elucidate the importance of resilience on the part of immigrant teachers. It is to drive the point home that immigrant teachers also have a role to play in the process of reconstructing their professional identities.

2.3.1.1 Teacher education

The purpose of teacher education, either informal or formal, is to help bridge the differences to a certain extent and empower immigrant teachers to creatively construct a new professional identity (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). Teacher education has helped many immigrant teachers to feel like 'real' teachers because it has helped in countering the notion that immigrant teachers are deficient in teaching skills and knowledge (Pollock, 2010:9). In the study conducted by Elbaz-Luwisch (2004:397) immigrant teachers that did not go through any teacher education before beginning to teach in adopted countries still felt like phonies and fakes. After going through teacher education at an Israeli University, immigrant teachers'

feelings of being a ‘stranger’ transformed into a professional role as researcher and this influenced the lives of teachers and classrooms (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004:397).

Mentoring and induction are forms of teacher education. Mentoring and induction are two different words that have been used interchangeably in the literature to depict a condition of helping immigrant teachers to integrate both socially and professionally and to allow for successful transition into their new environment (Sabar, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Cruickshank, 2004; Hutchison, 2006; Hutchison & Jazaar, 2007; Schmidt, Young & Mandzuk, 2010). In the process of mentoring there is a relationship between a more experienced, trustworthy adult (mentor) and a younger person (mentee) that is new to the environment or the profession. Although several definitions and types of mentoring exist in the literature, the cardinal focus is that of ‘continuous supportive relationships’ (Peeler & Jane, 2003:1).

Teacher education has allowed many immigrant teachers themselves to assume the position of student and become active learners. They believe that in order to be accepted in the new community and recover the status they had back in their countries, they will have to put in great efforts by suppressing their former way of knowing and embrace the new way of knowing (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004). Hutchison and Jazzar (2007:372) confirm that the only way immigrant teachers can escape several special challenges, such as cultural and logistical issues, unfamiliar structural and organizational arrangements, differing interpretations of assessment, communication gaps, and problems with teacher/student relations, is to become active learners. In the study of Cruickshank, Newell and Cole (2003:244) immigrant teachers who attended teacher education as students before becoming teachers reported a gain in confidence, skills and knowledge for coping in Australian classrooms.

It has also been reported that some immigrant teachers may not totally forego their former way of knowing, but they have the capability to develop dual discursive competence by hybridizing the older and new way of knowing (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007:115). The dual discursive competence is an asset for the immigrant teachers because it also enables them to understand

and share empathy with immigrant learners better and they become the role model for these learners (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007:115). In the study conducted by Myles, Cheng and Wang (2006) in the city of Ontario, Canada most of the immigrant teacher candidates confirmed that they had learnt a great deal from the ATAPTIE program especially from their students, their associate teachers, and the school environment. The program helped them to overcome the challenges that the most immigrant teachers always contend with in the classroom and among colleagues. After the program, they were willing to adjust to a different system and philosophy of teaching.

It is noteworthy to conclude that teacher education in the form of a mentoring program boosted the capacity of immigrant teachers to quickly adjust to the new environment and make an easy transition. It was used as a valuable strategy in English Language support for immigrant teachers who are from the background that English Language is regarded as a second language (Cruickshank, Newell & Cole, 2003). In a nutshell it has helped an outsider (immigrant teachers) to develop relationships with an insider (local colleagues and administrators), hence helping an outsider to become a member of community. Due to this the rate of teacher attrition was greatly reduced among immigrant teachers (Inglis & Philips, 1995). Therefore, mentoring in this sense was useful as a means of connecting newcomers with community structures (Peeler & Jane, 2005).

2.3.1.2 Absorption through negotiation, volunteering and relational agency

Absorption is defined as the achievement of harmony with the new culture, improvement of performance and increase in interaction with people of the absorbing culture (Hannigan, 1990). Elbaz-Luwisch (2004:399) advised that immigrant teachers should exhibit the spirit of “give and take”, whereby immigrant teachers develop a new professional identity without losing the former one. She believed that this might help in the process of absorption into the new community or professional environment. Immigrant teachers that were ready to learn and be familiar with the mainstream culture of the host country in which they found themselves quickly reconstructed their professional identities (Michael, 2006). The familiarization should

also be extended to the cultures of the people that immigrant teachers will be working with such as students, colleagues and administrators. It has been argued in the literature that teachers who tend to disrespect or trivialize the cultural background of their students are generally faced with resistance (Wlodkowski, 1997).

One of the ways to be absorbed is that immigrant teachers must be patient with their local colleagues and students and have an understanding that reconstructing professional identities is a slow and long process. They must exhibit personal traits such as self-confidence and resilience. Remennick (2002:115) found that immigrant teachers quickly reconstructed their professional identities if they possessed traits such as self-confidence and resilience. In the study conducted by Kamler, Reid and Santoro (1997:21) one of the immigrant teachers recorded success by consciously trying to be Australian, “to be more like the majority: to be able to take a joke, to forego old values for new”. In the study conducted by Remennick (2002:112) most immigrant teachers that participated in the study were generally satisfied with their jobs and professional performance due to their resilience and ability to endure. One of them said this.

Just because I had to overcome so many barriers, I am so proud of myself having made it. I’ve had a strong urge to quit several times, but now I am glad I have persisted. I feel that I am the right person at the right place, and I hope that my students feel the same.

The immigrant teacher candidate in the above study decided to be responsible for the reconstruction of her own professional identity. She had the knowledge that the process of identity reconstruction did not only depend on others but also on herself. Despite many obstacles, she persisted and was able to regain her lost professional identity. Furthermore it has been argued that immigrant teachers must be receptive to changes in beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, because the process of becoming a teacher involves changes in beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Elliot & Calderhead, 1994). In another study conducted by Deters (2008) it was found that the good relationships between the immigrant teacher and the parents through interaction helped in affirming the professional identity as a teacher.

Volunteering was another way that helped immigrant teachers in the absorption process. Immigrant teachers in the study of Pollock (2010) considered volunteering as being beneficial. Volunteering is viewed as a way to make connections, meet teachers and administrators who might recommend the teachers or think of hiring them when there is a need for an occasional teacher at the local school site (Pollock, 2010). Immigrant teachers in the study of Pollock (2010:8) articulated the importance of volunteering and how it helped in the process of reconstruction of his identity.

Volunteering, that's how you get information about the school. Volunteering, I would say, 90% of it was to my benefit, 10% to the benefit of the school...I learned what the school was about, the people who work there, the principal, vice principal, department heads, schools are not that big in my country...I am not accustomed to the department thing, because I taught in university, but not in a school like this.

Elbaz-Luwish (2004) claims that many of the stories from immigrant teachers that paint the behaviour of local colleagues as inappropriate are due to a misunderstanding of the language or culture. As a result immigrant teachers that are quickly absorbed by learning the codes of behaviour of the school culture are more likely to reconstruct their professional identities quickly. While some immigrant teachers consider the re-certification process as a structural barrier, others saw it as persuasive and a way to help them to be absorbed into the system (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004:435).

I am an immigrant to a new country. I don't know its history or geography or never worked with children in this country. I can't expect that I come in and say: 'I was a teacher in Ukraine' ... and they would say '... go ahead and teach'. I think it's normal that they ask me to get a Canadian background. I am an immigrant. I can't just expect people to just open doors for me, right? I have to work my own way through the doors.

To function effectively in a classroom that has learners with different cultures, immigrant teachers make the effort to learn about their students and prevalent educational methodologies in the new context. To function maximally in a community of practice, immigrant teachers must be able to make an effort by not perceiving themselves as different or inadequate, but as active participants in the community. It has been argued in the literature that immigrant teachers who wish to retain their former profession, despite lack of knowledge of the language and of the culture of the schools, must invest a great deal of mental effort in their own absorption (Porat, 1996). Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that learning and understanding

occur as people participate in activities where they become increasingly active participants. Absorption helps an individual that is new to an environment to quickly see him or herself as part of that environment. Immigrant teachers in the study of Mawhinney and Xu (1997) used this strategy to help them in changing their identity from outsiders to insiders.

Also in the study of Peeler and Jane (2005) a teacher candidate who is an immigrant teacher recognized that speaking another language is an advantage for her. She believed that with her talents and willingness, she could also be a good teacher like her Australian counterparts. This study concluded that the success of reconstruction of professional identities by immigrant teachers depended primarily on their relationships with students, but at the same time relations with other members of their community are also priceless. This assertion was corroborated by a participant in the study of Remennick (2002:108) who was an immigrant teacher.

When I was able to tell jokes in Hebrew, class experience has changed for me profoundly. I saw how even the most bold and hostile students melted down and paid more attention to what I said. Language is almost everything in class.

The above teacher candidate showed extra ordinary zeal and commitment in her quest to reconstruct her professional identity. Learning a new language at an adult stage of life might not be an easy task, but it is a good strategy to win the confidence and trust of students, colleagues and administrators who now considered the immigrant teachers as part of them. The active process of volunteering and speaking the language of the host country legitimized immigrant teachers as members of the host country. It helped immigrant teachers to be considered as part of the culture and the larger community. This has allowed immigrant teachers to reconstruct their professional identities.

2.3.1.3 Support and acceptance by colleagues and administrators

Immigrant teachers that are supported and accepted by colleagues and administrators will quickly adjust to the new environment and this will ease the process of identity reconstruction (Remennick, 2002). Learning occurs through apprenticing with others who are already part of a particular community or culture (Myles, Cheng & Wang, 2006). Kostogriz and Peeler

(2007) maintain that situational flow, or other people with whom a person interacts, or are present at a particular time and place, shape the construction of self. Peeler and Jane (2003) also confirm that contact with others in the profession can help immigrant teachers orient themselves to the theoretical and practical concepts of teaching and inform them of specific contextual orientations.

In the study conducted by Mawhinney and Xu (1997) in a school in Ontario in Canada, immigrant teachers learned from their colleagues and mentors, a variety of survival skills and techniques that helped them to survive and cope with various concerns and problems related to human relations and classroom management. Mawhinney and Xu (1997) conclude that support is an essential element in assisting immigrant teachers in reconstructing their professional identities. Special support came from a male immigrant teacher who had been in Canada for over twenty years. New immigrant teachers learned from the old immigrant teacher's different survival skills and techniques that allowed them to cope with issues related to human relations and classroom management. The old immigrant teachers were also useful when the new immigrant teachers were uncertain about school rules and regulations. It has been confirmed in the literature that guidance and negotiation by more knowledgeable members of a community alerts newcomers to the knowledge they require to negotiate meaning (Ball, 2000). This view is in consonance with the study of Blakey, Everett-Turner, Massing, and Scott (1998) that teacher candidates often regard their relationship with their associates as the most important element of their teacher preparation.

In a study conducted by Deters (2008) the importance of support from colleagues and administrators in helping immigrant teachers to reconstruct their professional identities was also mentioned. Teachers mentioned that their colleagues shared their handouts and other materials and they also provided important emotional support and acceptance of the immigrant teacher as a legitimate member of the community of practice. An immigrant teacher in this study claimed that although her accent was a little embarrassing to her, she was supported by her colleagues by encouraging her not to worry, as everybody, irrespective of their language background, also had an accent (Deters, 2008:19).

At the beginning when I was teaching I was so frustrated. I didn't know how to handle the problem with the students, because they were quite different from the problems I had in my previous school. So she talked to me, showed me, she shared with me her experience. She seems to be understanding. Even being understanding is enough... So that's why I say emotional support. Even at lunch time sitting together, having some kind of talk.

Emotional support like the one mentioned above was instrumental in the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities. According to Remennick (2002:113) immigrant teachers who enjoyed more assistance from the school administration and veteran teachers felt typically happy about their status and performance. Remennick (2002:113) contends that emotional support within the school such as availability of a confidant to share problems with, friendship with colleagues beyond the work context, were even more important than instrumental forms of support.

The importance of support from different sources such as the one discussed above has confirmed the study of Kostogriz and Peeler (2007:112) that re-establishing one's professional status is not a matter of one's own will. It also depends on the kind of support structures that are present around someone. In a nutshell, immigrant teachers that have access to this kind of support structure will quickly reconstruct their professional identities.

2.3.1.4 Access to professional organization and networks

Immigrant teachers that have access to professional networks and organizations will quickly reconstruct their professional identities (Schmidt, Young & Mandzuk, 2010). Belonging to professional and network organizations allows access to information and resources needed by immigrant teachers to become full members of a community of practice and this enhances active participation. According to Lave and Wenger (1991:100).

To become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old timers, and other members of the community; and to information resources, and opportunities for participation.

Some immigrant teachers have explained that they encountered difficulty in gaining appropriate advice and information on qualifications and upgrading them (Cruickshank, 2004). This problem could be alleviated or solved by belonging to networks. From the social constructivist point of view, it is assumed that knowledge construction is achieved by the interaction that takes place within oneself through reflective thinking and by the interaction that occurs in communication and collaboration with other people (Vygotsky, 1978).

One of the ways immigrant teachers in the study of Pollock (2010) confronted employment difficulties was to belong to networks. In the study conducted by Kuhn (1996:98) teachers were able to improve their communication prowess by joining a network known as “Toastmasters International”, an organization dedicated to helping immigrant teachers to become better public speakers. One of the immigrant teachers, a member of the organization, confirmed this in his assertion (Kuhn, 1996:98).

For me, Toastmasters provided the missing link. It gave me the opportunity to try out, receive response, and practice concepts that I had understood for a while, but had had trouble implementing in the classroom. Put simply, Toastmasters supplied me with the basics.

Also the importance of networks to immigrant teachers was emphasized in the study of Remennick (2002). A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) was established as self-aid to the immigrant teachers and it has been instrumental in advocacy, training and job placement of its members. In the study of Phillion (2003) immigrant teachers and the researcher in the study formed a cross-community political and professional organization. The organization was referred to as International Teachers Network (ITN) and it helped in assisting immigrant teachers to negotiate the path from foreign accredited teachers to entry into the system.

In conclusion I have highlighted and discussed in the above section factors that promote the reconstruction of immigrant teachers’ professional identities. The above named factors could be summarized in themes such as professional development, adjustment, involvement and participation. Immigrant teachers must be ready to develop themselves professionally through teacher education when they will be taught how teaching and learning is conducted in their new-found territory. The aim of teacher education is not to teach them the contents, but to

teach them the pedagogical approach as this differs from country to country. For example an immigrant teacher from West Africa will have to learn the new approach to teaching and learning in South Africa. The reason is because teachers from West Africa were from a background where textbook knowledge, standardized tests and lecturing are the norm. This is different in South Africa where teachers are mere facilitators and there is open engagement between students and teachers in the classroom. Immigrant teachers from West Africa need the professional adjustment in South Africa in order to successfully reconstruct their professional identities. The process of adjustment will be smooth and stress-free when immigrant teachers participate and get involved in the scheme of things in their place of work. Participation allows immigrant teachers to learn new things and it can also be a source of support in the process of identity reconstruction. In the following subsection, I will be looking at challenges that oppose or retard the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities. The purpose of this subsection is to discuss in detail those factors that hinder the successful reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities.

2.3.2 Challenges that oppose or retard the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities

Many researchers have carried out studies on hindrances, obstacles or challenges confronting immigrant teachers in the process of reconstructing their identity in their new-found place of work (Phillion, 2003; Myles, Cheng & Wang, 2006; Bascia, 1996; Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Mawhinney & Xu, 1998; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Remennick, 2002; Epstein & Kheimets, 2000; Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Michael, 2006). The main theme of all the studies indicated that immigrant teachers that were confronted with those challenges struggled to reconstruct their professional identities. In this subsection, I will discuss some of the challenges, such as re-certification and re-credentialling, employment, professional and cultural marginalization, professional and cultural isolation, holding on to a former culture or way of knowing. The effect of those challenges on immigrant teachers' professional identities will also be discussed.

2.3.2.1 Re-certification and re-credentialling

Re-certification and re-credentialling are two words that have been used interchangeably in the literature to describe the process whereby immigrant teachers are required to repeat some or all of their professional training in order for them to qualify as an “authentic” teacher (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004). Immigrant teachers have been found to possess enough professional qualifications from their countries of origin to qualify them to teach in their new found territory. Unfortunately their professional qualifications and experiences are disregarded because those qualifications were obtained from elsewhere thereby undermining their professional identities (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Michael, 2006; Phillion, 2003; Walsh & Brigham, 2007).

For example teachers that immigrated to Canada with credentials from non-Canadian sources although regarded as employable immigrant professionals, are still required to undergo the process of re-credentialling (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Myles, Cheng & Wang 2006; Phillion, 2003). In Israel immigrant teachers with accreditations from abroad were to complete a course of study in Israel before their accreditations were recognized (Micheal, 2006). Immigrant teachers in Australia who are high school trained teachers were expected to upgrade their qualifications before starting to teach in Australian schools. These teachers were generally recognized as having sufficient undergraduate study in their curriculum subjects but were still considered lacking in the field of pedagogy (Cruickshank, 2004).

Many immigrant teachers considered the re-certification experience as lengthy, traumatic and depressing leading to exclusion (Phillion, 2003). For example in the province of Manitoba in Canada, it takes five years of university course work to obtain both a Bachelor’s degree and Bachelor of Education degree (Schmidt, Young & Mandzuk, 2010). Immigrant teachers have criticized it as just a waste of time and resources because the training courses did not equip them with the socio-cultural knowledge they required (Inglis & Philips, 1995; Santoro, 1999).

Immigrant teachers believed that the process of re-certification was complicated and it entailed huge financial and emotional cost to them. This has led to despair and frustration hence the process challenged the integrity of their professional identities (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004:433).

But I still don't feel that I quite belong to this society because of this experience of exclusion, because I was born and grew up in a different country. I am subject to all this kind of scrutiny and the denial of opportunities no matter how much I have done, how much I have accomplished in Canada, so what is the point? So I don't feel that I belong to this country. I don't feel that I emotionally affiliate to it.

The study conducted by Kostogriz and Peeler (2007) also enumerated the bottleneck that immigrant teachers faced in Australia in the process of reconstructing their professional identities. They are required to complete additional teacher education courses, a process immigrant teachers referred to as “de-skilling” (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007:111). This process of “deskilling” was full of struggles and contradictions as immigrant teachers were forced to revise their sense of professionalism and identity. Immigrant teachers’ past experiences were disregarded and were never considered as a point of reference for negotiating new membership in a community of practice.

Re-certification and re-credentialling as a process was seen by immigrant teachers as gatekeepers, because it was the first challenge that the immigrant teacher faces in the process of transition (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004). Taking a critical look at this process it is obvious that this process could close the doors to other opportunities such as employment. This was because gaining employment depends on successful re-certification and re-credentialling.

2.3.2.2 Employment

Some immigrant teachers in the literature were lucky to have the re-certification process waived for them; nevertheless they found structural barriers to employment (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Phillion, 2003; Schmidt, Young & Mandzuk, 2010; Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Remennick, 2002). In Israel only 12-13% which is about one out of ten immigrant teachers

was employed in the teaching profession during their first years in the country (Remennick, 2002; Epstein & Kheimets, 2000). It has been documented that a sizeable proportion of immigrant teachers were unable to get back into the teaching profession in Australia in 1991 (Inglis & Philps, 1995). It has been reported that only a fraction of the immigrants that secured teaching employment did so in ethnic schools or private tutoring (Taraban, 2004:1). Some of them that are employed in government schools are used as substitute teachers when employed teachers are unable to come to work. Names such as call-teachers (Phillion, 2003:43) or occasional teachers (Pollock, 2010:1) have been used for such immigrant teachers. It is widely accepted that immigrant teachers that fell in this group or category struggled to establish a professional identity within the profession.

When professionals, especially teachers failed to be employed for a certain period of time, it negates their sense of professional identity (Phillion, 2003). One of the reasons why immigrant teachers failed to secure employment in their new territory was because they were considered to lack experience, despite many years of experience in their home countries (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004). Unfortunately immigrant teachers were not given the opportunity to gain entrance into the teaching profession in order to accumulate experience that would allow them to become desirable teachers. There are instances in which some immigrant teachers decided to become volunteers in order to gain experience. The opportunity to volunteer is not given to those immigrant teachers which results in the negation of their professional identities (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004:438).

And I said, ‘O.K. How can I get B.C. experience if you don’t let me even be a teacher on call in your district?’

It is reported in Canada that one of the reasons for unavailability of volunteer positions for immigrant teachers is due to competition from Canadian university students who also wish to volunteer in order to increase their chances of entering into the Faculty of Education (Phillion, 2003). There are instances when the request to volunteer was granted but unfortunately those experiences as a volunteer teacher did not count in securing employment (Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004:438).

They said my volunteer experience (in my daughter's school) didn't count because they want you to have paid employment and a reference from a principal or evaluations from a teacher education practicum.

After several efforts by immigrant teachers to cross employment structural hurdles had failed, some of them resorted to looking for employment in informal sectors, a condition referred to as underemployment (Remennick, 2002). It was confirmed that of those immigrant teachers who did not find work in the first three years after immigration to Canada, 90 per cent ended up permanently with jobs in other informal sectors due to mounting financial and family pressure (Galabuzi, 2006). Moreover in Australia, most of the immigrant teachers that were lucky enough to find employment as a full-time worker were working in unskilled or semiskilled occupations (Cruickshank, 2004:129).

To tell you the truth, I had given up on becoming a teacher again. I tried when I first came to Australia 24 years ago, but then I went to work in the factory. After I finished the factory job, I was working as a teacher's aide in a high school...

This was a serious dent on the professional identity of immigrant teachers because many of those jobs were at the lower end, semi- or unskilled labour (Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2009; Inglis & Philips, 1995). This process of securing a job at the lower end, semi-or unskilled labour was referred to as "downward mobility" and it always resulted in loss of professional identities for immigrant teachers (Taraban, 2004:1). Immigrant teachers that face challenges of employment might likely be marginalized in the scheme of things both professionally and in personal lives. The reason was because money is needed by immigrant teachers to access opportunities such as teacher education, membership of professional bodies, accommodation and living expenses. Lack of money due to unemployment may contribute to negative professional identity as immigrant teachers will find it difficult to cope financially.

2.3.2.3 Professional and cultural marginalization

Marginalization is described as a structural phenomenon that presupposes some kind of barrier limiting or obstructing social interaction between members of groups that are in the form of relationship to one another, not as an individual characteristic (Gist & Wright, 1973).

Kostogriz and Peeler (2007) argue that immigrant teachers may be marginalized due to racial, cultural and linguistic differences. International literature reveals that immigrant teachers are still marginalized professionally even if they meet other professional standards and have accepted qualifications (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Phillion, 2003; Pollock, 2003; Michael, 2006). For example in the city of Ontario in Canada it was reported that 41% of Ontario teacher education graduates were in regular teaching positions by the spring of their first teaching year, yet only 8% of newly certified teachers who were immigrants, were able to secure similar contracts (Schmidt, Young & Mandzuk, 2010:444). Even immigrant teachers that had qualifications in high demand fields were not insulated from being marginalized professionally. Chassels (2010:24) reported that sixty-four per cent of Ontario graduates with high-demand qualifications in Mathematics, Chemistry and French were employed as full-time teachers by the end of their first year of certification whereas only nineteen per cent of immigrant teachers with the same high-demand qualifications were fully employed.

When immigrant teachers felt marginalized by native co-workers, they reacted in many ways (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). One of the ways that they reacted was to isolate themselves. This may result into retracting into their shell and “staying within oneself” professionally or by limiting their interactions with colleagues of the same ethnicity (Seah & Bishop, 2002:4). To native colleagues the retraction might be misconstrued as an act of segregation but to immigrant teachers, it was a source of emotional and psychological support (Seah & Bishop, 2002). The study conducted by Michael (2006) shows that immigrant teachers were marginalized by participating less frequently than veteran teachers in decision-making forums in schools and they also participated less frequently in professional enrichment courses. This assertion was also corroborated by participants in the study of Remennick (2002) where immigrant teachers reported that they were given fewer hours and classes to teach than they would have liked, that they were often assigned to the most problematic classes unwanted by other teachers, or were used to cover for the colleagues on sick leave or maternity leave. It has also been discovered that immigrant teachers are marginalized because they lack power (Duggleby, 2007). They lack power because they were employed as substitute teachers; hence they exist at the lowest level of the hierarchy and were presided over by those with more

power (Phillion, 2003). Due to lack of power, there were situations whereby immigrant teachers that possessed the qualifications and experience to teach in high schools were placed mainly in elementary or middle schools (Michael, 2000).

The issue of physical space such as seating arrangements in the staffroom is based on factors such as permanent, contract and casual employment (Phillion, 2003). Immigrant teachers are mainly short tenured employees with less pay compared with indigenous colleagues who are permanent employees with high pay. This delineation in term of employment and remuneration has resulted in the alienation of immigrant teachers leading to the feeling of professional marginalization (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007:113).

Three and a half years was already long, I'd been working hard and I wanted something better... I just wanted to feel how it is to be a full-time teacher, and experience what other teachers are experiencing.

In other studies (Bascia, 1996; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Phillion, 2003; Santoro, Reid & Kamler, 2001) immigrant teachers were automatically marginalized by apportioning to them classes that were predominantly populated by immigrant learners. This act was considered by immigrant teachers as deliberate in order to sideline them. They were considered unqualified to teach in the classes populated by the majority of local learners. One of the Somali teachers in the study of Phillion (2003) considered herself more as an administrator than as a teacher because she often met with the parents of immigrant learners from Somalia and also translated documents. Marginalization of immigrant teachers was not only limited to their professional environment where they were working. They were also marginalized in other spheres of life both social and cultural. According to Hutchison (2006) social and cultural marginalization might not have been directly connected with teaching, but they also had an impact on the effectiveness of the teachers in the classroom. One of the immigrant teachers in the study of Hutchison (2006:78) related the stress she went through due to the difficulty encountered in obtaining credit cards, a driver's licence, a green card and a social security card. We have seen that marginal people live under high stress and have difficulty coping with most of the situations they encounter (Sabar, 2004:148). Therefore immigrant teachers may have problems in coping with situations in their new environment when marginalized. When they

find it difficult to cope, it negates their sense of professional identity. It also affects their performances in classrooms.

2.3.2.4 Professional and cultural isolation

Hutchison (2006) in his study explained isolation as not having sincere relationships with colleagues due to the immigrant teachers not feeling the expected care and concern. The feelings of professional isolation by immigrant teachers have been reported widely in the literature (Bascia, 1996; Kamler, Santoro & Reid, 1998; Madsen & Mabokela, 2000; Santoro, Reid & Kamler, 2001; Hutchison, 2006).

One of the reasons why immigrant teachers felt isolated professionally was because they were in the minority. Immigrant teachers have been described as minorities in much of the international literature (Santoro, Reid & Kamler, 2001; Peeler & Jane, 2003; Bascia, 1996; Phillion, 2003). For example immigrant teachers comprise only two per cent of the entire teachers' workforce in Australia (Santoro, Reid & Kamler, 2001). Madsen and Mabokela (2000:851) confirm that within organizations, minority group members have limited opportunities to assert their own beliefs because of main group norms and expectations to conform, thereby resulting in isolation.

Another reason for professional isolation as explained by the immigrant teachers is a feeling of the improper use of English, lack of fluency, communication or accent problems (Phillion, 2003; Hutchison, 2006; Remennick, 2002). The feeling of incompetence in the use of English language goes beyond communication and also results in a feeling of incompetence in their professional work. One of the immigrant teachers that participated in the study of (Remennick, 2002:109) explained the reason for feeling inferior and isolated.

My accent bugs me until this day, however hard I try, I still sound Russian, and this renders me inferior in a way. I heard on many occasions how students made fun of my accent behind my back.

Immigrant teachers may also feel isolated culturally especially when they are in communities that show little tolerance towards diversity and difference. It is reported in the study of Kamler, Santoro and Reid (1998) that immigrant teachers in rural schools in Australia are more likely to be culturally isolated, not within the working context alone, but also within the community. Professional and cultural isolation resulted from the fact that immigrant teachers felt marginalized in the scheme of things in the community or at the work place. This has resulted in a sense of feeling of “non-belonging”. This negative feeling may affect the construction of professional identities of immigrant teachers.

2.3.2.5 Holding on to former culture or way of knowing

One of the barriers that immigrant teachers faced in the process of identity reconstruction was that they still hold on to their former cultures and ways of doing things; they still long for the place they left behind (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004:395). Immigrant teachers present in this kind of condition were described as shuttling between spaces of past and present and a state of being in between (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007:116).

Fortuijn (2002) and Shatz (2002) all maintain that when teachers move into a new cultural context, their teaching approaches should be revised accordingly. When immigrant teachers are not prepared to shelve the former way of knowing and imbibe the new culture, the road to reconstruction of new professional identities might be slippery. In the study conducted by Faez (2010:7) in Canada, immigrant teachers that felt comfortable with the old way of teaching and not ready to embrace the new or acceptable way of teaching encountered difficulty that negated the sense of their professional identity.

Coming from a very academic environment, from back home, I was used to the Socratic teaching; teacher in front of the class lecturing. When I came to (this institution) and saw tables clustered in groups, I found it very hard. I am used to the teacher at the front and me as a student taking notes.

It has been documented in the literature that when a teacher enters a classroom with a particular set of expectations about teacher and student behaviour and students enter the same

classroom with another set of expectations, the potential for conflict and for the disruption of learning is at hand (Bernhardt, 1987).

2.4 Summary of findings from the literature review

Under the section above, I have dwelt on the challenges, hindrances and obstacles that constitute bottlenecks to the reconstruction of professional identities of immigrant teachers. The obstacles that immigrant teachers faced may not be the same, but they are not mutually exclusive of one another. It was assumed that the challenges enumerated above may be external or internal to immigrant teachers. The challenges that I refer to as external are those that immigrant teachers do not have control over while the internal ones are those that immigrant teachers can control.

Challenges such as re-certification and re-credentialling, employment, professional marginalization will fall under external challenges while those of professional isolation and holding on to a former way of knowing fall under internal challenges. To overcome the internal challenges, immigrant teachers must change their way of thinking, be determined and resolute. External challenges require the concerted efforts of institutions and other stakeholders such as administrators and colleagues at work. They have to partner with immigrant teachers in order to be able to get the best out of them as a teacher.

2.5 South African scenario: How do immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools?

There is a dearth of literature specifically on professional identities of Black immigrant teachers in South Africa. Most, if not all of the studies in literature on immigration issues in South Africa focus mainly on experiences of migrants and issues affecting them (Crush, 1999; 2000; Crush & McDonald, 2001). What took place before 1994 was the migration of farm and mine labourers from the neighbouring African countries of Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland

and Zimbabwe (Crush, 1999). Consequently there are few or no studies on immigrant professionals from other African countries.

In South Africa there have been a few studies conducted on teachers' professional identity formation and how their identities influenced their work. However these studies have focused mainly on South African teachers. Nevertheless, this area of study is progressively witnessing an increase in contribution by South African researchers (Jansen, 2001; Jita & Vandeyar, 2006; Jita, 2004; Mpungose, 2010; Samuel & Stephens, 2000).

Some of the studies focused on the impact of policy changes and reforms in the field of education by the government on teachers' professional identities (Jansen, 2001; Jita & Vandeyar, 2006; Mpungose, 2010). Others explored the connection between the teachers' biography or background and construction of their professional identities (Jita, 2004; Samuel & Stephens, 2000).

Jansen (2001) conducted a study on problematic relationships between policy images and teacher identity in South African classrooms. He used the study of Spillane (2000) as a starting point, where he described teacher identities as "the way teachers feel about themselves professionally, emotionally and politically given the conditions of their work"(Jansen, 2001:242). This study was in agreement with that of Sachs (2001) which suggests that policy images of teachers make demands that conflict with their personal identities as practitioners.

Jita and Vandeyar (2006) also concurred with the view of Jansen (2001) mentioned above. Using two Mathematics teachers from different backgrounds as a case study, it was discovered that their stories had both commonality and differences. The study concluded by confirming that previous and earlier experiences both as students and teachers in different schools significantly shaped teachers' knowledge and beliefs about mathematics, mathematics teaching and mathematics learning.

Mpungose (2010) in his study carried out in KwaZulu-Natal⁸ province of South Africa among six school principals described how school principals adapt to their new roles, brought about by the new education policies and educational restructuring within the South African Department of Education. This study which embraced a life history approach as a preferred methodological stance concluded that leaders create their provisional selves and construct their professional identities from their personal and professional knowledge.

Jita (2004) argues that the most of the reforms taking place in education are commendable but might not be totally successful. The reason for this as explained by the researcher was because other critical factors that influence the shaping of teachers' practice were not taken into cognizance. He concluded that the construction of a teachers' classroom practice depends on more than just what they know or believe about the pedagogical process. It also depends on how they perceive themselves, their relationship to their learners, their colleagues and the subject matter.

Samuel and Stephens (2000) took a critical look by means of a case study at the development and maintenance of the teacher's role and identity of student teachers entering the teaching profession in South Africa. The study concluded that there is much "identity baggage" that student teachers bring with them to their professional arena (Samuel & Stephens, 2000:477). This baggage has been acquired during their formative years and it has implications on how their professional identities are constructed as teachers.

Issues of professional identity and its implications for African immigrant teachers have not been properly addressed in the South African context. That is the reason why literature on this issue is still sparse in the local sphere. In this study⁹, I would like to begin a discourse that will lead to intellectual debate, so that we can have an understanding on how African immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools.

⁸ Like Gauteng province, KwaZulu-Natal is a name of another province in South Africa.

⁹ This study is part of a project led by Professor Saloshna Vandeyar. The intellectual conception of this study is vested in the larger project.

2.5.1 Summary of findings: International landscape

Internationally the literature suggested that professional identity can change and is flexible in different contexts and times. It has also been found that there are certain factors or circumstances that trouble the identities of immigrant teachers. If those circumstances are not well managed, this could lead to the loss of professional identity. Some of the factors that trouble the professional identities may be personal and we have seen in the literature that personal cannot be separated from professional. According to Day *et al.*, (2006:603) there are unavoidable interrelationships between professional and personal identities. Hence if there is a shift in the personal identity, it will definitely affect the professional one.

2.5.2 Summary of findings: South African scenario

In South African context, there is a dearth of literature on the reconstruction of professional identities of immigrant teachers. From the little that is available, most of the studies focus on professional identities of South African teachers (Jansen, 2001; Jita, 2004; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Vandeyar & Jita, 2006; Mpungose, 2010). Looking at the studies on professional identities of South African teachers, they all agreed that the teachers' personal identity affects their professional identity.

2.5.3 Comparison between international landscape and the South African scenario

The common denominator between the professional identity of immigrant teachers and that of South African teachers was that professional identity can change and it is changeable in different contexts and times. The literature from both international landscape and the South African scenario also concurred that teachers' professional identity is not determined by what they know or believe about teaching and learning, but also depends on how they perceived themselves in relation to students, colleagues and subject matter.

2.6 Theoretical frameworks

A theoretical framework is a theoretical model of how one theorizes or makes logical sense of the relationships among numerous factors that have been identified as important to the problem (Sekaran, 2000). It provides a researcher with a particular perspective or lens through which to examine a topic. According to Marriam (2001) a theoretical framework provides the researcher the lens to view the world. The definition of a theoretical framework by Camp (2001) was appropriate for this study where he defined theoretical frameworks as explanations about a phenomenon that is being studied. In this study, the aim of the researcher is to explain a phenomenon. There are two theoretical frameworks that will be considered as a lens in this study. The two frameworks are: Communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and Reconstructivist theory (Freire, 1998).

2.6.1 Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) affirms that Communities of Practice are groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and a passion for joint enterprise. Communities of Practice theory provide a more useful approach with which to analyse the complexity of new teacher's experience (Clarke, 2009).

This theory will be relevant in this research because African immigrant teachers who are participants in this study are considered to be new to the teaching environment they have found themselves in. In order for them to overcome social, cultural and systemic obstacles (Phillion, 2003), they can become a member of a community of practice. This will allow them to learn the difficulties of the job, explore the meaning of their work and in the process as a worker to develop a professional identity. Wenger (1998) has suggested that communities of practice is the ideal place for constructing professional identities, meaning that identities are constructed through participation, and through becoming a member of a professional

community. According to Wenger (1998) not everything that is called a community is a community of practice. A neighbourhood for instance, is often called a community, but is usually not a community of practice. For a particular community to be referred to as a community of practice, it should have certain characteristics which are crucial.

First, the domain. A community of practice has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. That is why a mere club of friends or a network of connections between people is not a community of practice. In my study African immigrant teachers under study, local colleagues and administrators are professional teachers who shared domain of interest and they can be distinguished from other people because of teacher education programmes they have followed before qualifying as a teacher. Second, the community. In order to pursue their interest in their domain, members build relationships that enable them to learn from one another. They also engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other and share information. Interaction is also an important factor in a community of practice and that is why having the same job or the same title does not make a community of practice unless members interact (Wenger, 1998). The risk undertakers in a large insurance company or learners in South African schools may have much in common, yet unless they interact and learn together, they do not form a community of practice. In this study immigrant teachers interact with students, colleagues and administrators in their place of work.

Third, the practice which community of practice members are involved in. A community of practice is not merely a community of interest. Members of a community of practice are practitioners (Wenger, 1998). They develop a shared collection of resources: experiences, stories, tools and ways of addressing recurring problems that can be regarded as a shared practice. In this study every individual in the community such as the immigrant teachers, administrators and local colleagues could be regarded as practitioners.

The reconstruction of professional identities by immigrant teachers is a process whereby immigrant teachers must be ready to subject themselves to the process of knowing and

learning. The reason for this subjectivity is apparent because of the new cultural and educational environment in which immigrant teachers find themselves. This is totally different from the one from which they come from or with which they are familiar. Hence they encounter challenges in the process of transition. According to Wenger (1998) finding meaning through experience is not a mechanical realization of a routine or procedure. It involves negotiation-the continuous interaction, of gradual achievement, and of give-and-take within the community of practice.

For immigrant teachers to fit into the new system, access and participation in communities of practice might be useful in the reconstruction of professional identities and a key to improving performances. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that learning and understanding occur as people participate in activities where they become active participants. Ball (2000) is of the opinion that an effective transition of immigrants is an evolutionary process that connects newcomers to the profession and helps them to appropriate the skills and knowledge that they require. Wenger (1998) confirms that community of practice allows for learning and social participation and also that issues of identity are an integral aspect of a social theory of learning and are thus inseparable from issues of practice, community and meaning. Holland *et al.*,(1998) and Beynon, Ilieva and Dichupa, (2001) both agree that identities are not about someone waking up one day and finding his/her identity already formed. Rather identities are shaped in social practice. For the identity to remain vibrant in the person, it needs considerable participation and social work. Thus, it is through participation in communities that individuals develop and possibly adapt and thereby reconstruct their identities and practice (Breakwell, 2001).

Participation here refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but also a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities (Wenger, 1998). Participation allows the possibility of mutual recognition and the ability to negotiate meaning, but does not necessarily entail equality or respect or even collaboration. The concept of participation mentioned by Wenger (1998) will be useful to explore how immigrant

teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools. The reason is that people in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems. Wenger (1998) also mentions that it is not only participation that shapes our identity, non-participation also does this. In other words, “non-participation is, in a reverse kind of fashion, as much a source of identity as participation” (Wenger, 1998:164).

We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in. Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not. To the extent that we can come in contact with other ways of being, what we are not can even become a large part of how we define ourselves.

Another concept in this theoretical framework that is of importance in my study is the concept of multimembership. Wenger (1998:159) opines that identity is more than just a single trajectory. Instead, it should be viewed as a nexus of multimembership. As such a nexus, identity is not a unity but neither is it simply fragmented. This indicates that identity entails multimemberships which require reconciliation (Wenger, 1998:160).

The work of reconciliation may be the most significant challenge faced by learners who move from one community of practice to another... e.g., when an immigrant moves from one culture to another... learning involves more than appropriating new pieces of information. Learners must often deal with conflicting forms of individuality and competence as defined in different communities.

The Community of practice framework can be useful in the study of experiences of immigrant teachers and how they reconstruct their professional identities. The framework conceives learning as highly complex and a socially situated process that is dynamic and involves the negotiation of access, power relations, participation and above all, identity (Deters, 2006).

2.6.2 Reconstructivist theory

Reconstructivist theory is an ideology that emphasizes the importance of changing existing social structures for the better. It is a philosophy that highlights the addressing of social questions and an urge to create a better society and worldwide democracy. The essence of reconstructivist theory is that it encourages remodelling oppressive structures. The

reconstructivists believe that systems must be changed to overcome oppression and improve human conditions. This theory has been adopted by many teachers and philosophers including Paulo Freire (1921-1997), a Brazilian teacher, who taught students the benefits of social reform within society. This theory has two major premises on which it is built.

Firstly, society is in need of constant reconstruction or change. Reconstructivists believe that societies should involve themselves continually in reform in order to establish more perfect government or social networks. The experiences of living in poverty of one of the early pioneers of the theory Paulo Freire (1921-1997) made him champion education and literacy as the vehicle for social change. Paulo, believed that humans must learn to resist oppression and not become its victims, nor oppress others. The only way to achieve this noble idea is to use education and literacy as a vehicle for this social change. Teaching and learning should not just be a system where educator deposits information in student heads, but must be a process of inquiry in which learners must invent and reinvent the world.

Secondly, such social change involves a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society. The social reconstructivist theory of education treats schools and teachers as major entities that are instrumental in directing social and cultural change. It is the school that creates awareness to overcome domination and oppression through dialogue and critical consciousness. Reconstructivists believe that school should lead in the renewal of culture and the resolution of social problems. This could be done by designing a curriculum that focuses on student experience and taking social action against real problems, such as violence and inequality. Other strategies to be used to bring about a change in society through the classroom include inquiry dialogue, multiple perspectives, community-based learning and bringing the world into the classroom. Mosier (1951) advocates that the school should act as social vanguard. The explanation of this is that the school should lead society in the task of reconstruction. In this study schools are compared to a repair shop to which the social machine should be sent whenever it breaks down. The school should strive to reconstruct society while the society decays.

In Canada a movement is already taking a root, according to which education was considered as a force for social and moral development (Goddard, 2004). The focus of this movement is a call for a return to schools as a community enterprise. Hesch (1999) argued for a social reconstructivist approach to create a culturally relevant teacher education program. The aim of this approach will be that educators will be aware, socially and educationally, the environment he/she works in while working for the long-term interests of their students.

Stone (1994) interprets educational reconstruction as a perspective that is based on four premises. First, advocates of educational reconstruction assert that all philosophies, including educational ones, are culturally based; such philosophies grow out of identifiable cultural patterns that are shaped by living in a particular place in the world at a given time. Second, culture is a dynamic process that constantly grows and changes. Third, human beings can and do refashion their cultures to promote more optimum possibilities for humanity's development and fulfillment. Fourth, education broadly conceived as popular, lifelong learning as well as schooling is a powerful means of radical social transformation.

2.6.3 The point of convergence between the two theoretical frameworks

It has been argued that education could be used in enforcing social change and transformation. One of the premises on which the transformation can take place is collaboration and active participation by all the stakeholders such as students, teachers, administrators and community representatives in policy formulation. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that learning and understanding occur as people participate in activities where they become active participants. This implies that access is the key and crucial in becoming a member of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991:100).

To become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation.

Depending on power relations, newcomers to the community of practice may be marginalized or denied access to participation. If immigrant teachers are marginalized and denied

participation, it will be difficult to become a social vanguard and agent of change and this might hamper the transformation of society.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion it has been confirmed from the various studies considered in this literature review that the process of identity reconstruction is not simple and straightforward. It requires great effort in negotiation and re-negotiation. While some immigrant teachers saw the process of reconstruction of professional identities as tedious and full of obstacles, others decided to confront the challenges head-on and ultimately they were able to define themselves as professionals in a foreign land. One of the immigrant teachers interviewed in the study of Deters (2008) reported that there was some improvement in the way she perceived herself now as a teacher compared with when she started working about three semesters ago having been able to overcome the challenges on her way to reconstruct her professional identity.

It has also been revealed in the literature that our identities are shaped both by our participation and non-participation in the community of practice. Some immigrant teachers had the opportunity to become legitimate members of the community through participation because they had full access to resources provided by their other colleagues in the community of practice. Other immigrant teachers were unable to participate as they were not granted access and this resulted in isolation or outright withdrawal as a member of a community of practice. A few immigrant teachers maintained their status as they saw their non-participation in some of the issues in the community of practice as a way to reconstruct their professional identity. In Chapter 3, the methodology applied to the empirical investigation is presented.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A well-formulated problem is already a half-solved problem
 Bless and Higson-Smith (2005:25)

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will describe and discuss the research design and the research methodology that were used to collect and organize the data that were gathered for this study. In the work of Mouton (1996:35) research methodology was defined as the process and the kind of tools and procedures used to answer the research questions, to gather and analyze the data, and to solve the research problem. The table below presents an outline of the research strategy process used in this study.

Table 3.1: An outline of the research strategy process

PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS	
Metatheoretical paradigm	Socio-constructivism
Methodological paradigm	Qualitative exploratory research design
STRATEGY OF INQUIRY	Case Study and Narrative Research Approach
SELECTION OF CASES	
Purposeful sampling	Selection of five (5) African immigrant teachers from five different schools in Tshwane Area of Gauteng. The selected teachers were interviewed and observed. The principals of the schools where immigrant teachers were selected were also interviewed. A focus group interviews were also conducted with learners who attended the class of the immigrant teachers.
DATA COLLECTION	
Data collection methods	Observations, semistructured interviews, focus group interviews, field notes and reflective journal.
DATA ANALYSIS	Grounded theory and content analysis
QUALITY MEASURES	
Data trustworthiness, Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability.	
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
Permission from concerned authorities (access), informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.	

This study uses a qualitative research method as mode of inquiry or what other researchers termed naturalistic paradigm (Morse *et al.*, 2002). Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials, including personal experience and interviews, amongst others, that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3). The qualitative research method was considered appropriate because the researcher wanted to listen to participants' stories so that he would be able to gain insight into and understand their experiences, challenges and opportunities. Over the past two decades researchers have started developing an interest in the personal nature of experience and how people make sense of their world by telling stories about them (Paola, 2002:134).

The data collection techniques involve interviews and observation. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with immigrant teachers and the principals while focus group interviews were conducted with the learners. The interviews were semi-structured. Questions asked were prepared beforehand, but follow-up questions were also asked depending on the answers supplied by the participants. During the interviews immigrant teachers were given the opportunity to tell their own stories. Observations were also conducted on immigrant teachers during the classroom sessions and their interactions within the confines of school.

During the time of interviews a tape recorder was used and the interviewer also made notes. The purpose of using these two different methods is to ensure accuracy and make the data dependable. In case the tape-recorder malfunctioned or became inoperable, the notes that were taken would become an alternative source. Data collected through interviews and observations were analyzed using grounded theory and content analysis.

3.2 Paradigmatic assumptions

3.2.1 Meta-theoretical paradigm

The meta-theoretical paradigm that was considered for this study is the one of social constructivism paradigm. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this

understanding (McMahon, 1997). Vygotsky is one of the greatest theorists working from a social constructivist perspective. Vygotsky's theory (1978) of social constructivism emphasizes cultural and social influences on cognitive development. Social constructivists argue that the very terms by which people perceive and describe the world, including language, are social artifacts (Schwandt, 1994).

According to Au (1998:299) reality is seen as being created through processes of social exchange, historically situated. Social constructivists are interested in the collective generation of meaning among people. Social constructivism includes the idea that there is no objective basis for knowledge claims, because knowledge is always a human construction (Au, 1998). In this study the researcher's interest lies in how African immigrant teachers in South African schools negotiate and construct their identity in a social and cultural environment that is totally different from the one they were familiar with.

Social constructivism enables immigrant teachers to understand the transformative process of border crossing, making meaning of their reality and constructing new knowledge based on the difference in social and cultural values. It helps them to move from their previous professional knowledge of the experts and specialists to the local cultural knowledge and allows them to engage themselves in coping mechanisms that will help them to be self-reliant through social interaction. The emphasis is on the process of knowledge construction by the social group and the intersubjectivity established through the interaction of the group (Au, 1998).

3.3 Methodological paradigm

3.3.1 Research purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstruct their professional identities. The study involved life experiences, opportunities and challenges that confront African immigrant teachers and how they negotiate meaning among native colleagues, learners and the community in general. In order to do this

the researcher went to interview and observe the participants who are African immigrant teachers in their place of work. The principals of the school where the African immigrant teaches were interviewed and the learners who attend the classes of the African immigrant teachers also participated in a focus group interview. The study was conducted in natural settings far away from the laboratory and therefore a qualitative exploratory research design was deemed appropriate for the study.

3.3.2 Qualitative exploratory research design

This study uses a qualitative research method. This is because the process of gathering data by the researcher took place in a natural setting and not in the laboratory. Qualitative research relies on gathering as much information of a non-quantifiable and non numeric nature as possible. Creswell (2007:257) defines qualitative research as an inquiry of understanding where a researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

In supporting this, Grinnell Jr. (1997:107), confirms that qualitative research is conducted in natural field settings, such as homes, schools and communities in an attempt to make sense of the meaning that people bring to their personal experiences. The researcher wants to understand real-life situations by talking and interacting with participants through the qualitative approaches of interviewing and observation. The most important procedures of qualitative research are the interactions that occur between the participants and the researcher because these provide much of the data upon which the researcher is able to construct an analytical, personal and interpretive account of the events, actions and narratives that emerge from the conditions that are being investigated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:15).

A qualitative research method was used in this study because it reveals the nature of situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:134-135). This study enabled the researcher to explore the experiences of African immigrant teachers in South African schools. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) argue that a qualitative research method enables the researcher to gain insight into a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or

theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon and discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon. To increase the trustworthiness of the data collected, qualitative researchers do not depend only on one method in the collection of data. Different methods of data collection were used. In the case of this study, the data that were collected for analysis were obtained by means of observation, semi-structured interviews, field notes, voice recordings, and an interrogation of the narratives that emerged.

There are different forms of qualitative research design such as narrative, case study, survey, ethnography, grounded theory, content analysis and phenomenological study. Due to the nature of this study which involves participants telling their stories in a particular situation, a case study approach and narrative research approach of qualitative research design were considered. In the following subsections, I will discuss in details the meaning of a case study and narrative research approach. Their strengths and weaknesses will also be discussed and why they are considered suitable for this study.

3.4 Strategy of inquiry

3.4.1 A case study approach

A case study approach is a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings (Eishenhardt, 1989:534). Case studies have been used as a strategy in different studies to accomplish various aims. They have been used to provide description (Kidder, 1982), to test theory (Pinfield, 1986), or generate theory (Gersick, 1988). In this research case study is used to provide description as it tries to explore how African immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools. Case study was considered suitable because a single case being the reconstruction of professional identities by African immigrant teachers was studied.

In case studies there are different methods of data collection, such as archives, interviews, questionnaires and observations and the data may be qualitative or quantitative (Eishenhardt, 1989). This study is qualitative and interviews and observations were employed as method of

data collection. Gillham (2000:2) views the use of multiple sources of evidence as a “key characteristics of case study research”. Yin (2003:13-14) concurs that the case study enquiry relies on multiple sources of evidence, where data should converge in a triangulation fashion. In this study I collected my data through interviews with the immigrant teachers, the learners and the principals. I also observed the teachers inside and outside the classroom.

Case study approach is useful in the study of human affairs because it is down-to-earth and attention-holding (Stake, 1978). In this study I found case study design appropriate because the immigrant teachers were able to speak to me on a one-to-one basis and in the process gained my attention. Case studies are of value because they can contribute to the refinement of theory, bring to attention issues that require more detailed exploration, and mark the limits of generalizability (Stake, 1994). It can also help us to understand complex interrelationships because it operates with a severely restricted focus (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). By interviewing and observing only five immigrant teachers, I was able to follow them over a three-to-four-months period. It also affords me the opportunity to interview the various stakeholders with whom they are working such as the learners and the principals.

Case study approach has been criticized as not providing a suitable basis for generalization (Stake, 1978). Critics believe that the sample is small and idiosyncratic, and because data is predominantly non-numerical, there is no way to establish the probability that data are representative of some larger population (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). Moreover, case study has been criticized for generating too much data that might be too much for easy analysis (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). The general belief is that when data are too much there are probabilities that important information may be omitted or some stories may be given more detail than others (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996).

3.4.2 A narrative research approach

A narrative research approach describes the lives of individuals, collects and tell stories about people’s lives, and writes narratives of individual experiences (Creswell, 2002:525).

Qualitative research that is focused on gathering and interpreting the stories that people use to describe their lives, is referred to by different names that the term “narrative studies” covers (Hatch, 2002:28). It has been argued further that narrative work fits most comfortably within the paradigmatic boundaries of constructivist and critical/feminist thinking, where emphasis is placed on the meanings individuals generate through stories that are told as part of the research (Hatch, 2002).

In this study the experiences of immigrant teachers considering the challenges that they face and the opportunities they have in South African schools would be explored from the stories that they tell the researcher. From an immigrant teacher’s perspectives we will be able to know what it means to be an immigrant teacher in a foreign land and how such a person is perceived by the learners, colleagues and community at large.

Narrative can be both a method and a phenomenon of the study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative was used as a method in this study. Narrative research design makes use of personal stories such as life story, conversation and personal writing. Of necessity these invite reflection and reflectivity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are story-telling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:2).

In narrative research individuals give their personal, first-hand accounts to researchers (Creswell, 2002). He argues that for individuals searching for a research design that reports personal stories, narrative research may be ideal, as it seeks to understand and represent experiences through the stories that individuals live and tell (Creswell, 2002:521). Immigrant teachers in this study told me their stories about how they reconstructed their professional identities in South African schools. Narrative research design focuses on the way individuals present their accounts of themselves and views self-narrations both as constructions and claim of identity (Linde, 1993). According to Creswell (2002:531) narrative captures an everyday, normal form of data familiar to individuals as it is a natural part of life and individuals all have stories about their experiences to tell others. For the participants under investigation through

narrative research, sharing their stories may make them feel that their stories are important and they are being heard (Creswell, 2002). Some immigrant teachers interviewed in this study did not yet consider themselves as part of the system because they were still only temporarily employed. By giving them the opportunity to tell their stories, they were believing that at least their voice might be heard soonest.

While it is acknowledged that narrative research design is an outstanding method of collecting and interpreting data, it has also been discovered that it also has a weakness. This weakness has to be taken into consideration when conducting narrative research. One weakness that is very common is that the participant may try to “fake the data”, and write a fiction thereby substituting falsehood for truth (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:10). Apart from the problem inherent in narrative research design during collection of data, the researcher may also intentionally smooth the participants’ story during reporting. This process is referred to as “the Hollywood plot” and it has been labelled as a danger in narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:10).

3.5 Selection of cases

Like all other qualitative researchers, the sampling procedure in this study was deliberately done. Hence it was a “purposive sampling” that was used for this study (Punch, 2009: 162). Purposive sampling is described as sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind (Punch, 2009). In the following paragraphs, I will explain in detail how selection of cases was carried out for this study. Participants were selected from different schools that have different racial compositions racially due to their location. Participants were also selected according to different nationalities with varying social, economical and cultural backgrounds. It has been reported in the literature that teachers’ identities are shaped within multiple contexts such as schools, classrooms, subject department or cultures (Jita, 2004:12). My participants in this study were African immigrant teachers, students that are taught by the immigrant teachers and the principal of the school where the immigrant teacher was teaching.

The criterion that was used in choosing immigrant teachers was that they were born and had their teacher education in an African country other than South Africa.

One immigrant teacher was chosen from a former model “C” white school¹⁰, one from a black township school, one from a school located in a coloured community, one from a school in an Indian community and one from an inner city school. This selection process helped me to determine whether the type of school where immigrant teachers work also influenced the construction of their professional identities. In total five African immigrant teachers, five school principals and five different focus groups consisting of six learners in each group participated in this study. Immigrant teachers were also chosen according to gender and language background in order to increase the richness of the data. Two female immigrant teachers were included among the participants. The purpose of this was to confirm whether gender and language background would influence the reconstruction of professional identities of immigrant teachers. Allard and Santoro (2006:116) opine that identity is a function of gender, ethnicity, race or social class. Lastly, six learners were chosen from the class of each of the identified participating teachers to participate in a focus group interview. This also ensured that participating students are selected across the gender, language and culture barrier.

3.5.1 Identification and selection of participants

The first task in the selection of participants in this study was to identify the schools that had African immigrant teachers as members of teaching staff. In doing this, three different methods were employed in a search for schools that would be able to serve this purpose.

Firstly, the principal of a school that I met in a conference organized by my supervisor Professor Saloshna Vandeyar in March 2010 was contacted. In the conference tagged “Borderwork Conference” the principal was one of the speakers at the conference. He participated in the study and also allowed immigrant teachers and the learners in his school to

¹⁰ A government attempt to remove state costs by shifting some of the financing and control of White schools to parents.

participate. Secondly, personal telephone contacts were used by phoning schools to inquire whether they had African immigrant teachers as members of teaching staff. This method also provided the researcher with one out of the five participants. Lastly, I wrote a formal letter to the Department of Basic Education (DoE) (Appendix H) in which I requested the list of schools where there were African immigrant teachers in the Tshwane area of Gauteng. In this list three participants from different schools were randomly selected. The list that was received from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) is summarized in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Number of African immigrant teachers in Tshwane (GDE, 2011)

Name of district	Broad areas in the district	No of schools per district	No of African immigrant teachers in the district
Tshwane North	Hammanskraal; Pretoria; Sinoville Soshanguve	23	40
Tshwane West	Akasia; Atteridgeville(Tshwane South) Mabopane ;Ga-Rankuwa; Hercules Pretoria-Noord; Pretoria; Soshanguve Pretoria West	18	30
Tshwane South	Atteridgeville; Eldoraigne ;Erasmia Irene; Lyttelton; Mamelodi; Pretoria- West; Rissik; Silverton; Centurion	21	67

At the planning stage of this study, I had in mind selecting participants that would be a true reflection of the entire people of the African continent in terms of culture and language background. I wanted to choose immigrant teachers from North, South, East and West Africa. I also wanted to choose African immigrant teachers who had other languages such as French or Portuguese as home language. After a thorough and consistent search for such participants,

it was discovered that African immigrants who possessed those backgrounds were in South Africa communities, but they were not available in the teaching profession. I want to posit that what was responsible for less visibility of such individuals in educational profession in South Africa is not unconnected to lack of fluency in English language among African immigrants from such countries. The list of African immigrant teachers supplied to me by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) consisted of about 99% African immigrant teachers from Zimbabwe and 1% of African immigrant teachers from Nigeria. Therefore the selection of participants in this study was limited to African immigrant teachers from Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

3.6 The research process

3.6.1 Pilot study or pilot test

A pilot test is an opportunity to try out an instrument before it is made final and simulated in its intended setting (Fink, 2003). The pilot test for this study was carried out in a school located in a black township¹¹ in the Tshwane area of Pretoria. Two participants that were selected for the pilot study were interviewed using the interview protocol to be tested. The purpose of the pilot study as explained before was to test the instrument used in data gathering such as the interview protocol. The pilot study helped to reveal deficiencies in the interview protocol. The pilot interviews were taperecorded and transcribed verbatim. During the transcription, efforts were made to discover mistakes and these were rectified. The original interview protocol was reviewed and the questions were refined to conform to the new standard that was used in the final interviews. The pilot study was also discussed with the supervisor of the study, and suggestions for improvement were pointed out to the researcher.

¹¹ A black township is a particular area or location specifically assigned for Black South Africans to live and reside during apartheid regime. Learners in schools located in such areas are predominantly Africans.

3.6.2 Observations

Observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place (Kumar, 2005). It entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, and artifacts (objects) in the social setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Observation is one way to collect primary data because it provides first-hand information (Kumar, 2005). There are two types of observation namely participant observation and non-participant observation (Kumar, 2005). In this study the non-participant observation was used to gather data. The researcher did not get involved in the activities that took place in the classroom but the researcher remained a passive observer, watching and listening to the activities from which conclusions were drawn (Kumar, 2005:120).

In recording the observations a narrative method was used in which the researcher recorded a description of the interaction in his own words. Brief notes were made while observing the interaction and soon after the observation, the notes were made in detailed in narrative form. The advantage of this form of recording according to Kumar (2005:121) was that it provides a deeper insight into the interaction. Observation as a method of data collection has been reported to suffer from a number of problems. When individuals or groups become aware that they are being observed, they may change their behaviour (Kumar, 2005). This may lead to distortion, not representing the exact or normal behaviour of participants. It is also possible that the person that is observing may be biased and there is no way to verify the observations and the inferences drawn from them.

3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are used as part of a qualitative methodology for the purpose of data collection and they are able to evoke an intersubjective and nuanced understanding of the subject of research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Semi-structured interviews have the following advantages over other forms of interviews. They seldom span a long period of time; they require the participant to answer a set of predetermined questions; they allow for probing

and classification of answers and the line of enquiry is basically defined by schedule (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). In this study both the immigrant teachers and the principals that participated in the study were interviewed on one to one basis.

3.6.4 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviewing is a general term, where the researcher works with several people simultaneously rather than just one (Punch, 2009). A focus group interview is a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data (Kitzinger, 1995). In a focus group interview the perceptions, experiences and understanding of a group of people who have some experience in common with regard to a situation or event are explored (Kumar, 2005). In the literature, a focus group interview can consist of anything between half a dozen to over fifty groups, depending on the aims of the project and the resources available (Kitzinger, 1995).

In this study there were six learners who formed a group and all the learners who had participated in the focus group interview belonged to the class of immigrant teachers. Therefore they were able to tell me their perceptions and explained their experiences about the immigrant teachers. According to Kitzinger (1995:299) the method is particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only the perceptions of people but how they perceive them and why. The learners that participated in the focus group interview were selected from the different classes that the immigrant teachers were teaching. Hence they were unfamiliar with one another. They also shared certain characteristics relevant to the study's questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:149).

One of the strengths of this form of interview was that it is socially oriented (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It encouraged participation from learners who were reluctant to be interviewed as listening to one another's views creates a supportive environment for those that are reluctant (Kitzinger, 1995:299). It also increased the sample size of my study by allowing me to interview more people at one time (Krueger & Casey, 2008). This method of data

collection also has its inherent problems. One of the problems is that the interviewer must be aware of the issue of power dynamics, and he or she must be a trained facilitator in order to get a good result (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). There can also be problems associated with group culture and dynamics, and in achieving balance in the group interaction (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

3.6.5 Field notes

Field notes are a written account of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks about in the course of interviewing (Greeff, 2005:298). Apart from the transcribed interviews which mainly constitute the researcher's field notes, the researcher also took some notes during the class observation of the immigrant teachers. The field note comprised descriptions of events in the research field and the interpretation of those events. The field notes gathered during the interview helped the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of experiences of African immigrant teachers hence providing insight into how they reconstruct their professional identities. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000:104) field notes written when the research was being conducted provided the opportunity for reflection on the entire research process. In order not to forget important events such as change in voice or becoming emotional, these were recorded immediately. All other notes were written immediately after the interview when they were still fresh in the researcher's memory.

3.6.6 Reflective journals

Keeping reflective journals is a process whereby researchers are urged to talk about themselves, "their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process (Mruck & Breuer, 2003:3). The main purpose of keeping a reflective journal is to minimize the influence or the bias of the researcher to an acceptable level. Up till now there is no agreement yet in the literature on the amount and type of researcher influence that is acceptable, and whether and how it needs to be "controlled" and accounted for (Ortlipp, 2008: 698). The only recommendation in the literature to prevent bias was that qualitative

researchers should make the baggage they bring to the research visible (Scheurich, 1997). In this study the interview was used as a major data gathering technique. One group of participants in the study shared the same characteristics with the researcher namely being an immigrant. Reflective journals made the researcher aware of mistakes and errors that were committed during each interview (Boden, Kenway & Epstein, 2005). After the completion of each interview, reflecting on it allowed the researcher to be aware of the mistakes and errors earlier committed and guarded against this in subsequent interviews.

3.7 Data analysis

To increase the trustworthiness of data collected on the research field, the researcher employed two different methods to analyze the data that were gathered in the field of study. The two methods are grounded theory and content analysis which are explained in detail below.

3.7.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory may be defined as theory generated from data systematically obtained through the constant comparative method (Conrad, 1982:241). The constant comparative method is a multifaceted approach to research designed to maximize flexibility and aid the creative generation of theory (Conrad, 1982). Unlike other ways of theorizing that start by developing a theory and seeking out evidence to verify it, grounded theory set out to gather data and then systematically develop the theory derived directly from the data (Dey, 1999).

There are different methods of gathering data when using grounded theory in a study. One point that is central to this theory is collection and recording of data that are pertinent to the research question and this depends on the imagination and the strength of the researcher (Conrad, 1982:242). Data that are collected through qualitative means such as field observations, interviews and document analysis are continually and systematically sorted, analyzed, and coded as the researcher endeavours to abstract from the data concepts, their properties, and their relationships (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973).

Coding is an iterative, inductive, yet reductive process that organized data, from which the researcher can then construct themes, essences, descriptions, and theories (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Coding is of significant importance in grounded theory as it is central to the analysis of data. It provides the bridge between data and theory (Glaser, 1978:55). This is also corroborated by Conrad (1982:242) that coding forces the researcher to move from the empirical to the theoretical level by identifying the underlying patterns in the data. On the strength of grounded theory that made it appropriate for this study it could readily be used in association with other strategies (Conrad, 1982:246). Using different combinations of research strategies known as triangulation has been found to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative data (Creswell & Miller, 2000:126).

3.7.2 Content analysis

Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1969). It is also described as a process of systematically analyzing messages in any type of communication (Kondracki *et al.*, 2002; Kvale, 2007). This method of data analysis has been found to be useful because it allows the researcher to discover and describe the focus of individuals, groups, and institutions, for social attention (Weber, 1990). It also allows inferences to be made which can be corroborated using other methods of data collection (Weber, 1990). This method of analyzing data also has its own limitations because one of the assumptions is that the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concern. Weber (1990) argues that synonyms may be used for stylistic reasons throughout a document and this may lead researchers to underestimate the importance of a concept. In performing word frequency counts, one should also bear in mind that some words may have multiple meanings.

3.8 Quality measures

According to Morse *et al.* (2002:2), research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility without rigour. They affirm further that even student projects, although necessarily smaller in

scope, must also be responsive to rigour. In qualitative research, the word “rigour” is replaced by “relevance”, but it has been quickly pointed out that both terms have the the same meaning (Guba, 1981:78). To obtain data that are trustworthy, the researcher underwent rigours during the collection and analysis of the data that were collected from the field. In the following subheadings, those procedures are discussed and how they assisted in making data that were collected from participants in the research field, trustworthy.

3.8.1 Data trustworthiness

Trustworthiness has been described as a criterion to test the quality of research design (Yin, 1994), while Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to it as a goal of the research. Previously trustworthiness in qualitative studies contains four aspects which are credibility, fittingness, auditability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). But now these criteria have been refined to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There is general consensus that qualitative inquirers need to demonstrate that their studies are credible (Creswell & Miller, 2000). For the study to align with this general consensus the researcher engaged in procedures such as member checking, triangulation, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflexivity, thick rich description, audit trail and prolonged engagement in the field and peer reviews (Creswell & Miller, 2000:124).

Member checking consists of taking data and interpretations back to the participants that have participated in a study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Lincoln and Guba (1985:314) described it as “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility”. In this study the researcher went back to the participants to cross-check to confirm whether the narratives they produced during interviews were accurate and realistic (Creswell & Miller, 2000: 127). Participants were given the chance to react to the final outcomes of the data before it was reported. In one instance the researcher gave a copy of the voice recording to one of the participants because the participant wanted to cross check the recordings. In situations in which there were unintentional

misrepresentations of facts, participants' comments were incorporated into the final narratives (Creswell & Miller, 2000:127).

Triangulation is a validity procedure in which researchers search for convergence among numerous and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). It has been found that triangulation can lead to greater confidence in research findings in the field (Conrad, 1982:246). Different types of triangulation do exist depending on different sources of data, the theories and methods used in obtaining the data and results obtained from different investigators (Denzin, 1978). In this study the researcher obtained data through different sources because an interview was granted to five different African immigrant teachers from five different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The researcher also used different methods such as interview and observation to obtain data. According to Creswell and Miller (2000:127) reliance on multiple forms of evidence rather than a single incident or data point in the study increases the trustworthiness of data.

Disconfirming evidence is a process whereby researchers search for disconfirming or negative evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the interview process using the narrative method, the researcher was both confirming and disconfirming the themes that were predominant in the literature. In the data analysis period, the researcher was not only interested in confirming what was already known, but also looking for those things that were not yet reported and known. In this research, the researcher was able to find disconfirming evidence which provided further support to the credibility of this study because reality, according to constructivists is multiple and complex (Creswell & Miller, 2000:127).

Researcher reflexivity is the process according to which researchers report on personal beliefs, values, and biases that may influence their inquiry (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This study investigates the experiences of African immigrant teachers in South African schools. I, as a researcher, am also an immigrant from an African country. I have reported clearly my biases in section 3.10 (limitations of the study) under this chapter and how they will be dealt with, so that they do not to shape the researcher's inquiry. Audit trail and prolonged engagement is a

process in which researchers stay at the research site for a prolonged period turning to individuals external to the project to examine the narrative account and attest to its credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The supervisor of this study acted as an auditor examining both the process and product of the researcher's inquiry and determining the trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000:128). After returning from the interviews, the researcher always shared reflections with the supervisor and she gave advice on areas for improvement. The researcher also kept reflections in written form in a journal which acted as an audit trail during the course of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000:128). The researcher visited each of the research sites about four to five times over four months during the data collection period. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007:239) prolonged engagement involves conducting a study for a sufficient period of time to obtain an adequate representation of the "voice" under study.

Thick, rich description is a process in which a researcher establishes credibility in a study by describing the setting, the participants and the themes of a qualitative study in detail (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Punch (2009:161) argues that this process allows qualitative researchers "to be able to convey the full picture" of an event and the term used to capture this is "thick description". Denzin (1989) made a clear distinction between "thick" and "thin" descriptions. According to him, "thick descriptions are deep, dense, detailed accounts whereas thin descriptions are not detailed and simply report facts" (Denzin, 1989:83). The purpose of a thick description is to allow the reader to imagine himself/herself as being a witness to the events being described. Therefore credibility is brought about through the lens of the readers who read a narrative account and are transported into a setting or situation (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

In this study the researcher gave a vivid and detailed account and description of research sites and research participants. The reason for this was to help the readers of the study to understand the context of the study. By doing this, the researcher believed that it would make the study credible and enable readers to make decisions on the generalizability of the study and its applicability in other settings or similar context (Creswell & Miller, 2000:129). A peer

review or debriefing is the review of data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study the person that helped to perform this function was the supervisor of the study. She provided support, challenged my assumptions, pushed me to the next step methodologically, and asked questions about the methods that were used to gather the data and how they were interpreted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The moral implication of this method was that a person that is external to a study is not likely to be biased when considering the credibility of a study. This method helped to serve as a feedback for the researcher and provided a sounding board for ideas (Creswell & Miller, 2000:129).

3.8.2 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is divided into internal and external credibility (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Internal credibility can be defined as the truth value, applicability, consistency, neutrality, dependability, and/or credibility of interpretations and conclusions within the underlying setting or group (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:234). External credibility refers to the degree that the findings of a study can be generalized across different populations of persons, settings, contexts and times (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:235). To make a study credible, qualitative researchers embark on different methods during the research process. The methods are prolonged engagement at site, persistent observation, peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks (Guba, 1981:84-85). In this study the researcher stayed in the research sites for about 3-4 months from the initial negotiation of access to sites to the final collection of data. The constant engagement of the researcher with the supervisor of the project from time to time allowed for the rigorous scrutiny of the data and professional advice during the research process.

3.8.3 Transferability

The word “transferability” was used instead of “generalizability” because qualitative researchers believe that virtually all social/behavioural phenomena are context-bound (Guba,

1981). Transferability is also defined as an extent or degree by which research findings in a specific research situation can be generalized to other situations and people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Steps taken by a qualitative researcher to ensure transferability are to do theoretical/purposive sampling, collect thick descriptive data and to develop detailed description (Guba, 1981:86). In this study the researcher selected participants who teach in schools with different backgrounds and the participants are from different African countries with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

3.8.4 Dependability

Dependability denotes the extent to which the data that are collected in the research field are stable (Guba, 1981). In qualitative research an allowance is always made for apparent instabilities that may occur due to the fact that different realities are being investigated. Some steps that could be taken to guide against instabilities are use of triangulation and the audit trail (Guba, 1981:87). The supervisor of this study provided an audit trail by having a critical look at the data collected, its analysis and interpretation.

3.8.5 Confirmability

Confirmability points to the extent to which the findings are the end-products of the aims of conducting this research and not of the subjectivity of the researcher (Mouton, 2001). Confirmability has been criticized by some researchers as not being relevant to some type of qualitative research such as phenomenology and for modern philosophies such as feminism and critical theory in which the investigator's experience becomes part of data, and who perceives reality as dynamic and changing (Morse *et al.*, 2002). Qualitative researchers take some steps to make sure that the findings or the result of a study are confirmable. Such steps are triangulation and practising reflexivity (Guba, 1981:87). In order to make the findings of this study confirmable, data were collected using different methods such as interviews and observations. Research journals were kept by the researcher in which the occurrences on the research field were noted and reflected upon every day.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethics refers to the world of human activities that have an important moral content (Brody, 2002). As a researcher dealing with humans, it is the researcher's duty to protect participants during the course of the research and after the completion of the research. The researcher has to make sure that participants are protected from any harm. Participants should not be seen as an instrument dumped after being used, but as major stakeholders and contributors who helped to make the study a success. In this study some of the participants belong to a vulnerable group, e.g. the learners that are under 18 years of age. Ethically it is the researcher's duty to protect them from harm as a result of participating in the study. The researcher has to protect their identities and privacy, and being diligent, to ensure that they are willingly participating in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:158).

My watchword during and after the research was *primum non nocere*, which means first, do no harm (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:158). Ellis (2007:5) corroborates this assertion noting that there are “no definitive rules or universal principles that can tell you precisely what to do in every situation or relationship you may encounter, other than the vague and generic do no harm”. In order to adhere to this principle, the researcher embarked on several steps before and after the completion of the study. Some of those steps are discussed under the following subsections.

3.9.1 Permission from concerned authorities

After the defence of this study's proposal, the first step that was taken was to secure permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (Appendix J) in order to proceed with the study. The researcher also obtained permission from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (Appendix I) before proceeding to the field to contact potential research participants. The reason for going through these two processes was to make sure that the participants' interest would be protected by the researcher. It was also to make sure that the researcher possessed enough skill to conduct good research that would not harm the

participants. When the researcher got to the schools where the study was conducted, access was negotiated with the principals of the school. It was only after access and permission were granted by the Principal that the researcher contacted the teachers and the learners.

3.9.2 Informed consent

Informed consent involves informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as possible risks and benefits from participation in the study (Kvale, 2007:27). After access was negotiated, the researcher approached all the potential participants to formally invite them to participate in research being conducted in their schools. After they agreed to participate in the research, the researcher presented them with letters of consent in which the research process was described (Appendix, A, B, C, D). The participants were asked to read the letters of consent. The researcher did not allow them to sign the consent form immediately and return it. They were given at least a week before the already signed forms were collected from the participants. This was done to give the participants enough time and opportunity to decide whether they would like to participate or not. In the case of learners who were all minors (under 18 years), their parents also signed a consent form in addition to the learners' consent form. In the letter it was spelt out to the participants that they would not be subjected to any undue physical or psychological harm. It was also stated that participation in the research was voluntary and nobody would be victimized for participation or non-participation. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:158) researchers must be diligent to make sure that participants are willingly participating in a study. This assertion was also corroborated by Kvale (2007:27) that informed consent involves obtaining the voluntary participation of participants and informing them about their right to discontinue at any time.

3.9.3 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported (Kvale, 2007:27). All the participant's information and responses shared during the

study were kept private and the results were presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect participant's identity. A code was used for the names of the participants, their schools, the consent form they signed and the voice recordings. Any external person that laid his or her hands on the raw data accidentally would not be able to decipher them as the information was coded.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007:236) argue that researcher bias threatens external credibility of a study because the particular type of bias of the researcher may be so unique as to make the interpretation of the data ungeneralizable in the case of quantitative research and not transferable in the case of qualitative research. Apart from influencing participants unduly, the researcher could affect study procedures (e.g. ask leading questions in an interview) or even contaminate data-gathering techniques (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). Research bias has been described as a very common threat to legitimation in constructivist research because the researcher usually serves as the person (i.e. instrument) collecting the data (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007).

Due to the fact that I am an immigrant myself, as researcher I may bring a certain degree of bias to this study. Researcher bias occurs when the researcher has personal bias or a priori assumptions that he/she is unable to bracket (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). The issue of researchers immersing themselves in the personal when conducting research in which they also have a story to tell has been explored (Goodson, 1995). Elbaz-Luwisch (2004:389) a researcher on immigrant teachers and also an immigrant herself confirms this bias.

Recently I have been working on the stories of immigrant teachers; this project was a long time in the formulation, because I somehow "forgot" that I too was an immigrant and it took me time to realize that my own story needed to be heard in this work.

Such bias may influence the way I view and understand the data I collect and the interpretation thereof of those experiences. Notwithstanding this, every effort will be made to ensure

objectivity. One of those efforts was to keep a reflective journal during the data collection stage as discussed in subsection 3.6.6.

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided insight into the research design and methodology applied in the study. I also explained the research instruments, data collection and analysis as well as the relevant ethical issues. In Chapter 4, I will deal with the data analysis and interpretation to determine how African immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

It is through their storying of their experiences of work, relationships, history and power that the immigrant teachers manage to create meaningful accounts of themselves as teachers in their new settings. Their stories are meaningful because they are stories of making a difference (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004:410).

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstruct their professional identities. In this chapter I present the findings of the study based on the narratives of participants. Data obtained from principals and learners were used as corroborating evidence for those of African immigrant teachers. The data from which the themes and subthemes emerged, were obtained through interviews, observations, reflective journals and field notes.

4.2 Tawanda: “The teachers are very friendly, they are very co-operative.”

4.2.1 Tawanda’s life story

Tawanda was a male teacher of about 41 years of age. He was a Zimbabwean national who came to South Africa in 2007 due to economic hardship in his home country. His home language was Shona and English was his additional language. He holds a diploma in education from the University of Zimbabwe which he obtained in 1993. In addition he also possessed a Bachelor of Science degree with specialization in Mathematics and Statistics from the Open University of Zimbabwe which he obtained in 2005. Before he came to South Africa in 2007, he had been teaching Mathematics for 14 years at different high schools in Zimbabwe. During the time this study was conducted in 2011, Tawanda was a Mathematics teacher at Monakeng High School in Soshanguve¹². Tawanda was employed by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) on a contract that was renewable every year. The school

¹² Soshanguve is a black township located in Tshwane north of Pretoria.

where Tawanda was a teacher had 1300 learners and 42 staff members. All the learners and staff members were Indigenous Black Africans¹³. The school had two African immigrant teachers from Zimbabwe as staff members.

4.2.2 Reconstruction of professional identity

The process of reconstruction of professional identity by Tawanda was described as easy and straightforward because of the support he received from fellow colleagues and administrators. It has been documented in the literature that immigrant teachers that are supported and accepted by colleagues and administrators would quickly adjust to the new environment and this enhanced the process of identity reconstruction (Remennick, 2002; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997).

In the study of Remennick (2002:112) one immigrant teacher from former Soviet Union (FSU) to Israel who was “adopted” by an Israeli teacher, narrated her story. The immigrant teacher admitted that the help she received from the native colleague helped her to settle down in the new environment with fewer blows and bruises. Moreover it was noted in the study conducted by Mawhinney and Xu (1997:635) that the support that immigrant teachers received from native colleagues was an essential element in assisting immigrant teachers to reconstruct a professional identity.

A review of the literature revealed that immigrant teachers received support in different forms namely professional support (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997) or emotional support (Deters, 2008). The support that Tawanda enjoyed from fellow teachers and administrators was not professional in nature, but rather purely emotional. It has been documented in the literature that when immigrant teachers enjoy emotional support from their colleagues, it helps immigrant teachers to reconstruct their professional identities (Deters, 2008). Remennick (2002:113) too argued that work satisfaction was a function of available support during the

¹³ Indigenous Black Africans are considered as original natives of South Africa who are of African descent. They are the Black majority who were subjugated and oppressed during the former apartheid rule by minority Whites.

initial period of adjustment at school, both formal and informal. It was further stated in the study that emotional support within the school (e.g. availability of a confidant to share problems with, friendship with colleagues beyond the work context) was even more important than instrumental forms of support (Remennick, 2002). In the interview conducted with Tawanda he explained that the attitudes of native colleagues towards him were positive and friendly.

The teachers are very friendly, they are very cooperative. I remembered during the time I was not paid, they contributed something towards my welfare. It was fine, no complaints.

The hands of friendship that were extended by colleagues towards Tawanda increased his participation in the learning community which helped him to become a legitimate member of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Participation in the school community involves shared experiences and negotiations that result from social interaction among members within the local community, such as learners, teaching staff, and other candidates (Wenger, 1998). It was also discovered that the good relationships that existed between Tawanda and colleagues blossomed to the extent that it was not beneficial to the immigrant teacher only, but also to his colleagues. Tawanda mentioned that some of his colleagues that were teaching Mathematics always approached him when they encountered challenges in their subject areas. According to him this was an indication that indigenous Black colleagues regarded him as a professional in his own field instead of a novice teacher. As flattering as it may sound, this situation allowed Tawanda to socialize and was helpful to him to perceive himself as a professional teacher with a constructed positive professional identity.

Most of them seek advice when it comes to Mathematical issues, they bring their relatives who have gone to colleges to come and seek advice and we help them.

The above transcripts indicated that it was not only the indigenous Black colleagues who benefited in terms of professional assistance from the immigrant teacher. The professional assistance was also extended to family members of colleagues. This situation allowed the relationships between native colleagues and immigrant teacher to blossom and therefore helped the immigrant teacher to quickly reconstruct his professional identity. It was also pointed out by Tawanda that he enjoyed support from the parents of his learners. It has been

reported in the literature that good relationships between immigrant teachers and learners' parents were helpful to affirm teachers' professional identities (Deters, 2008). The immigrant teacher resided in the same community where the school was located. He explained that it was not unusual for him to be the guest at funeral ceremonies conducted in the community. This also helped him to become part of the community and helped in establishing his professional identity. According to Simon-Maeda (2004:409) teachers' professional identities develop within a network involving macro-level socio-cultural circumstances and ongoing micro-level private and public interaction inside and outside the classroom.

The principal, Mr. Maseko of Monakeng High where Tawanda was a teacher, spoke glowingly about good personal and working relationships that existed between them. The good relationship according to Mr. Maseko was a result of the commitment and dedication of immigrant teachers to work. Because of their commitment, the principal explained that the school was giving them all the support that was needed by them to settle down in their work. For example, the principal mentioned that whenever there was a need for Tawanda to go to the Department of Home Affairs to renew his permit, permission was always granted to him in order to do this.

I think I am happy to be having the two gentlemen here with me. Communication wise they are open, then even in interactions. With the directors we don't have problems whatsoever with them. I think we are blessed to be having those two gentlemen.

Tawanda also received great co-operation and support from his learners. Mastery of the subject that he was teaching and his ability to speak isiZulu¹⁴ helped him to enjoy the support of the learners. In a focus group interview with the learners they explained that his ability to speak one of their local languages as an immigrant teacher endeared him to them. Despite the fact that proficiency in local languages is less important for Physics or a Mathematics teacher (Remennick, 2002:108) it was still helpful in making immigrant teachers feel much better about their professional performance. One of the immigrant teachers in the study of Remennick (2008:108) confirmed that "when he was able to tell jokes in Hebrew, class

¹⁴ IsiZulu is one of the eleven official languages in South Africa. The language was predominantly spoken by the Nguni and Zulu people of Black African descent in South Africa.

experiences for him changed profoundly and that language is almost everything in the class.” The desire of Tawanda to communicate in one of the local languages was a strategy for him to be considered as part of the community by learners and indigenous colleagues. He explained that his ability to speak the local language, though without total perfection, prevented him from being seen and perceived as a different person and on his own. This helped him to reconstruct his professional identity. According to Wang and Phillion (2007:95) language is not just a cultural issue but a political one. It could give access to power and resources and it could also remove power and resources from someone. In the case of Tawanda mastery of IsiZulu language bestowed on him power and resources which allowed him to negotiate his identity.

It is noteworthy to mention that the hand of co-operation extended to Tawanda was not only within the school environment but it also manifested itself among the people in the community. In our discussions it was revealed that the indigenous Black South Africans protected him during the xenophobic attacks that took place in 2008 when foreign nationals’, especially African immigrants, were maimed and killed. He singled out the efforts of his landlord who did everything in his power to protect him. He maintained that this kind of attitude from indigenous Black colleagues had reassured him of his safety and had also helped him to reconstruct his professional identity as a teacher in a South African school.

4.3 Bolanle: “I went for a workshop on the Revised National Curriculum Statement”

4.3.1 Bolanle’s life story

Bolanle was a female teacher in her late 40’s. She was originally from Nigeria but she had obtained citizenship in South Africa. She came to South Africa in 1991 with her husband who was working with one of the international organizations and was on transfer from Nigeria to South Africa. She left Nigeria because she had to follow her husband to his new place of work. She obtained a Bachelor of Education degree from a Nigerian university in 1991. Bolanle was a teacher in Nigeria for 10 years before she came to South Africa. She taught

Arts and Culture and Life Orientation in one of the South African schools. The school where she was employed was located in the city centre of Pretoria and it was established in 2003. The name of the school was City High school, Pretoria. Because it was an inner city school, the population of learners was diverse in terms of race, language and culture. The school comprised indigenous Black learners from South Africa as well as learners from various African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) all from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

The total number of learners at the school was 600 and the total number of staff 44. All the learners were black Africans. There were 3 Coloured teachers and 2 White females among the administrative staff. City High school had two African immigrant teachers among the teaching staff; the first was from Nigeria and the second was from Zimbabwe. Bolanle a female immigrant teacher from Nigeria, who participated in this study, was employed by the Gauteng Department of Education as a permanent employee.

4.3.2 Reconstruction of professional identity

Attending a workshop on the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) organized by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) was considered by Bolanle as helpful to her to reconstruct her professional identity. It has been reported in the literature that teacher education in terms of mentoring or induction could help immigrant teachers to reconstruct their professional identities (Sabar, 2004; Cruickshank, 2004, Hutchison, 2006; Hutchison & Jazaar, 2007). It was also reported in the literature that new entrants, especially immigrant teachers, always participated in informal learning to help them secure jobs and also to be familiar with the local terrain (Pollock, 2010). In the conversation with Bolanle, she mentioned the challenges she had faced initially with the curriculum of South Africa because it was totally different from that of her home country. She stated specifically that the curriculum of South Africa was unstable and it was changing a lot thereby creating confusion for the educators.

Yes, yes...we used to move from good, fair, worst or excellent. Now we have seven (7) levels of grading, not achieved, achieved, so there are many grading systems and we always change from OBE to other level of teaching. The system here is always changing from one level to the other. It is confusing to us as teachers.

She also expressed her hatred for the inclusion of continuous assessment in the curriculum because it increased the workload of the educators and reduced the time allocated for teaching. In the study conducted by Hutchison (2006:78) the participants also noted some differences between the United States educational system and their native ones. The differences created structural and organizational gaps for immigrant teachers. One of the ways through which Bolanle approached the challenge was to attend a workshop organized by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) on Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). She confirmed that the attendance of the workshop helped her to obtain a better understanding of the curriculum which enhanced her professional status and ability to perform better in the classroom and to reconstruct a positive professional identity. She explained that she was working as a part-time educator in a rural area before she attended the workshop and that it was after she had attended the workshop that she was offered a permanent position in a school located in an urban area.

The implication of this seemingly was that the attendance at the workshop also afforded her the opportunity to move up the professional ladder and increased the perception of her professional being. Hutchison and Jazzar (2007:372) argue that the only way immigrant teachers can get away from several special challenges, such as cultural and logistical issues, unfamiliar structural and organizational arrangements, differing understandings of assessment, communication gaps, and problems with teacher/student relations, is to become active learners themselves. The principal, Mr. Kambule of City High where Bolanle was a teacher, also supported the idea of mentoring or induction for newly appointed immigrant teachers because it would help them to reconstruct their professional identities. Mr. Kambules's stance was based on extensive working relationships with immigrant teachers especially those from African countries. He stated further that the beliefs and cultural background of immigrant teachers influenced the way they perceived South African learners. He particularly mentioned that some of the behaviours of learners that immigrant teachers considered as poor discipline

were not regarded as such by the indigenous Black colleagues. It has been reported in the literature that the history, philosophy and culture of individuals affected their beliefs on education, which in turn affected their adaptation to teaching in a new context (Myles *et al.*, 2006). Mr. Kambule explained that because of differences in the curriculum of South Africa and immigrant teachers' countries, mentoring or induction was appropriate and inevitable.

According to Mr. Kambule, a mentoring or induction program will afford African immigrant teachers the opportunity to learn about the methods and culture of teaching in South Africa, thereby helping them to quickly adapt to the new environment. Mr. Kambule concluded that the length of training did not really matter as many of the immigrant teachers possessed good content knowledge and expertise in their subject matter. What they lacked according to Mr. Kambule was the understanding of the curriculum and culture of teaching in South Africa. If African immigrant teachers had an understanding of the culture of teaching in South Africa, it would allow them to negotiate the perceived difficult terrain of teaching and learning in South African classrooms. It has been confirmed that knowledge is the key to becoming a legitimate member of community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

The curriculum is different. You actually throw them in the deep end. They should be given a week's training; it should run like week training, just an overview of the curriculum of the country.

Nevertheless Mr. Kambule was appreciative of the level of education, experiences and commitment that African immigrant teachers had when they came from their different countries to South African schools. He said that the expertise, the experiences and the commitment allowed African immigrant teachers to adapt quickly to the new learning environment. For example Mr. Kambule expressed his satisfaction on their ability to meet deadlines and work under pressure.

One of the things that I know is that they are thorough in their job. I believe that it is one of the qualities that they come with from... the discipline they went through in their training and in realizing what a teacher is, you see. They don't necessarily lose their commitment to meeting deadlines and submissions, preparing for work, preparing for class and ensuring that learners work is accounted for in terms of being able to report to learners on time and ensuring that their marks are thorough.

One of the ways that Bolanle used to reconstruct her professional identity was to be assertive as a teacher in the classroom. The narratives of Bolanle showed that she was from a disciplined background. Her father was a school principal when she was a student back home in Nigeria. The school she attended was described by her as very strict and she stated that corporal punishment was used for corrective purposes especially when home work was not done. Her general perception of South African learners was that they were disrespectful to teachers (whom she referred to as elders) and that they were not disciplined enough according to her standard of morals. From the interview conducted with the learners, it was apparent that the background of Bolanle with regard to discipline influenced her conduct among the learners.

Punishment...that is one of the challenges, punishment. She doesn't care who you are or where you come from, all that she does is punishment... She punishes you if you do not do the homework. You can scrub the class or take out the chairs. She can make you put your hands and legs up.

From the above it was apparent that the only way that Bolanle could perceive herself as a professional teacher among learners whom she considered disrespectful was to punish the learners when they misbehaved. Based on this evidence, we could conclude that the identity of a teacher was not shaped only by his/her gender, ethnicity, race or social class (Allard & Santoro, 2006), but also by his/her past experiences and perception of an ideal teacher.

4.4 Tafadwa: “I didn’t even spend a week before I secured a job in a private school.”

4.4.1 Tafadwa’s life story

Tafadwa was a 36-year-old male teacher from Zimbabwe. He holds a Diploma in Education and a Bachelor degree in Education with specialization in Environmental Sciences. He was employed as a teacher in Zimbabwe for eight years where he was a teacher of Mathematics, Science and Computer Studies. He came to South Africa in 2006 after his sixth attempt to obtain a United Kingdom visa proved futile. He left Zimbabwe due to what he described as social, political and economic problems. He was teaching Mathematics, Science and

Computer Studies at Talisman High School Laudium¹⁵. The school was located in the Indian community in Tshwane south of Pretoria. The school was established in 1980 and had 1050 learners; 80% of the learners were Africans and about 10% were Indians. The total number of staff in the school was 42. The majority of the staff were African teachers. Apart from the immigrant teacher who participated in this research, the school also had about seven other African immigrant teachers who were all Zimbabweans. Tafadwa was employed by the Gauteng Department of Education on a contract renewable every year.

4.4.2 Reconstruction of professional identity

It has been reported in the literature that when professionals, especially teachers, failed to be employed for a certain period of time, this negates their sense of professional identity (Phillion, 2003). Internationally the literature confirmed that immigrant teachers struggled to regain their employment as teachers in their host countries (Remennick, 2002; Walsh & Brigham, 2007). It was also revealed that immigrant teachers who tried to secure teaching jobs and failed to do so, resorted to being employed in informal sectors (Remennick, 2002; Galabuzi, 2006). When immigrant teachers who regarded themselves as professionals unavoidably found themselves employed in an informal sector, it caused a serious dent in their professional identities (Inglis & Philps, 1995).

Findings from the review of international literature revealed that immigrant teachers suffered from unemployment, not because they were unqualified to teach, but only because they were educated in another country which was different from the host country (Pollock, 2010). For example in Canada, an immigrant teacher believed that there was an implicit assumption that Canadian-trained teachers were superior to teachers who were trained elsewhere in the world (Pollock, 2010:5). Teachers that were educated in the host countries were always preferred in terms of employment to immigrant teachers who had obtained their certification elsewhere. This kind of assumption actually limited the chances of immigrant teachers to be gainfully

¹⁵ Laudium is a name of a particular community in Tshwane area of Gauteng province inhabited mainly by the Indian people of South Africa.

employed as a teacher. In the case of African immigrant teachers in South Africa, securing employment as a teacher was easier and stress-free compared to the experiences of immigrant teachers in the international context. The easy access to employment actually helped African immigrant teachers to settle down as professional teachers and thereby reconstructed their professional identities. For example, Tafadwa told me that it took him less than a week before he secured a job as a teacher in a private school. He explained that the reason he decided to start working at a private school was to be occupied while waiting for his work permits to be finalized by the Department of Home Affairs. He said that it took him about two years to migrate, not because he was not being invited for an interview but because of his papers that were yet to be finalized. Unlike private schools that could employ immigrant teachers without a work permit, a valid work permit is required from an immigrant teacher in order to secure employment in public schools owned by the government.

I inquired from Tafadwa whether he had worked in an informal sector before he secured a teaching job. He answered that it was like the teaching job was waiting for him before he came to South Africa. He stressed further that before he left his home country, he had access to information that Mathematics and Science teachers were in short supply in South African schools. Hence he was confident of securing a teaching job on his arrival in South Africa. This experience was different from the experience of an immigrant teacher in one of the studies considered in the literature. In this study (Pollock, 2010:6) an immigrant teacher who was from Iran, reported that he was misinformed about both the teacher shortage and access to the teaching profession in Canada. The immigrant teacher was led to believe that if a potential immigrant was certified as a teacher in his or her home country and has had a teaching career in their homeland, he/she would have an advantage in securing a teaching position in Canada.

The ease of securing jobs as a teacher and not being engaged in low paying jobs helped Tafadwa in reconstructing his professional identity when he arrived in South Africa. It has been reported that when a professional teacher was employed in low paying and in formal jobs, it created a dent in their professional identity (Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2009). Obtaining a secure job as a professional teacher allowed Tafadwa to bring his family out from

his home country and helped him to settle down in his work, thereby enhancing his professional status and identity.

I came here in 2006, beginning of 2006. At first I came alone, then when I got employment...The first time I came here I started teaching in Johannesburg at a private college called Z college. From then, you know Joburg thing is different, even the salary is not that enough, so I have to migrate. I got another employment here also in private school and that was when I brought my family. I stayed for one and half years before I brought my family.

From the above, it was clear that the immigrant teacher had had easy access to employment and he was able to change jobs as he desired. The opportunity to choose from different jobs created an advantage for African immigrant teachers in South Africa and helped them to reconstruct their professional identity to meet the challenges they encountered in the host country. The principal of Talisman High school, Mr. Padayachee, disclosed that African immigrant teachers were coming to terms with the behaviours of learners and other ways of doing things in South African schools. Mr. Padayachee said it was natural to compare the two different experiences as it helped the individual to draw conclusions based on those specific experiences. Therefore he concluded that African immigrant teachers were not out of order when they compared the attitudes of learners towards learning in South Africa with those of the learners in their home countries. In fact Mr. Padayachee maintained that it was healthy and had its own advantages.

In my interaction with one or two of them, I think they raised the concern of the learners out here not eager to learn, there isn't that culture of learning. So they find it hard to accept why these learners are behaving in a manner like this, we think they are hungry for education but they seem not to be. But probably they are beginning to come to terms with that. They are now realizing that these learners are different from where they are from.

According to the above it was obvious that when teachers have an understanding of learners' perception, beliefs and background, it helped in the successful reconstruction of the professional identity of teachers. This implies that African immigrant teachers should endeavour to learn from their students and co-operate with them in order to successfully reconstruct their professional identity. In my conversation with Tafadwa he said that he had

to become a counsellor and motivator in order to find his place as a teacher and successfully reconstructed his professional identity in South African schools.

...You know they are good at listening but what they don't want to do is work. Now if you first try to motivate them before getting to work, you could win. That is why I say from the beginning you must be a counsellor, a motivator for them to do work.

Therefore, coming to terms with the behaviour of learners and making efforts to relate with them based on the understanding of their psyche was seemingly another strategy which African immigrant teachers used to reconstruct their professional identity in South African schools. This stance was in line with the reconstructivist theory which confirmed that learning is impossible without taking into account the position of the learner (Freire, 1993).

4.5. Weza: “Yes we are given the same opportunities.”

4.5.1 Weza's life story

Weza was a female teacher from Zimbabwe who was 38 years of age. She was trained as a teacher at a Cuban university where she specialized in Mathematics and Computer Science. She graduated in 1998 and went back to Zimbabwe to become a teacher as she was on a bursary from the Government of Zimbabwe. She had been a teacher in Zimbabwe for 8 years before she decided to quit her job in 2006. She decided to quit her job as a teacher in Zimbabwe because according to her, teachers were poorly paid in Zimbabwe.

She came to South Africa in 2007 to look for greener pastures. She taught Mathematics at a school called Ambassador High school located in an area populated by Whites in Tshwane West of Pretoria. Ambassador High was established in 1955 and it had 977 learners. The learner population was made up of about 97% black Africans and there were about 10 Whites learner, 10 Coloured learners and 10 Indian learners. The total number of staff was 45 and was made up of about half black Africans and half Whites. There were no Indian teachers and only two Coloured teachers. Ambassador High had five African immigrant teachers as

members of the teaching staff and all of them were Zimbabwe nationals. Weza was employed by the Gauteng Department of Education on a contract basis which was renewable every year.

4.5.2 Reconstruction of professional identity

Professional marginalization has been described in the literature as one of the impediments to the successful reconstruction of professional identities by immigrant teachers (Remennick, 2002; Sabar, 2004; Hutchison, 2006). This phenomenon has been widely reported among immigrant teachers in the literature (Phillion, 2003; Pollock, 2003; Michael, 2006). Professional marginalization occurred when indigenous teachers are treated differently or specially apart from immigrant teachers by the employer, administrator, colleagues or the community. This special treatment creates a situation in which indigenous teachers perceived themselves as being superior and immigrant teachers felt inferior and isolated. Marginalized people have been reported to live under high stress levels and have difficulty in coping with the situations they encounter (Sabar, 2004).

In this study Weza confirmed in her interview that despite the fact that she was a non-permanent staff member the same opportunity was given to her by her employer irrespective of her nationality, thereby helping her to reconstruct her professional identity. This was a sharp departure with the case of Pollock (2010:2) where it was stated that non-permanent teaching is given marginal work by default and those who work under these arrangements are set up for marginalization. Weza explained that she was given the opportunity to attend workshops, served on school committees and attended meetings on behalf of the school. She mentioned that she was the head of a group in the school referred to as a life coach whose aim was to impart the word of God to learners during break time every day. She also said that in terms of remuneration, there was no substantial difference as all teachers were paid according to their qualifications and years of experience. She reported that she had been adequately inducted into the South African schooling system and absence of professional marginalization has allowed her to positively reconstruct her professional identity. I asked her whether she

was happy with her professional status in South Africa or whether she would like to explore other opportunities elsewhere.

No not yet, I have not thought of going anywhere. Not yet. Maybe, I am not quite sure. I am comfortable in South Africa.

This kind of reply was an indication that the above-named immigrant teacher had developed a positive professional identity and seemed satisfied with the conditions of her job. The challenge of negative attitudes or discipline by South African learners as perceived by African immigrant teachers was not peculiar only to City High and Talisman High schools (discussed under 4.3.2 and 4.4.2 above). The same challenge was also mentioned by Weza. But there were differences and similarities on how the three African immigrant teachers reacted to the challenge in order to reconstruct their professional identities. What was similar between the reaction of Tafadwa and Weza was that Weza also became a spiritual counselor in order to regain her professional identity. She believed that pastoral work was part of the work of an educator as she was made to believe in Zimbabwe. According to her the pastoral work was important and useful because it helped to structure the lives of learners to be more responsible. Her belief in “power from above” gave her impetus to be part of a Christian group in the school, namely Life Coach. The aim of this group was to mentor learners to become responsible and successful adults in future.

Apart from learners the pastoral work had also encouraged good working relationships between Weza and Black indigenous colleagues. Good relationship between Weza and indigenous colleagues helped her to reconstruct her professional identity.

Some of them, they just come to me so that I can help them in praying, you understand? If they have got an issue, they ask me, can you join me in prayer on this issue?

Learners also confirmed that using scriptures to correct them when they were at fault was ingenious compared with the traditional way of punishment.

Especially as teenagers, scripture can change your life. It does help because you may be having a bad day and somebody comes to you to tell you something, it does help. And compared to somebody that is carnal and somebody that is spiritual. A teacher that is carnal whatever you do, let’s say you are getting lower marks, they will try to take you

down, you are stupid, how can you do that? But coming to a teacher who is spiritual, like their advices. Like she know that it is wrong to tell someone you are stupid, it is better to lift them up.

This ingenuity on the part of Weza positioned her learners to perceive her as a professional teacher. It has been suggested that identity is the relation between assigned identity (the identity that is imposed on one by others) and claimed identity (the identity that one acknowledges or claims for oneself) (Varghese *et al.*, 2005). Another way that Weza reacted to the issue of discipline in the class that was different from the Bolanle strategy of corporal punishment (reported in 4.3.2 above) was to be indifferent to learners who were troublesome in the class. Ignoring learners who were not cooperative in the class was an avenue for Weza to reconstruct her professional identity. Unlike in Zimbabwe where learners were given corporal punishment such as beatings, she explained that due to the issue of rights in South Africa, it was better to ignore recalcitrant learners and not to run foul of the law of the land. In my conversation with the learners, they also confirmed the indifferent behaviour of Weza towards learners who were not serious about their work.

They also take advantage of her soft spot, she is soft she is not hard. Like if you just get into her class and you interrupt, she just say go out, get out of my class even though you don't, she just ignores you.

The Principal of Ambassador High, Mr. Newton, mentioned that one strategy that African immigrant teachers in his school used in reconstructing their professional identities was to get closer to Black indigenous teachers that speak isiZulu. Based on the finding of this study, it was found that some African immigrant teachers from Zimbabwe could speak and understand isiZulu language. It has been documented that language has an ethnic dimension (Allard & Santoro, 2006). People that speak the same language have the tendency to be closer to one another and interact more with one another compared with people that speak different languages. The commonality of language between African immigrant teachers from Zimbabwe and Zulu/Nguni counterparts in South Africa allowed for social interaction between these two groups of people. Social interaction enhances participation and participation leads to access in the community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

If I think now they normally sit with Zulu-speaking people in our staff, the Nguni speakers, normally not with Sothos. I wondered why. Maybe because their languages are related to each other.

The above observation by Mr. Newton indicated that language was a powerful tool and a means of access to become a legitimate member of community of practice. Language could also be used to determine who was qualified to be an insider or an outsider. Based on this study it was discovered that African immigrant teachers that were able to communicate in any of the local languages in South Africa quickly reconstructed their professional identities.

4.6 Adewale: “It has been a challenge, but I think I have been able to surmount it.”

4.6.1 Adewale’s life story

Adewale was a male immigrant teacher from Nigeria who came with his family to South Africa in 2006. He was in his early forties and he left his home country because he wanted to change his environment and also because he wanted to try another profession other than his earlier banking profession. When he came to South Africa, he found it difficult to secure a job in the teaching profession because he did not have a background of teaching. Due to this, he decided to further his education by enrolling for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the University of Pretoria. This further training enhanced his chance to secure a job as a Mathematics teacher in Greenfield Secondary school, Pretoria. Greenfield Secondary school was located in one of the affluent suburbs in Pretoria known as Pretoria East where upper class citizens mainly White South Africans and expatriates resided. The school was established about 35 years ago and it had 1024 learners and 50 members of staff. It was a well resourced school with learners from different racial backgrounds and substantial numbers of immigrant learners from other African and Asian countries. The learners were predominantly Black Africans of middle class parents whereas the teachers were predominantly Whites. The school employed five immigrant teachers through the School Governing Body (SGB) on contract basis; two of them were from Nigeria while the remaining three were from

Zimbabwe. Adewale was employed by the School Governing Body (SGB) on a contract basis renewable every year.

4.6.2 Reconstruction of professional identity

The process of reconstruction of professional identity by Adewale was full of opportunities and challenges. The opportunities were brought about seemingly because his school had an organized system in place according to which new teachers both novice and immigrant teachers, were properly mentored. He said teachers were assigned dedicated mentors who monitored the progress of new teachers to ensure acculturation. He quickly pointed out that the school was able to do this because it was a well resourced school with enough resources. According to Remennick (2002:111) in more advantaged schools with more educated and secure teaching staff, the reception of the newcomers was usually friendly or at least neutral, and they were soon on an equal footing with others.

Apart from the opportunities the immigrant teacher also mentioned that he came across challenges in the process of reconstructing his professional identity. He said that because he was able to make up his mind to face the challenge head-on, he was successful in overcoming the challenge and he has established a positive professional identity in a new educational setting. It has been reported that professional commitment and other personal traits such as self-confidence and resilience played a major role in the immigrant teachers' ability to win and keep their place in the local school "jungle" (Remennick, 2002:115). Moreover the high level of motivation and immigrant teachers' willingness to invest much in their work was responsible for their absorption in Israeli schools (Michael, 2006). He explained that he encountered challenges in terms of understanding the curriculum, assessment and grading system because they were different from the one that he was used to in his home country. He mentioned particularly the Outcome Based Education (OBE) system which was alien to him as a teacher in his home country.

Well the grading and assessment is... You know when we started here it was Outcome Based Education (OBE) and we don't do that in Nigeria so I have to get used to that.

Because we have to give them the outcomes before we start teaching. And then from the assessment, it is quite different from our own because here we have to have at least three assessments per term. So at the end of the year, we have 12 assessments.

It has been reported in the literature that immigrant teachers may encounter barriers in the process of reconstructing their professional identities when they held on to their former culture and way of knowing (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Faez, 2010). One of the ways that immigrant teachers could overcome the barriers was to jettison the former way of knowing and make spirited efforts to learn the new ways of teaching (Fortuijn, 2002; Shatz, 2002). In order to put aside the former way of knowing there was a need to acknowledge the fact that one has to become a learner again under new conditions. In the study conducted by Faez (2010:9) one of the immigrant teachers who participated in the research concluded that immigrant teachers needed certain adjustments in order to become successful teachers in Canadian schools. Adewale was able to reconstruct his professional identity because he knew that the way things were done in South Africa were quite different from the way they were done in his home country, consequently he readjusted.

Well, when it comes to teaching, there are not many differences really. But it is only that I have to get used to a pattern of education in terms of the curriculum and way we do the assessment, that is the only basic difference.

He explained that the need for readjustment in terms of understanding the curriculum and assessment method was the reason he went for further training by enrolling for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the University of Pretoria. According to him the training allowed him to have an understanding of the curriculum and assessment which was totally different from that of Nigeria.

Obviously I have to, i.e. the PGCE. I found out that when I applied for a job with my first degree in Nigeria, it wasn't easy to get employment. And I think I understand the reason why. I thought well this is different terrain in terms of education, so I have to do their own and I found out that it was worth it. I have to do a one-year diploma in Education at the University of Pretoria which I did in Maths and Life Orientation at the senior level. I think that also gave me an edge.

Adewale explained further that it was during his training at the University of Pretoria that he understood the curriculum and assessment system in South Africa. During his training at the University of Pretoria he had to submit portfolio, he was involved in co-operative study or

group work and did presentations in the class. This was totally different from the ways of teaching and learning conducted in Nigeria which was still traditional and teacher-centred. He explained that the training afforded him the opportunity to revise his teaching and assessment strategy that he was formally used to in his country of birth so as to suit the teaching in a new environment. The understanding of the curriculum and assessment method increased his acceptance among learners, colleagues and administrators which helped him to reconstruct his professional identity. It was ironical that Adewale did his teaching practice as a student teacher at Greenfield Secondary School to which he returned to become a fully fledged teacher after the completion of his studies at the University of Pretoria. The three months that Adewale used for teaching practice as a student teacher at Greenfield Secondary school could be compared with an immigrant teacher in an international context who volunteered to teach in schools in order to make connections, and gain practical skills and knowledge needed to assess permanent employment.

In the literature it was discovered that volunteering increased the likelihood of immigrant teachers of securing permanent jobs and this helped them to reconstruct positive professional identities (Pollock, 2010). Adewale explained that after he finished his teaching practice, he was asked to provide his curriculum vitae and immediately there was a vacancy he was contacted. From this submission, it appeared that immigrant teachers who updated their knowledge by going through teacher education in their host countries had more chance of securing a teaching job than those who depended on former qualifications obtained in their home countries.

Adewale also mentioned that apart from the fact that the training equipped him with the ability to understand the curriculum and the pedagogy, it also afforded him the opportunity of securing a teaching job quickly. According to him it took him only two months after completing his postgraduate certificate to secure a teaching job. The school where he was employed was the same school where he did his teaching practice when he was a student. Unemployment has also been reported in the literature as one of the challenges that opposed the reconstruction of professional identities by immigrant teachers (Phillion, 2003).

Immigrant teachers that were able to escape the challenge of unemployment in their new territory quickly reconstructed their professional identities. Access to an important leadership position by Adewale in his school also helped him to perceive himself as a professional teacher and helped him to reconstruct his professional identity. In this case, Adewale was the head of the school choir, an opportunity that the principal Mrs. Blatter said was to allow immigrant teachers to feel that they belonged to the school and do their best for the progress of the learners and the school in general.

From African immigrant teachers, there are many of them that lead in establishing things like poetry class, choir, cricket, they have taken a lead in that. Some of our Zimbabwean educators are cricket organizers. For example Mr. Adewale runs the choir and they are also involved in toastmaster.

The availability of space for Adewale to become a leader and a mentor as revealed by the principal Mrs. Blatter in the above transcripts showed clearly that Adewale did not suffer from racial discrimination at his working place. When immigrant teachers are not discriminated against in the scheme of things in their working place, it enhanced the successful reconstruction of their professional identities. According to Wenger (1998:152) our membership constitutes our identity and when we are with a community of practice of which we are a full member, we are in a familiar territory.

One pertinent issue that came to light at Greenfield Secondary school about African immigrant teachers was the issue of accent and language barrier. In international literature, difficulties posed by language usage and accent in the reconstruction of professional identity by immigrant teachers had been mentioned (Remennick, 2002; Beynon *et al.*, 2004; Myles *et al.*, 2006). The principal, Mrs. Blatter acknowledged that the problem did arise when immigrant teachers were new in the school, but with time the learners get accustomed to their accents and pronunciations.

Yes. Firstly I think the language barrier as a problem because it is sometimes difficult for our learners to understand. Yes, pronunciation wise, the accent becomes a problem. Sometimes being an immigrant the learners are prejudiced. It takes them longer to establish themselves in the classroom than it will take a South African to establish himself or herself in the classroom.

Learners also corroborated Mrs. Blatter's observation that they occasionally had problems with the accent and pronunciations of Mr. Adewale who was an African immigrant teacher from Nigeria.

It might happen occasionally at times that he might not pronounce words exactly the way we understand it, so we have to ask again.

The immigrant teacher Mr. Adewale confirmed that it was true that his learners were not initially comfortable with his accent and pronunciation but over time the learners got used to him and the problem gradually disappeared. One particular word from Adewale that kept repeating itself in my discussion with him was that "he realized that teaching in a new context was challenging but he had to cope with it". Resilience and determination to succeed by adapting his pronunciation to suit the learners and to repeat words many times for easy comprehension and understanding was a survival strategy used by immigrant teachers. The survival strategy was helpful because it allowed the learners to co-operate with the immigrant teacher which led to the successful reconstruction of his professional identity. I asked learners whether they enjoyed attending Mr. Adewale's class.

Yes, it is really nice, Mr. Adewale is teaching Mathematics okay. He doesn't complicate it.

Adewale also mentioned that the length of years he has spent (4 years) in the school had allowed learners to get used to his pronunciation. From this outcome, it may also be inferred that Adewale was able to reconstruct his professional identity as a teacher because of his long years of service at Greenfield Secondary School. The long years of service at his school helped to foster good relationships and understanding between him and other stakeholders such as learners, indigenous colleagues and administrators.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented narratives of how five African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstructed their professional identities. Findings revealed that these five African immigrant teachers also employed different survival strategies like their counterparts in the

international context to reconstruct their professional identities in their new places of work. Some of the survival strategies mentioned were participation in a mentoring programme, undergoing formal teacher education, cultivating good relationships with co-workers, attendance of workshops and determination to succeed in the new working environment.

From the five cases presented in this study, there were differences and similarities in some of the narratives. For example there were differences between the way Bolanle and Weza approached issues of poor-discipline on the part of learners. Bolanle believed that the only way she could see herself as a professional teacher was to use corporal punishment to correct the learners, whereas Weza believed that assuming a pastoral role was the best way to correct learners. In the case of Tafadwa, he and Weza shared the same similarity in the way they reconstructed their professional identities. Becoming a counsellor was their preferred strategy of dealing with issues of poor-discipline among the learners. In conclusion one could therefore argue that the way immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities was influenced by different situational and environmental factors. In the next chapter of this study a discussion on findings will be presented by comparing the study's finding with findings from the voluminous literature review, and the theoretical frameworks of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

*How do we re-assemble the scattered pieces of ourselves – or do we?
(Brigham, 2008:47).*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion and analysis of the findings of this study. These findings were compared with findings from the literature in Chapter 2. Specific attention was paid to similarities and differences between findings in the literature and the findings of this study. Findings of this study were also analyzed using the two theoretical frameworks on which this study was hinged namely Communities of practice (COP) and Reconstructivist theory. Finally I present new knowledge that has been generated from this study.

5.2 Echoing the literature

Under this section I discussed similarities between the findings of this study and findings that have been reported in the literature. Similarities were found in terms of teacher education program/workshop, support and acceptance by colleagues and administrators, holding on to former culture or way of knowing and racial discrimination and professional marginalization. Other similarities are the employment status of African immigrant teachers, access to opportunities, resources and materials at school by African immigrant teachers, immigration status of African immigrant teachers and attitudes of learners towards African immigrant teachers.

5.2.1 Teacher education program/workshop

Teacher education program/workshop in the form of mentoring or induction had been prescribed for newly arrived immigrant teachers in their places of work as a mechanism to help in the reconstruction of their professional identities (Peeler & Jane, 2003; Cruickshank, 2004; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Remennick, 2002). Mentoring has been described as a bridge

that helped immigrant teachers to pass through troubled waters during their initial transition to a new educational context which was totally different from the one which they previously practised or worked (Peeler & Jane, 2003). The purpose of mentoring was to provide help to new immigrant teachers in the reconstruction of their professional identities. It has been documented in the literature that positive reconstruction of professional identity and the extent of help that immigrant teachers received on arrival in a new country are dependent on each other (Peeler & Jane, 2003). A female immigrant teacher who was a participant in the study of Peeler & Jane (2003:5) revealed that the support she received from a mentoring program that was put in place at her work place helped her to develop a sense of belonging and to identify herself as a teacher.

Each teacher has a mentor and my mentor is really a wonderful person so when I have a problem I always go to him and he always gives me good advice and good support.

In the same vein it was found in this study that African immigrant teachers working in South African schools also benefited from teacher education program/workshops in the form of mentoring or induction. Three of five participants in this study revealed that they had attended a workshop on Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). The purpose of the workshop was to help both novice and veteran teachers to obtain a firm grasp and understanding of the new curriculum in order to function effectively in South African classrooms. African immigrant teachers who attended the workshop confirmed that the attendance of the workshop allowed them to overcome the challenges they initially had in the curriculum; hence access to the workshop helped them to reconstruct their professional identities.

In the literature there were some teacher education programs that were designed specially for immigrant teachers (Phillion, 2003; Ross, 2003; Myles *et al.*, 2003; Cruickshank, 2004; Schmidt *et al.*, 2010). Myles *et al.*, (2003) reported that in the city of Ontario, Canada there was a special mentoring program for immigrant teachers known as the Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience (ATAPTIE). The reason for this special mentoring program was based on the fact that that the areas of support needed by immigrant teachers were different from novice or beginner teachers who also required

mentoring at the inception of their careers. Beginner teachers are deficient in knowledge about teaching and learning whereas immigrant teachers are short of culturally specified educational knowledge (Peeler & Jane, 2003). In contrast it was discovered that the educational program/workshop that was attended by African immigrant teachers in this study was not specially designed or exclusively meant for them. The workshop on Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was organized by the Department of Education for all school teachers irrespective of status to prepare teachers for the new curriculum introduced by the Gauteng Department of Education. Due to this the attendance of the teacher education programs/workshop was a source of help to African immigrant teachers in terms of knowledge acquisition but failed to address their specific challenges. It has been argued in the literature that special mentoring programs should be organized for immigrant teachers because the challenges that the immigrant teacher contends with were different from those of the novice or beginner teachers. While beginner teachers lack knowledge of teaching and learning, immigrant teachers lack culturally specific educational knowledge (Peeler & Jane, 2003:1).

It is noteworthy to mention that it was not only in Canada where teacher education programs were specially designed for immigrant teachers. They were also found in the United States (Genzuk & Baca, 1998), Australia (Bella, 1999) and Israel (Court, 1999). The absence of a specially designed program for African immigrant teachers in South Africa may be construed as inadequate knowledge or insensitivity on the part of policy designer to the peculiar challenges that the African immigrant teachers face in South African schools and its implications for their identities and practice. This might probably be the reason why all African immigrant teachers who were participants in this study, still severely criticised the curriculum and assessment practices in South African schools despite their attendance of a program/ workshop on revised curriculum. Nevertheless all the immigrant teachers agreed that the support they received by attending the teacher education program/workshop helped them to acquire basic knowledge needed to become a member of the professional community. It has been reported that knowledge and experience could help individuals to negotiate access in the community of practice and ultimately provide access to individuals to become a full

member of community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Members without adequate knowledge in the community of practice operate on the margin or in the peripheral and they were considered as outsiders. Immigrant teachers that participated in this study became full members of the community of practice because of access to knowledge through teacher education program/workshop hence they were able to reconstruct positive professional identities in South African schools.

Paulo Freire, a proponent of reconstructivist theory, described education as a tool that could be used to lift the oppressed from dehumanizing marginalization to affirmation and self-respect that empowers the oppressed to transcend social limitations. He urged both students and teachers to unlearn their race, class, and gender privileges and to engage in a dialogue with those whose experiences were different from their own. Therefore teacher education designed with good intentions and with open minds could afford immigrant teachers access to transcend their limitations in a new environment and become participants in the community of practice. A legitimate participant in the community of practice would reconstruct his/her professional identity faster than a participant in the community of practice who was on the periphery (Wenger, 1998).

5.2.2 Support and acceptance by colleagues and administrators

Support and acceptance of immigrant teachers by colleagues and administrators on their arrival in a new teaching environment was one of the factors that helped immigrant teachers in the literature to shape and reconstruct their professional identities (Remennick, 2002; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Deters, 2008). It has been reported that immigrant teachers that were supported by fellow colleagues and administrators quickly readjusted to the new teaching environment and successfully reconstructed their professional identities (Deters, 2008). Emotional support received from colleagues by a female immigrant teacher who participated in the study of Deters (2008:19) describes the support as valuable in reconstructing her professional identity.

At the beginning when I was teaching I was so frustrated. I didn't know how to handle the problem with the students, because they were quite different from the problems I had in my previous school. So she talked to me, showed me, she shared with me her experiences. So that's why I say emotional support.

African immigrant teachers in this study also agreed that the support and acceptance they received from colleagues and administrators helped them to reconstruct their professional identities. Such support included financial support from fellow indigenous colleagues in times of need as confirmed in the statement below.

The teachers are very friendly, they are very cooperative. I remembered during the time I was not paid, they contributed something towards my welfare. It was fine, no complaints.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991:100) "to become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation". Access to support in times of need seemingly gave African immigrant teachers access to become full members of community of practice. African immigrant teachers also reported that the cooperation they received was not from their colleagues only, but also from their principals. For example one of the immigrant teachers explained that his principal always gave permission anytime he needed to go the Department of Home Affairs to renew his temporary/work permits. He also mentioned that the principal would give him an official letter of employment to the Department of Home Affairs when this was needed for the extension or renewal of his temporary/work permits.

However, some of the African immigrant teachers mentioned that they experienced absence of support due to some negative attitudes towards them from their colleagues. They explained that the negative reaction of Black indigenous teachers towards their ideas and beliefs was an indication that there was no place for them in the local sphere. It was mentioned that it required negotiation and renegotiation among indigenous colleagues before they could be afforded a limited space. One of the participants in this study, Tafadwa from Zimbabwe explained:

When you are in a staff meeting for instance, if you are in a meeting if you call to do something, the moment it knocks sense with them, yes they will take it but they will have that feeling that who are you to say it.

Nevertheless, from the conversation with all the immigrant teachers, it appeared that the level of cooperation and acceptance they received from colleagues and administrators was adequate to help them to reconstruct their professional identities.

5.2.3 Holding on to a former culture or way of knowing

Immigrant teachers in the literature were reported to face the challenges of identity reconstruction because they held on to a former culture or way of knowing (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004). It was also mentioned that many of them were comfortable with the old way of teaching and assessment and they were not ready to embrace the new or acceptable way of teaching and assessment in the new country (Faez, 2010). In the study conducted by Hutchison (2006) it was found that immigrant teachers in the study noted some differences between the educational system of their home countries and that of their host countries. One of the immigrant teachers realized that “England is a big exam orientated structure and that United States isn’t” (Hutchison, 2006:78).

It has been mentioned in the literature that immigrant teachers who would like to succeed in another country must be able to adjust their approaches to teaching and learning accordingly (Fortuijn, 2002; Shatz, 2002). For example it has been argued that “assessment is one of the words that can be used in a great many contexts, and can, therefore, have a variety of meanings for different people” (Doran *et al.*, 1994:388). Therefore it is important for immigrant teachers who have migrated to another country to understand and embrace the new context that they are operating in and temporarily jettison or forget the former old way. This will prevent a possible clash between the former and new way of knowing, thereby helping them to reconstruct their professional identities in their new place of work. In this study all the African immigrant teachers believed that the mode of assessment in South African schools was cumbersome and that the entire curriculum was faulty. They particularly criticized the

method of assessment in which learners were asked to prepare a portfolio. They described the portfolio as a waste of time and not helping the learners in terms of real learning. Bolanle, a female immigrant teacher from Nigeria, expressed her feelings on portfolio as a method of assessment and she mentioned that it was affecting her professional identity as a teacher.

We are not really inculcating this knowledge to the learners. We are busy with paperwork, portfolio work; we are not really...aah... We are not really teaching these learners to be what they want to be in future. We are just giving them paperwork to do and most of the things they just copy it from the internet and submit for portfolio work which is not the same system back home in Nigeria.

The comparison of the curriculum of Nigeria with that of South Africa and preference for the former was an indication that the above immigrant teacher was holding on to a former way of doing things in her native country and place of birth despite her naturalization as a South African citizen. Another participant in this study, Weza who was from Zimbabwe, also preferred the way she used to administer summative assessment in her home country to the South African formative way of assessment.

In Zimbabwe we are not used to give learners assignments and projects. We just give them test, test, test (3x), only test and if you fail you fail.

It was not only the assessment practice or method that was challenging the reconstruction of professional identities of African immigrant teachers in this study. They also mentioned that the pass mark as stipulated in the curriculum of South African schools was too low. They all emphasized that the pass mark in their home countries for any subject was 50% compared with 30% in South Africa. Tawanda, an immigrant teacher from Zimbabwe, found his professional identity challenged by the pass mark in South Africa.

It is different, as I was saying that 30% pass here in South Africa while 50% pass in Zimbabwe. The pass mark is a bit low in South Africa and it allows those that are not supposed to be qualified, to qualify because it is just 30%.

The verdict of all the immigrant teachers was that the education system in their home countries was better than that in South Africa. It has been reported in the literature that it is not uncommon that immigrant teachers always think or believe that the standard of education in their host countries compared with their home country is poorer and that education is insufficiently valued by learners in the host country (Santoro, 1997:92).

5.2.4 Racial discrimination and professional marginalization

It has been reported in the literature that immigrant teachers that suffered from racial discrimination and professional marginalization would likely encounter difficulties in reconstructing their professional identities (Hutchison, 2006). Immigrant teachers have also been reported in the literature to suffer from racial discrimination and professional marginalization both inside and outside the school environment due to the differences in their professional background, race, culture, language, and colour (Hutchison, 2006; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Pollock, 2010; Phillion, 2003). In the study conducted by Hutchison (2006:78) one of the factors that challenged the professional identity of one immigrant teacher from Europe to America was her inability to apply and receive what American colleagues received from the bank. Despite the fact that she was employed as a teacher, she was unable to obtain a credit card from her bank because she did not have a credit history in America.

The other major thing I found was that I was trying to get credit cards. A year ago I got my first credit card and I have pathetically low limit because people don't accept the fact that I have a credit history in Europe. Nobody would let me hire a car because they didn't know me; I couldn't rent any furniture.

In the same vein, the challenge or inability to apply for car loans and house bonds from financial institutions in South African banks were mentioned in this study by African immigrant teachers as a serious dent in their professional identities. Seemingly, the challenge was caused by two factors. The first was because only one out of the five participants had a South African identity document; the remaining four participants were still using their various countries' international passports as a form of identification. Secondly it was only the participant with a South African identity document that was on permanent employment. The remaining four participants were on contract or temporary appointment.

Using the analysis above as a yardstick to determine access to opportunities, it appeared that non-possession of a South African identity document was a gatekeeper and it prevented access to opportunities. Lack of access to opportunities which were available to South African counterparts was regarded by immigrant teachers as racial discrimination. They felt that they had been excluded from the mainstream and scheme of things because they were of different

nationalities. This segregation and exclusion did put a dent in African immigrant teachers' professional identities as a teacher in South Africa.

If you are being segregated, I don't think you are given the same opportunities because if you do something no one will recognize it. Already if you are doing something better and they are segregating you, it means if you do something good, it won't be emulated.

Another important issue that was raised by African immigrant teachers in this study and was similar to those of immigrant teachers in international context, was the issue of professional marginalization. African immigrant teachers considered themselves professionally marginalized because they were employed on contract or on a temporary basis. Immigrant teachers' professional identities have been reported in the literature to be thwarted when they were employed on contract or a non-permanent basis leading to isolation (Peeler & Jane, 2003; Pollock, 2010). Immigrant teachers who were participants in the study of Pollock (2010) who came to Canada as immigrant teachers from non-western countries reported that they were marginalized professionally. This was because despite all their former experiences in their home countries they could only be employed on a temporary basis referred to as occasional employment.

In this study four out of the five African immigrant teachers who participated in this study were on contract/temporary employment either with the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) or with the School Governing Body (SGB). Like their counterparts in the international context, they expressed the desire to become permanent teachers. They explained that conversion of their employment from contract/temporary into permanent would give them a psychological leverage which would be helpful for the reconstruction of positive professional identities. One of the African immigrant teachers in this study explained that the reason he has not brought his family to join him in South Africa was because he was still on temporary appointment. He did not want to undergo the risk of bringing his wife and children to South Africa when the term of employment was still not stable and unsatisfactory. Contract/temporary employment could create a hierarchical structure whereby immigrant teachers found it very difficult to become full members of the teaching profession as a result of marginalization (Pollock, 2010). In this study all the African immigrant teachers were

asked to identify challenges that they encountered in reconstructing their professional identities. They all mentioned the issue of temporary appointment as an obstacle to the reconstruction of their professional identities. I inquired from one of the African immigrant teachers whether becoming a permanent teacher would make a difference to him.

It will make a difference, however presently I am just putting more effort. The difference will be that right now I am not secure. Anytime I may be out of employment because I am on temporary, so if I am permanent, I will know that now I am now permanent on a permanent basis. The job is mine and I will be able to put more effort.

Professional marginalization in the form of temporary appointment was perceived by African immigrant teachers in this study as a gatekeeper that denied them full membership to the community of practice. According to Wenger (1998:152) our membership of a community of practice that we belong to constitutes our identity.

5.2.5 Employment status of African immigrant teachers

In the international literature the term and conditions used to describe temporary employment was different from the one in the South African context. A temporary teacher in the international context indicates that the teachers were called in only when their services were needed. For example, in the literature, a temporary teacher is needed when there was a vacancy created due to a teacher that was off ill or on maternity leave. That was the reason teachers in those contexts, mostly immigrant teachers, were labelled with different names such as call teachers or occasional teachers (Pollock, 2010) and relief teachers (Colcott, 2009).

Irrespective of the appellation used to describe temporary employment and conditions attached to it, immigrant teachers both in the international and South African context expressed their dislike of temporary employment and maintained that it had a negative effect on their professional identities. According to Colcott (2009) teachers working in casual relief and emergency positions struggle to establish an identity within the profession. For example in a study conducted in the city of Victoria in Australia, the results of this study indicated that relief teachers faced a number of barriers in accessing professional development (Australian Research Group, 2007). In South Africa there was a thin line of separation between temporary

and permanent teachers in terms of salaries, as teachers were paid according to their qualifications. The immigrant teachers pointed out that it was only on some allowances such as medical aid and housing allowances that they were left out. But despite the fact that they were earning almost the same salary as the permanent teachers they still also wanted to become permanent teachers. They explained that their non-conversion to a permanent teacher after long years on contract was torturing them psychologically which had a negative effect on their professional identity as a teacher. This was the reply of Tawanda when I asked him whether being a permanent teacher would make a difference on how he perceived himself as a teacher.

It will make a difference, however presently I am just putting in more effort. The difference will be that right now I am not secure. Anytime I may be out of employment because I am on temporary, so if I am permanent, I will know that now I am now permanent on a permanent basis. The job is mine and I will be able to put in more effort.

Another African immigrant teacher known as Tafadwa also complained that they were intentionally discriminated against by the Department of Education by keeping them on contract employment for years. He said that even when there were internal vacancies for permanent employment and they responded to the advertisement, they were never considered for such positions. He mentioned that the authorities were happy to put them perpetually on temporary appointments even when they were overqualified and competent to occupy a permanent position. This was described as an affront to one's professional integrity because indigenous teachers who were less qualified and with less experience were being offered those permanent positions on a platter.

...They are, especially in the appointments, permanent appointments, it is very rare. And recently I heard that immigrant teachers that had been appointed recently their contracts have been terminated. I heard so. They don't consider what you know and what you had; they consider where you come from.

The Principal of City High, Mr. Kambule, also confirmed that African immigrant teachers were always apprehensive and disturbed when the time to renew their contracts was around the corner. He said the apprehension was brought about because they were unsure whether their contracts were to be renewed or terminated. He said he did not believe that they were

excluded based on their nationalities but he confirmed that being on temporary employment for a very long time was an affront to their psyche.

No, the only challenge I know is to be permanent in their job so that they can feel secure and that is all. The only challenge I know about them is that they will be happier if their employment is permanent; they will not have to look behind them. It is affecting them greatly but it is not something that will necessarily make them feel excluded in any way.

The transcripts from the interview of two African immigrant teachers and one of the principals indicated that the employment status of African immigrant teachers in South Africa schools was one of the factors that hindered the reconstruction of their professional identities like those of their counterparts in the international context.

5.2.6 Access to opportunities, resources and materials at school by African immigrant teachers

Internationally immigrant teachers who had access to opportunities, resources and materials in the literature were able to reconstruct their professional identities while those that lacked access to opportunities, resources and materials in their schools experienced a shift in their professional identities. In a study in Canada the adjustment of Merida, an immigrant teacher from Venezuela to Canada, was easier because many aspects of the Canadian education system were better than the system in Venezuela (Deters, 2006:12). In a like manner access to opportunities, resources and materials was one of the factors that promoted the reconstruction of professional identities of African immigrant teachers in South African schools.

It was discovered that African immigrant teachers perceived South Africa as a place that was conducive to the demonstration of their talents and realization of their ambitions due to the peaceful environment politically, socially and economically compared with their countries of birth. Two of the immigrant teachers explained that availability of the centre for distance learning such as the University of South Africa (UNISA) was an opportunity for professional growth and self-development. The affordance of this kind of professional development in terms of cost and access which was hitherto unavailable in their home countries, was

considered as a factor that promoted the reconstruction of their professional identities. Tafadwa who is an African immigrant teacher from Zimbabwe explained in the text below.

Here there are some opportunities. I can further my education. There are better opportunities that you can study then as well as do your work like what UNISA is doing. I think it is better, it is an opportunity.

Availability of teaching and learning materials such as computers, projectors and textbooks in South African schools were also helpful to African immigrant teachers in reconstructing their professional identities. Participants in this study who were immigrant teachers from two African countries, namely Nigeria and Zimbabwe, were of the opinion that there were fewer resources at schools in their countries when compared with South African schools. Bolanle, a teacher from Nigeria, explained in her statement about how challenging it was to be a teacher due to lack of materials and resources in her country of birth.

Okay in Nigeria we did not have so much opportunity as South Africa. We learnt in very difficult circumstances because we don't have materials, we don't have equipment. We... Teachers teach by only what they see in textbooks. Practically we don't have those things. Comparing with my teaching in South Africa, these days there is technology happening. We have slides, projector, computers. Then when I was teaching, there was nothing like computers and so on.

This view was also corroborated by another immigrant teacher, Tawanda from Zimbabwe.

The materials now are different. Here in South Africa they have a lot of materials, a lot of resources as compared to Zimbabwe. They have a lot of resources, they have computers, overhead projectors, the books are just plenty, they have a lot of resources.

It was further confirmed by Tawanda that availability of materials helped him to transit successfully and it afforded him the opportunity to reconstruct his professional identity.

It was very easy because that side I was doing it in a hard way. In some case I have to impoverish but this time they are readily available so it makes it easy for me.

From the explanation of two African immigrant teachers presented above, it was clear that the availability of resources and materials was one of the factors that promoted the reconstruction of the professional identities of African immigrant teachers in South African schools.

5.2.7 Immigration status of African immigrant teachers

In the literature it has been reported that lack of proper documentation or inappropriate immigration status of immigrant teachers may lead to loneliness and deskilled underemployment (Chassels, 2010). These two factors have been known to affect the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities. In the study carried out by Chassels (2009:9) it was mentioned that a female immigrant teacher named Lanying was in Canada for almost five years, "waiting in separation", before she was granted a permit that was required to sponsor her hubby's immigration to Canada. As if the pain of loneliness was not enough, Lanying had to work as a domestic worker and also sold flowers on the street during those five years to finance her study for further professional development as she did not qualify for financial aid without landed immigration status.

In this study it was only one participant (Bolanle) that had naturalized citizenship of South Africa. The other four participants had temporary/work permits as their immigration status. A citizen of South Africa or an immigrant who is permanently resident in South Africa would possess an identity card with 13 digit numbers as a form of identification whereas non-citizen on temporary or work permit would use his/her passport of country of birth for identification purposes. Apart from identification purposes, the South African identity card serves as a means to secure employment, relative access to social services and economic opportunities to the citizens. This might not be unconnected with the reasons why it was only Bolanle that was a permanent teacher while the remaining four were on contract employment renewable every year. In the view of immigrant teachers who are on temporary employment, they perceived the treatment meted out to them as an insult to the integrity of their professional status.

One of the teachers (Tawanda) who participated in this study mentioned that it was difficult for him and his fellow Zimbabwean teacher in his school to obtain approval for car loans and house bonds from their banks despite being gainfully employed as professional teachers. The reason was that the banks considered them as high risk clients due to two factors. In the first instance they were on contract employment and moreover they were immigrants without a

South African identity card. It was indeed unacceptable to another African immigrant teacher (Tafadwa) the reason he had to be on temporary appointment for years while the authority kept on renewing his contract every year. He explained that the yearly renewal of his contract for three years was an attestation to the fact that his professional service was needed by his employer. He then questioned the rationale behind his perpetual temporary appointment whereas there was a basis for permanent employment. He believed that not offering him permanent employment was deliberate hatred of him as a foreigner.

To them a foreigner is a monster; they don't perceive you as a person. Sometimes some can even say it out to you. You go back to your place, who are you? This is not your place.

It was clear from the above transcripts that the professional identity of Tafadwa had been dented by his immigration status. Therefore it could be concluded that the African immigrant teacher in South Africa who had enhanced immigration status through possession of a South African identity document would reconstruct his/her professional identity more quickly when compared with the one without a South African identity document.

5.2.8 Attitudes of learners towards African immigrant teachers

It was discovered that the attitudes of learners towards African immigrant teachers in South African schools in terms of negative behaviours influenced the reconstruction of their professional identities. Behaviour from learners that was considered inappropriate by African immigrant teachers was discovered to oppose the reconstruction of their professional identities in South African schools. In the study conducted by Deters (2008:16) it was reported that an immigrant teacher in the study faced challenges in term of attitude and behaviour of her learners. One of the issues that were reported is lack of respect from the learners. The attitudes of learners towards African immigrant teachers in South African schools in terms of unruly behaviour were described by those immigrant teachers as one of the factors that hindered the reconstruction of their professional identities. According to them, bad behaviour of learners towards them made them feel less as a professional teacher because that was not the way learners in their countries used to behave to them. In earlier studies it was mentioned

that immigrant teachers always come with identity baggage from their home countries to their new places of work (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). Bolanle who was a teacher in City High said that the disrespectful nature of her learners made her feel hurt.

They are very disrespectful. In my culture, we are very respectful people. So whenever I see learners who are disrespectful to me it hurts me, it makes me angry that I will even want to invite their parents to say this learner has done 1,2,3. We have to talk to him or her and try to see how we can help this learner because he... I think he is going astray. It's not African culture to disrespect elders.

Weza who was a teacher in Ambassador High also explained that the indiscipline of the learners affected her professional integrity. She said that one of the causes of the indiscipline could be traced to overpampering of the learners even when they scored low marks in the examinations, because they still had to be promoted. She said that teachers were always blamed for non-performance of the learners. In order to appease the administrators and create the impression that teachers were hard workers, learners were occasionally awarded undeserved marks. This was considered an affront to her identity as a professional teacher.

The general thing which I observed here which is totally different. Their learners generally here in South Africa... I have taught in different schools in South Africa, I have a lot of experience. The learners are the same thing. They are not self-motivated. They need to be pushed every now and then. Some of them, they already know that if they failed, they will be given marks.

Tawanda who was a teacher in Monakeng High, was able to judge the level of indiscipline among learners in his present school in South Africa by comparing them with learners in his former school in Zimbabwe. His judgment was that learners in Zimbabwe schools were well behaved and more disciplined than those of their counterparts in South African schools.

I dislike their indiscipline. You see some of them just whistle at the corner, make a whistle. Some shout at the top of their voices in the corridors. Or they come in about five (5) minutes trying to settle down. That means a lecture is 45 minutes, five minutes are taken to discipline. In terms of discipline that is what I dislike. It is not like that in Zimbabwe, no one can whistle, no one can shout in the school premises. When you are in class you are ready with your books waiting for the teachers. But here, the learners talk and talk until the teacher instructs them to take out their books.

Tafadwa who was a teacher at Talisman High and also a Zimbabwean agreed with his fellow countryman above with his explanations below.

The behaviour in this country as I have been saying, one thing, they have to be forced. In my country for a student to fall in love with another student and do other acts, the love acts, kissing and whatever you know. In our country it is not accepted, it is not at all, it is an offence. Yes, there was a time, I think it is a year or two years ago, they even had sex in the class. That is not accepted in my country; that is a serious offence.

He explained further that the cause of indiscipline and unacceptable behaviour in his school as shown above was connected with the learners' various religions, race and social backgrounds.

I think it is because of the mixture of religion and culture in this school. The Indians will come they will bring their own acts, the Coloureds will come and bring their own acts, the Black Africans will come and bring their own, so it is a dilution of several things. As a result what will come out there will be difficult to control.

The above statement of Tafadwa was in confirmation of the argument of Chen and Goldring (1994). They argued that the diversity of the students along ethnic and socio-economic lines adds to the difficulty of maintaining reasonable discipline in class. When teachers find it difficult to maintain reasonable discipline in the class, it was a challenge to their professional integrity as teachers. The principal of Ambassador High, Mr. Newton also mentioned that one of the major obstacles to the successful reconstruction of professional identities of African immigrant teachers in his school was lack of discipline on the part of the learners.

The problem that they experienced in the classes, the challenges that they face. Our learners are not as disciplined like those they are used to. I don't know why but our learners do not have that much respect for elders as where they come from.

The submissions of three African immigrant teachers and one principal was an attestation to the fact that the negative attitudes of learners towards African immigrant teachers in South African schools was one of the factors that opposed the reconstruction of their professional identities.

5.3 Areas of silences in my study

In this section I will discuss themes that emerged in the literature on the topic under consideration but not mentioned or did not surface in my study. Themes such as re-certification and re-credentialling, employment challenge, professional and cultural isolation were not mentioned or discussed by African immigrant teachers that participated in this study.

5.3.1 Re-certification or re-credentialling

In the literature immigrant teachers in the international context have been forced to redo some or all of their former professional training and qualifications before they were considered for employment in their new territory (Beynon *et al.*, 2004). The process of re-certification was regarded by immigrant teachers as lengthy and costly and a dent in the integrity of their professional identities (Beynon *et al.*, 2004). In the study conducted by Walsh and Brigham (2007:10) one immigrant teacher expressed her disappointment with regard to re-certification in the statement below.

I came to Canada to search for peace and when I came here I thought that I would find a job as soon as I reached (here) and unfortunately that was not correct. I was shocked that my certifications are not recognized.

In this study African immigrant teachers working in South African schools did not go through re-certification before they were employed as teachers. Therefore they did not have the kind of experience that their counterparts had in the international context that negated the sense of their professional identities as immigrant teachers. African immigrant teachers in South African schools were only obliged to submit their qualifications to the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) and Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) for evaluation when they arrived for the first time in the country. The process of evaluation by SAQA and GDE were considered by African immigrant teachers as a normal process as it was the first step in securing teaching employment in South Africa. Compared with recertification in countries such as Canada, the process of evaluation of former credentials in South Africa was stress-free for African immigrant teachers in South African schools. The stress-free nature of process of evaluation of immigrant teachers' credentials enhanced the reconstruction of their professional identities.

5.3.2 Employment

Immigrant teachers who migrated to countries such as Canada and Australia have been reported to face challenges of employment in their new territory (Remennick, 2002; Inglis &

Philips, 1995; Ryan *et al.*, 2009). The study conducted by Ontario College of Teachers (2006:23) described the experiences of immigrant teachers in Canada searching for employment as a “crisis”. The study discovered that immigrant teachers were six times more likely than other Ontario graduates to be unemployed because they could not find a teaching job, three times most likely to be underemployed, three times more likely to be in substitute teaching, and three times less likely to have found a regular teaching job (Ontario College of Teachers, 2006:23).

In Australia it was reported that most of the immigrant teachers that were unable to find teaching employment always ended up being employed in an informal sector (Cruickshank, 2004:129).

To tell you the truth, I had given up on becoming a teacher again. I tried when I first came to Australia 24 years ago, but then I went to work in the factory. After I finished the factory job, I was working as a teacher’s aide in a high school...

In their quest for employment African immigrant teachers in South African schools did not experience the challenges described above when they newly arrived in South Africa. All the five African immigrant teachers who participated in this study confirmed that they secured teaching jobs within a short space of time on their arrival in South Africa. Access to quick employment by African immigrant teachers who arrived in South Africa might be linked to the challenge of shortage of teachers, especially Mathematics and Science teachers in South African schools.

According to the report from the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) (2011:4), it was reported that South Africa urgently needs more and better teachers and that the shortage of good teachers is a key reason why the education system is underperforming, particularly in scarce but vital subjects such as mathematics and science. The report recommended that South Africa should consider outsourcing for skilled immigrant teachers to alleviate the abovementioned challenge. In this study it was discovered that four out of the five African immigrant teachers who participated were all teaching mathematics and science. The ease of gaining employment seemingly helped African immigrant teachers in South African schools to

quickly reconstruct their professional identities. When I inquired how long it took them to secure teaching jobs in South Africa, one of the immigrant teachers told me this. “Well it wasn’t so long. I think it was about two months”. Another one told me that it took her only six months. She went further on to explain that it took six months not because she was not receiving offers from potential employers, but that her work permit was being processed and she had to obtain a work permit before she could start work. Moreover the term of employment of African immigrant teachers in South African schools and those of immigrant teachers in the international context were also different. In the international context various names such as occasional, supply, substitute, and call teachers were used to depict the temporary and unstable nature of employment of immigrant teachers (Phillion, 2003; Pollock, 2010). For example in the study of Pollock (2010) the term “occasional teachers” was used for teachers who normally stand in on behalf of permanent teachers who were absent from work due to one reason or the other such as being indisposed for example.

In Canada teachers designated as occasional teachers were mainly immigrant teachers (Pollock, 2010). In the study conducted by Remennick (2002:107) participants reported that they were given fewer hours and classes to teach than they would have liked, that they were often assigned to the most problematic classes unwanted by other teachers, or were used to cover for the colleagues on sick leave or maternity leave. Apart from occasional teachers being non-permanent, their chances of teaching in classrooms also depended on non availability of permanent teachers. Therefore it was possible that an occasional teacher might not receive any income for a year if permanent teachers were present in their posts all year round. In this study four out of the five African immigrant teachers who participated confirmed that they were on contract appointments. Nevertheless they expressed satisfaction with the terms of their employment because they perceived themselves as useful and indispensable resources in the South African educational system. Many of them were employed under a special intervention program run by the Department of Education known as Dinaledi¹⁶. One of the immigrant teachers confirmed that their employer treats them in a

¹⁶ Dinaledi is a special intervention educational program embarked on by the National Department of Education in South Africa to increase the pass rate of learners in special subjects such as mathematics and science. Some

special and dignified manner because they were aware of their importance and contributions to the upliftment of standards of education in South Africa.

...The learners and teachers may treat you differently but governments don't treat you differently.

The ease of employment and its good terms and conditions in comparison with immigrant teachers in international context seemingly helped African immigrant teachers in South African schools to reconstruct their professional identities.

5.3.3 Professional and cultural isolation

Immigrant teachers in international context have been reported to be subject to professional and cultural isolation in their working places (Hutchison, 2006; Michael, 2006). One of the reasons they were subjected to isolation may partly be due to the fact that they were minorities in their working place (Phillion, 2003) or because they were not given opportunities to express their cultural beliefs or freely exhibit their talents and leadership qualities (Kamler, Santoro & Reid, 1998; Michael, 2006). In the study conducted by Michael (2006:164) it was found that immigrant teachers seldom belong to professional organizations, take part minimally in school decision-making forums, hold fewer leadership positions (such as homeroom teachers, subject coordinators, or grade-level coordinators) and partake less in professional enrichment courses.

In this study African immigrant teachers confirmed that they were neither professionally nor culturally isolated. They explained that they were given opportunities to attend seminars and workshops and some of them had represented their schools in some educational forums outside school environment. In terms of leadership positions, almost all of them hold leadership positions in their schools. For example Bolanle was the Arts and Culture coordinator in her school and Adewale was the choir master in his own school. The excerpt below was from Adewale an immigrant teacher from Nigeria.

schools were identified and given the status of Dinaledi schools because they were provided with extra resources in mathematics and science by the government.

I am the choir leader, choir coordinator in the school. Also, I act sometimes as one of the teachers that train the soccer team.

Access to important leadership posts in the school helped African immigrant teachers in this study to feel belonged to and less isolated in the scheme of things in their schools compared with their counterparts in the literature. This has helped African immigrant teachers in South African schools in the reconstruction of their professional identities. It has been found that there is a positive connection between self-image and participation in teacher enrichment courses and willingness to participate in decision-making in the schools (Hyman, Golan & Shapira, 1995). With reference to cultural isolation, African immigrant teachers in South Africa did not experience any degree of isolation compared with their counterparts in the international context. One of the factors that might be responsible for this was the existence of resemblance in people's culture across the African continent. For example, all the Zimbabweans immigrant teachers pointed out similarities between Zimbabweans food and mode of dressing with that of the South African people.

... We eat sasa that is our favourite food. Here in South Africa they call it pap.

In studies conducted on immigrant teachers in countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel and United States, it was discovered that immigrant teachers in those countries had languages and cultures that were totally different from the host countries. For example, in Australia, immigrant teachers who participated in the study of Cruickshank (2004) were Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabs. In the study conducted by Pollock (2010) in Canada, the three immigrant teachers that participated in the study came from Pakistan, South Africa and Iran. In the study conducted by Michael (2006) in Israel, all the 117 immigrant teachers who participated in the research had come from the former Soviet Union. Finally immigrant teachers that participated in the study conducted by Rhone (2007) in America came from the Caribbean. Therefore, I would argue based on observations and interviews conducted that African immigrant teachers in South African schools did not suffer from cultural isolation seemingly because of some resemblance to the culture of African countries and her people.

5.4 Generation of new knowledge

It appeared that new knowledge has been generated by this study on the reconstruction of professional identities of African immigrant teachers in South Africa due to the discovery of new insights not previously reported in the literature. In most of the literature considered in this study, the general perception of immigrant teachers by administrators, learners and colleagues was that they were mere jobseekers, opportunists and desperate individuals who had nothing to contribute to the development of education in the host country (Walsh & Brigham, 2007). Many of the challenges and obstacles that immigrant teachers faced in their new territory could be traced to this general negative perception by their host about them. This negative perception was more pronounced especially when immigrant teachers moved from third world or underdeveloped nations to developed nations. In the study conducted by Ryan (2002:16) parents in Canada expressed their disappointment over recruitment of teachers from third world countries to save the education of their children.

To say that Nova Scotia's or Canada's future depends on immigrants is so ridiculous. How can accepting immigrants from Third World republics enrich Canada? All that it will do is quicken Canada's demise into becoming a Third World nation itself... If immigrants are so valuable to our nation, then how come they can't make their own homelands prosper? Is this a consideration when they try to lure more immigrants here from the Third World to "enrich" us? I have children and I am not going to sell out their future to a bunch of immigrant invaders who can steal their birthright.

In this study it was discovered however that African immigrant teachers in South Africa were not only considered as desirable by potential employers, they were also perceived as indispensable partners by students and administrators. For example all five principals that participated in this study agreed that African immigrant teachers in South African schools have added value to the educational system and that they have raised the standard of education because of their unique contribution. This might also be the reason why African immigrant teachers in South African schools encountered less stress when compared with their counterparts elsewhere in the process of reconstructing their professional identities. The principal of Monakeng High, Mr. Maseko, summarized the contribution of African immigrant teachers in his school as precious.

I have said the quality, they are dedicated, they go extra mile. So we have one of them who is helping with the timetables and with the computers. They are excellent, so they bring quality to the school.

The principal of Greenfield Secondary, Mrs. Blatter did not mince words by pointing out the excellent intelligence and dexterity that African immigrant teachers in her school possess, hence the reason for their indispensability.

I think knowledge; I think that they are highly qualified. I must say when we interviewed we look for the best. People that are knowledgeable about their subject so that is what we want from them, subject knowledge and what they can bring into a multicultural school. Because we acknowledge diversity and as being a diverse school in a community they have their part and role to play.

It is pertinent to mention that it was not only the school administrators that valued the positive contributions of African immigrant teachers to the South African educational system. The learners were also of opinion that African immigrant teachers in their schools were exceptional in the subjects they handled. They reiterated that their success in core subjects such as Mathematics and Sciences could be traced to the diligence and hard work of their teachers who are from other African countries. The learners in Talisman High explained that they passed Mathematics because of the efforts and professional conduct of Mr. Tafadwa who was an African immigrant teacher from Zimbabwe. One of the learners at City High was of the opinion that more immigrant teachers should be allowed to come in and teach in South African schools.

Definitely they should be allowed because this people they come with new ideas and experiences to South Africa...In South African schools it should be only foreigners teaching because to be honest mostly they are smarter. Their level is very high.

The new insight generated in this study might challenge our preconceived notion of immigrant teachers as liabilities in their host countries instead of valuable resources

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the similarities and differences between the findings of this study and those in the literature both in international and local context. I also pointed out

areas of echo and silences in the literature as revealed through observations and interviews conducted with African immigrant teachers that were participants in this study. It was discovered that the construction of a teacher professional identity was not dependent on the teacher alone (internal factors), but also on other external factors. It has been established in the literature that the concept of identity is one that expands from the inner sense of self to include social and external factors (Breger, 1974). In the same vein, it has been mentioned that a person's identity is challenged by both external and internal factors (Carson, 2005). The chapter concludes by discussing new knowledge that was generated from the study using areas of silence not mentioned in the literature as a pedestal. In the next chapter the recommendations and conclusions of this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

*“Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but what we are not”
(Wenger, 1998:164).*

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings relating to the research questions. It also presents the recommendations and contributions based on how African immigrant teachers reconstructed their professional identities in South African schools. Prospects for future research will also be presented.

6.2 Summary of emergent themes and findings

This study set out to determine how African immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools. Findings regarding factors that promote the reconstruction of professional identities of African immigrant teachers in South African schools from this study were fourfold. First, African immigrant teachers in South Africa devised different strategies that helped them to reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools. One of these was that they had good working relationships with fellow colleagues and administrators. Having good relationships with colleagues and administrators provided the support they needed for successful integration into the school community and helped them reconstruct their professional identities.

Second, development of special traits such as perseverance and resilience were helpful to African immigrant teachers in overcoming barriers on the way to successful reconstruction of their professional identities in South African schools. Despite the majority of African immigrant teachers being employed on a contract basis for many years, they still believed that the situation would change later on. They refused to have their spirit dampened and did not allow the negative situations in the work environment to reduce their spirit of hard work and consistency. Third, availability of resources and materials in South African schools coupled

with access to opportunities helped African immigrant teachers to reconstruct their professional identities. All African immigrant teachers who participated in this study confirmed that schools in South Africa were functional and well equipped in terms of teaching and learning materials compared with schools in their countries of origin. Access to resources and opportunities was considered by African immigrant teachers as an impetus to the successful reconstruction of their professional identities. Fourth, availability of almost immediate employment on arrival in South Africa was also described by them as one of the factors that promoted the reconstruction of their professional identities. The expertise that the African immigrant teacher possessed in the subjects that they taught also helped them to find their place as a teacher in South African schools. All the African immigrant teachers who participated in the study possessed a wealth of teaching experience and this helped in the successful reconstruction of their professional identities.

Apart from factors that promoted the reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools, there were also some factors that retarded or opposed the entry of African immigrant teachers into communities of practice. It has been argued that our relations with communities of practice involved both participation and non-participation and the combination of both shaped our identities (Wenger, 1998). The reaction of African immigrant teachers to opposition could also be considered as a way that they reconstructed their professional identities. According to Wenger (1998:164) we not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in. First, the immigration status of African immigrant teachers was one of the factors that opposed the reconstruction of their professional identities. It was discovered that due to the temporary permits that African immigrant teachers had, this prevented them from gaining full access to becoming a member of the community. Second, the employment status of African immigrant teachers which was mainly contractual or temporary employment also opposed the reconstruction of their professional identities. Third, the attitude of learners towards African immigrant teachers was also mentioned as one of the factors that opposed or retarded the reconstruction of African immigrant teacher's professional identities.

6.3 Limitations of the study

A number of factors that could limit this study have been identified. First, all immigrant teachers who participated in this study were only from two African countries. There were two participants from Nigeria and three participants from Zimbabwe. Every effort was made to include participants from other African countries such as Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The effort did not yield any result because immigrants from those countries did not seem to take up teaching jobs on their arrival in South Africa probably because the majority of them could not speak the English language when they first arrived in South Africa. The researcher believed that the inclusion of African immigrant teachers who spoke additional languages such as Portuguese and French would have increased the richness of the data. Second, colleagues of African immigrant teachers at the work place were not included in this study. The inclusion of colleagues especially Black indigenous colleagues as participants in this study, would also have increased the richness of the data from this study.

6.4 Significance of the study

Teachers who are initially trained and have worked in other African countries have made their presence known in South African schools going by their numbers, prevalence and distribution. In three educational districts of Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) where study participants were randomly selected for this study, there were 137 African immigrant teachers in 62 schools (Gauteng Department of Education, 2011). This number may be an estimate going by the fact that some other African immigrant teachers were employed by the School Governing Body (SGB) whose names might not have appeared on the list supplied by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Various studies conducted on immigrant teachers in the literature have argued the importance and necessity of helping immigrant teachers to become part of the community based on their unique contribution to the educational system of their host countries. For example in Canada, in the city of Manitoba, the community was reported to have benefited from the international, intercultural and multilingual knowledge, attributes, and skills of immigrant teachers (Schmidt, 2007). Due to this, it is important that

we understand how the reconstruction and renegotiation of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools is affected by their different background which is not the same as that for the mainstream. It is when we understand how their professional identities were affected that they could be supported in order to function effectively in the classroom and deliver quality education to the learners. In their study Rowe and Rowe (2002) argued that quality education did not depend only on content of systems, school programs and infrastructure provided to support them, but also of importance was the quality of the teaching which occurs in the classroom. This study was significant because it could help us understand how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstruct their professional identities. According to Watson (2006:510) the concept of professional identity lies in the assumption that who we think we are, influences what we do, i.e. there is a link between professional identity and professional action. Moreover the professional identity of the teacher influences his or her emotions and attitudes towards learners and colleagues at work. According to Faez (2010) teacher educators need to realize the importance of immigrant teachers' emotions in their success both within and outside the school. This was based on the fact that emotions are central to the cognitive development of individuals (Vygotsky, 1987). Teachers with positive attitudes are likely to be positive role models for students, whereas negative attitudes towards subject matter can lead to many classroom problems, since students are quick to adopt attitudes they see their teacher projecting (Scott, 2001:98). Therefore it is important to conduct research on how teachers (including immigrant teachers) perceive themselves, i.e. their professional identity because their perceptions influence their judgment and behaviours (Nias, 1989).

From the findings of the study, it was found that African immigrant teachers in South African schools also encountered challenges of identity reconstruction like their international counterparts in the literature. Although the challenges are not exactly the same they still have some common characteristics. This study gave us an insight into the process of identity reconstruction of African immigrant teachers in South African schools and how they cope with the challenges. Furthermore, through their narrative which is very scanty in the literature, the study could help educational leaders and policy makers to become aware of

African immigrant teachers' professional needs. Being aware or having an insight into the professional needs was the first step to identify African immigrant teachers' challenge in South Africa and how to provide support to them both inside and outside the school environment.

6.5 Revisiting research assumptions

In Chapter 1 of this study certain assumptions were made based on what was stated in the literature on how immigrant teachers reconstructed their professional identities. In this subsection, I revisit those assumptions and relate them to my study's findings in order to confirm or reject those assumptions that were made earlier on.

6.5.1. *The reconstruction of professional identities of immigrant teachers was complex and not straightforward (Hutchison, 2006; Remennick, 2002).*

The process of reconstruction of professional identities of African immigrant teachers in South Africa could also be described as complex but the degree of complexity was less when compared with immigrant teachers in international context. The reason for this was basically because those factors that were regarded as barriers or obstacles to identity construction in the literature such as problem of accent, culture shock, language barriers and logistical problems were less frequent in the South African context. The only challenge that did not fade away totally overtime was the problem of accent. Despite that all the immigrant teachers have spent an average of five years in the schools where they are employed, the learners still mentioned the challenges they encounter with the accent of immigrant teachers due to the way and manner that immigrant teachers pronounce certain words. Nevertheless, it appears that African immigrant teachers in South Africa quickly adjusted to the new environment. The quick adjustment to the environment paved the way for easy and quick reconstruction of the African immigrant teacher's professional identity in South African schools.

6.5.2. *Immigrant teachers were confronted with challenges of re-certification and re-credentialing in the host countries which affected the reconstruction of their professional identities (Michael, 2006; Phillion, 2003).*

Unlike their counterparts in international context, African immigrant teachers in South African schools did not go through re-certification and re-credentialing before they secured teaching employment. The absence of re-certification and its attendant challenges seemingly helped African immigrant teachers in South African schools to reconstruct their professional identities.

6.5.3. *It was difficult if not impossible for immigrant teachers to secure teaching jobs in host countries because their formal training and experiences were considered inadequate or insufficient and were therefore disregarded (Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Beynon et al., 2004).*

African immigrant teachers in South African schools were of the opinion that it was easy to secure teaching jobs in South Africa especially in Science and Mathematics. While immigrant teachers in the literature suffered from challenges of employment, those in South Africa had quick, prompt and easy access to employment when they arrived in South Africa.

6.5.4. *It was assumed that immigrant teachers were subject to subtle discrimination by colleagues and the society which ultimately led to marginalization and isolation (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Pollock, 2003).*

In the literature immigrant teachers were subjected to discrimination based on their nationalities, educational and language background. The discrimination led to isolation which affected the reconstruction of immigrant teachers' professional identities. African immigrant teachers in South Africa also reported that they suffered from systemic and subtle discrimination mostly outside the school environment. This is due to the lack of understanding of any of the local languages or difference in accent in situations where English Language was used as a mode of communication. Notwithstanding that, they all mentioned that it did not reach the extent that it affected the reconstruction of their professional identities.

6.6 Recommendations for future research

Recommendations for further research included studies that could be conducted in terms of the following potential research topics:

- The experiences, challenges and opportunities of African immigrant teachers in South African schools.
- The adjustment process of African immigrant teachers in South African schools.
- A narrative study of African immigrant teachers' transition in South African schools.

6.7 Chapter summary and conclusion

In this chapter I have summarized the findings relating to the research questions. I presented the themes that emerged on how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstructed their professional identities. I dwelt both on factors that promoted the reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools and those factors that opposed or retarded the reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools. The limitations and significance of this study was discussed and areas of future research explored.

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Appendix A: Principal's letter of informed consent

Letter of informed consent

Dear Principal

My name is Kola Elufisan I am a student in the Department of Humanities Education, Faculty of Education of the University of Pretoria. I am taking a Master's degree that specialises in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development (CIDD). Part of my degree course includes completing a relevant and factual research project. I would like to learn about the experiences of teachers from other African countries that are teaching in South African schools. I feel that these teachers have many stories that they would like to share with me, and that could help scholars here and abroad understand that it is not only our rainbow nation alone that is undergoing transformation, but even our classrooms.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, most public schools in the country are opening their doors to all South African children irrespective of race, colour or creed. They have also opened their doors to a number of teachers that have not been born and educated in South Africa. Presently we have little or no information on how these immigrant teachers are experiencing the new South Africa with regard to the classroom practice. Accordingly this study investigates how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstruct their professional identities?

This study is being carried out on the understanding that African immigrant teachers are stakeholders in the South African educational context. It will be beneficial both to the learners and the nation if we understand their experiences. If we understand their experiences, we could design programmes that would allow them to perform better in the classrooms and this could lead to more efficient teaching and learning. The name of the school and the names of all the participants will remain confidential. I wish to point out that despite one's best efforts, there are hardly any qualitative researchers in the world, ourselves included, who can guarantee anonymity in an absolute sense. Data collection will involve a range of standard qualitative techniques such as semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes and focus group interviews. Filming and photography will take place throughout the school setting and may include, for example classrooms, hallways, sports or cultural events, assemblies and so

forth and also students and teachers. I will interpret the data, make selections, and use it for my Masters degree dissertation. I could also use the data generated by the study to write an article, perhaps more than one article, about what I think it all means. I may submit the article or articles to academic journals for publication. You are free to respond to all or only some of our questions. You may also request that the tape-recorder be switched off for certain responses. Permission to conduct this research has already been granted by the Department of Education (Gauteng Provincial Government) and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (University of Pretoria). If you have any questions, comments, or concerns at all, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this important study.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Kola Elufisan (082 967 8220)

Prof. Saloshna Vandeyar (012-420 2003)

Researcher:

Supervisor:

Participant:

Date:

Appendix B: Teacher's letter of informed consent

Letter of informed consent

Dear Teacher

My name is Kola Elufisan I am a student in the Department of Humanities Education, Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. I am taking a Master's degree that specialises in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development (CIDD). Part of my degree course includes completing a relevant and factual research project. I would like to learn about the experiences of teachers from other African countries that are teaching in South African schools. I feel that these teachers have many stories that they would like to share with me that could help scholars here and abroad understand that it is not only our rainbow nation alone that is undergoing transformation, but even our classrooms.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, most public schools in the country are opening their doors to all South African children irrespective of race, colour or creed. They have also opened their doors to a number of teachers who were not born and educated in South Africa. Presently, we have little or no information on how these immigrant teachers are experiencing the new South Africa with regard to the classroom practice. Accordingly this study, asks the question how do African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstruct their professional identities?

This study is being carried out on the understanding that African immigrant teachers are stakeholders in the South African educational context. It will be beneficial both to the learners and the nation if we understand their experiences. If we understand their experiences, we could design programmes that would allow them to perform better in the classrooms, and this could lead to better teaching and learning. The name of the school and your own name as a participant will remain confidential. I wish to point out that despite one's best efforts, there are hardly any qualitative researchers in the world, ourselves included, who can guarantee anonymity in an absolute sense. Data collection will involve an interview with you for about 45minutes to 1 hour for each session. The interview may be repeated for about three times for clarification purposes. The interview will take place on the school premises will be conducted after school hours or during break time. The reason for this was to make sure that the

interview sessions do not interfere with your normal teaching. I will interpret the data, make selections, and use this for my Master's degree dissertation. I could also use the data generated from the study to write an article, perhaps more than one article, about what I think it all means. I may submit the article or articles to academic journals for publication.

Please be aware that you will be free to respond to all or only some of our questions. You may also request that the tape-recorder be switched off for certain responses. Permission to conduct this research has already been granted by the Department of Education (Gauteng Provincial Government) and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (University of Pretoria). If you have any questions, comments, or concerns at all, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important study.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Kola Elufisan (082 967 8220)

Prof. Saloshna Vandeyar (012-420 2003)

Researcher:

Supervisor:

Participant:

Date:

Appendix C: Learner's letter of informed consent

Letter of invitation to participate in my research

Dear Learner

My name is Kola Elufisan I am a student in the Department of Humanities Education, Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. For me to complete my studies, I will have to carry out some research. I want to interview teachers who are not from South Africa but from other countries in Africa such as Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, and Ghana. The reason why I want to interview them is to allow them to tell me about their experiences both inside and outside school. Because you attend the class of one of these teachers that are not from South Africa, I believe that you may have some information about them.

If you agree to help me in this research, it means that you would have played a role in the process of building a prosperous and united South Africa. When I write my final report, I will thank you because you have helped me. I will speak to a group of students that are your colleagues, about 6-8 of you at a time for about 45minutes to one hour in your school after school hours when you are busy with extracurricular activities or during your break time. I want to talk to you during the extracurricular activities or break time so that I will not disturb you when your learning during the usual class hours. I wish to tell you that taking part in this research is not compulsory. If you want to start with us but do not wish to continue you can tell me and I will allow you to discontinue. If you want to participate but you are not sure, you are free to talk to your parent/guardian, teacher or principal or seek advice from them. When I write my examination, I will not disclose your name or the name of your school. The reason is that I do not want anybody to know what you have told me. I also provide my name and that of my supervisor and our contact details below if you wish to ask questions about anything. The Department of Education (Gauteng Provincial Government) and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (University of Pretoria) know about this research and they gave permission for this research.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Kola Elufisan (082 967 8220)

Researcher

Prof. Saloshna Vandeyar (012-420 2003)

Supervisor

Informed Consent Receipt

I _____ (student) agree that I am willing to participate in this study. I understand that my name and that of my school will not be disclosed.

Signed by _____ (student).

Date:

Appendix D: Parent's letter of informed consent

Letter of informed consent

Dear Parent

My name is Kola Elufisan I am a student in the Department of Humanities Education, Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. I am taking a Master's degree that specialises in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development (CIDD). Part of my degree course includes completing a relevant and factual research project. I would like to learn about the experiences of teachers from other African countries who are teaching in South African schools. I feel that these teachers have many stories that they would like to share with me that could help scholars here and abroad understand that it is not only our rainbow nation alone that is undergoing transformation but also our classrooms.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa most public schools in the country have opened their doors to all South African children irrespective of race, colour or creed. They have also opened their doors to a number of teachers born and educated outside South Africa. At present, we have little or no information on how these immigrant teachers are experiencing the new South Africa regard to the classroom practice. Accordingly this study investigates how African immigrant teachers in South African schools reconstruct their professional identities?

This study is being carried out because on the understanding that African immigrant teachers are stakeholders in the South African educational context. It will be beneficial both to the learners and the nation if we understand their experiences. If we understand their experiences, we could design programmes that would allow them to perform better in the classrooms and this could lead to better teaching and learning. The name of the schools and the names of all the learners will remain confidential and, if necessary, I will intentionally disguise the identities of the participants by, for example, changing their names and the name of the school. I wish however to point out that despite one's best efforts, there are hardly any qualitative researchers in the world-ourselves included-that can guarantee anonymity in an absolute sense. I will analyze the information the students give me using techniques such as content analysis to determine themes that frequently emerge. I will interpret the data, make selections, and use

them for my Master's degree dissertation. I could also use the data generated from the study to write an article, perhaps more than one article about what I think it all means. I may submit the article or articles to academic journals for publication. Please be aware that the learner is free to respond to all or only some of the questions that will be asked. It is also important to state that their participation or non- participation will not have any impact on their year marks. With your permission, I intend to tape-record the conversation. If at any point the student wants me to switch off the tape-recorder, I will do so. The student can end the interview whenever he/she wishes. The duration of the interview will be approximately between 45 minutes and 1 hour either after the formal school day during the time allocated for extracurricular activities or during the break time. I promise that the interview session will not interfere with the normal school work as it will be arranged in conjunction with the teachers.

Permission to conduct this research has already been granted by the Department of Education (Gauteng Provincial Government) and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (University of Pretoria). If you have any questions, comments, or concerns at all, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Kola Elufisan (082 967 8220)

Prof. Saloshna Vandeyar (012-420 2003)

Researcher

Supervisor

Informed Consent Receipt

I _____ (parent/guardian) grant permission for my child to participate in this study. I understand that my name and my child's name will not be used in this study.

Signed by _____ (parent)

Date:

Appendix E

Research Study: Reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools
Semistructured interview protocol for teachers

Background information

Personal

1. Can you please tell me your name? What does it mean?
2. Can you please tell me your age?
3. How do you identify yourself?
4. Which country are you originally from?
5. Can you please describe your culture?
6. When did you come to South Africa? Did you come on your own or with family?
7. Can you tell me the reason why you left your country?
8. Why did you prefer to come to South Africa instead of any other country?
9. Do you plan on staying on in South Africa?

Professional

1. What degree/ diploma do you hold?
2. Where did you obtain your teaching certification? In which year?
3. How long have you been a teacher in your country? Can you share the experiences with me?
4. Did you teach in a primary or secondary school? Can you provide me with a background context of that school?
5. What position did you hold in that school?
6. Can you tell me about your own schooling experiences in your country of origin?
7. Can you tell me something about your own teaching experiences in your country of origin?

Teaching in South Africa

1. How long did it take you to secure teaching job in South Africa?
2. Are you employed or hired by Department of Education (DoE) or School Governing Body (SGB)?
3. Is there any difference between the way you teach here and that of your home country?
4. Were you given the subject that you were teaching in your home country? or other subject?
5. Do you find the grading or assessment here different from that in your home country?

6. In your own view, is your present position higher or lower than your former position?
7. Did you go through any formal professional training in South Africa before you were considered for appointment? If no jump to question number 10
8. Did this professional training enhance your chance of gaining employment?
9. How did you hear about the programme?
10. Have you worked in any other sector in South Africa before returning to teaching job?
11. Did you find teaching methodologies in schools here different?
12. If you had to compare your experiences here in South Africa with that of your home country what would you say?

Relationships among immigrant teachers, students, colleagues, administrators and parents

1. Can you tell me about your relationships with your colleagues/staffs?
2. Can you tell me about your relationships with your students?
3. Can you tell me about your relationships with school management/SGB
4. How does the staff/students/management perceive/see you?
5. Do they see you as a different person?
6. Do you also see them as different person?
7. What do you like or dislike in terms of the staff?
8. What do you like or dislike in terms of your students?
9. Are they interested in your culture or your way of life?
10. Do local colleagues (teachers) seek advice from you?
11. Do you belong to SADTU or any other teacher organization in the country?
12. Do you participate in decision making forums in the school?
13. Do you hold additional positions to that of teaching subject matter in the school? e.g. housemaster or mistress.
14. Do you attend the Parents- Teachers meeting? If no, why don't you attend?
15. Have you ever met any of the parents of your learners?
16. Are you registered with any teacher professional body such as SACE?
17. With whom do you associate mostly with at schools? Why?

Future hopes, challenges and opportunities

1. What are some of the challenges that you face as a teacher in South African schools?
2. What are some of the opportunities that you see as a teacher in South African schools?
3. Do you think that immigrant teachers are treated differently to that of indigenous or South African teachers? Why?

4. Do you believe that you are given the same opportunities to participate in various forums as South African teachers? (both inside and outside of schools)
5. Do you believe that you have been adequately inducted into the South African schooling system?
6. If you were to change something about the South African schooling system, what would it be?
7. Do you like it here or you will like to move to another school or country, if yes, why?

Appendix F

Research Study: Reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools

Semistructured interview protocol for principals

1. How long have you been a principal at this school?
2. When was this school established?
3. How many learners do you have at this school?
4. What is the racial composition of learners at this school?
5. What is the total number of your staffs?
6. What is the racial composition of the staff at this school?
7. How many African immigrant teachers are members of your staff?
8. Are they hired by the Department of Education (DoE) or School Governing Body (SGB)?
9. What are some of the subjects that these African immigrant teachers teach?
10. Are any African immigrant teachers on the SGB or SMT?
11. With whom do African immigrant teachers associate with mostly...? Seating in the staffroom, during breaks etc.
12. What differences do you think the immigrant teachers bring to this school?
13. What do you think are some of the challenges they face at this school?
14. What do you think are some of the opportunities they have at this school?
15. Do you think African immigrant teachers are treated in the same way as their South African counterparts by student/colleagues/management/SGB?
16. What are some of the challenges you face as a principal regarding African immigrant teachers?
17. What are some of the opportunities that you as a Principal see regarding African immigrant teachers?
18. Can you comment on work ethic of African immigrant teachers?
19. Do you believe that the South African Education system should hire African immigrant teachers? Why?

Appendix G

Research Study: Reconstruction of African immigrant teachers' professional identities in South African schools

Focus group interview protocol for learners

1. Do you know which country Mr/Mrs...comes from?
2. How do you know that he/she is not from South Africa?
3. Do you see him/her as a different person?
4. Do you like or dislike his/her subject?
5. Do you enjoy attending his/her class?
6. Do you like or dislike the way he/she teaches?
7. With whom does Mr/Mrs...associate with mostly during breaks, staffroom etc?
8. What are some of the challenges that you experience as a learner in Mr/Mrs...class?
9. Do you like or dislike the way he/she grades your work?
10. Do you think that his/her inability to speak your language affects your learning?
11. Would you like the subject he/she teaches to be taught by a South African teacher? If yes, why?
12. If you have problem with your studies, do you go to him/her or you prefer to go to another teacher?
13. Do you think he/she treats you fairly?
14. Do you think immigrant teachers should be allowed to teach in South African schools? Why?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about Mr/Mrs...?

Appendix H

17th June, 2011

The Director General
Department of Basic Education
Sol Plaatje House, 222 Struben Street
Pretoria, 0001.

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for the list of African immigrant teachers in Tshwane schools

My name is Kola Elufisan a postgraduate student in the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria. To meet the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (M.Ed.), I need to contribute to academic knowledge by undertaking an educational research project. I have decided with my supervisor, Professor Saloshna Vandeyar to research the experiences of immigrant teachers especially those from African countries and now teaching in South African schools. Therefore I put the question, how do African immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identities in South African schools?

In this study immigrant teachers are defined as teachers working in South African schools who had their teacher training in African countries other than South Africa. My research strategy is qualitative and I will be gathering my data through observation and interviews with five African immigrant teachers from different schools, their principals and a focus group interview with the learners. I have received permission from both the Gauteng Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education to proceed with the research. Therefore I request you to supply me with a list of immigrant teachers so that I can randomly choose the persons who will be participants in my research.

The principal of the school, the teachers and the students reserve the right to either participate in the study or not. I will have to seek their consent before conducting interviews or observations. I promise to observe and maintain the highest ethical standards during and after the study. Should you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact either the researcher or the supervisor whose names appear below.

Yours faithfully,

Kolawole Elufisan (Researcher)
082 967 8220
elufisank@gmail.com

Prof. Saloshna Vandeyar (Supervisor)
012-420 2003
Saloshna.Vandeyar@up.ac.za



Faculty of Education

Ethics Committee

17 June 2011

Dear Mr Elufisan

REFERENCE: HS 10/11/01

Your application was carefully considered by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and the final decision of the Ethics Committee is:

Your application is approved.

The ethics committee would hereby like to acknowledge receipt of the letter from the Department of Basic Education indicating approval of your study. This submission meets the requirement as stipulated in the conditions of your ethics approval.

This letter serves as notification that you may continue with your fieldwork. Should any significant changes to the study occur after approval was given, it is your responsibility to notify the Ethics Committee immediately.

Please note that this is **not a clearance certificate**. Upon completion of your research you need to submit the following documentation to the Ethics Committee:

1. Integrated Declarations form that you adhered to conditions stipulated in this letter – Form D08

On receipt of the above-mentioned documents you will be issued a clearance certificate. Please quote the reference number HS 10/11/01 in any communication with the Ethics Committee.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Liesel Ebsersohn'.

Prof Liesel Ebsersohn
Chair: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education



UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

Enquiries: Diane Buntting (011) 843 6503

Date:	27 August 2010
Name of Researcher:	Elufisan K.T.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 27014
	Sunnyside
	0132
Reference No:	2011/18
Telephone Number:	082 967 8220
Fax Number:	012 323 4833
Email address:	<u>elufisank@gmail.com</u>
Research Topic:	Reconstruction of professional Identities of African immigrant teachers in South African Schools
Number and type of schools:	FIVE Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane North; Tshwane South and Tshwane West

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 to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

4. **A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.**
5. **The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.**
6. **Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.**
7. **Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.**
8. **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.**
9. **It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.**
10. **The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.**
11. **The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.**
12. **On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.**
13. **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.**
14. **Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director 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



Shadrack Phele MIRMSA
 [Member of the Institute of Risk Management South Africa]
 CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST: RESEARCH COORDINATION

27 August 2010

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	