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**An exploration of teacher leadership: a case study in a
Namibian rural primary school.**

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ABSTRACT

The Namibian education system has undergone a policy shift from a top-down leadership practice or head-centred leadership to a more shared form of leadership in schools. Existing policy documents call for teacher participation in school level decision-making structures and processes as teachers often are involved in other activities and have been through life experiences which equip them with leadership skills. These policies clearly stipulate that school principals cannot lead and manage the schools alone, but should involve teachers and other stakeholders in leadership activities.

This study explored teacher leadership in a rural primary school in the Otjozondjupa region of Namibia. The study explored the understanding of the concept teacher leadership, the practice of teacher leadership and the enhancing factors as well as barriers to teacher leadership practice. A qualitative interpretative case study was conducted. Interviews, document analysis, focus group interviews, a questionnaire and observation were employed to produce data with regard to teacher leadership practices in the case study school. The data were analysed thematically using Grant's (2008) model of teacher leadership.

Findings revealed that the concept of teacher leadership was understood as teachers leading both within and beyond the classroom. Teacher leadership was practiced across the four zones of teacher leadership (after Grant, 2008), but to varying degrees. It could be categorized as emergent teacher leadership (after Muijs and Harris, 2005) within a formal distributed leadership framework (MacBeath, 2005). Teacher leadership in the case study school was enhanced by collaboration among staff and involvement of teachers in school level decision-making. However, barriers to teacher leadership at the case study school included holding on to power by the principal, teachers' negative attitudes towards teacher leadership, a lack of incentives, a lack of time due to a heavy work load and a lack of professional development.

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This study is dedicated to:

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To my beloved daughter Matago Gersonia Uises and the 'stars', you are the reason I pursued the master's degree. I know this will remain a good example for you to follow in the years to come. Follow in my 'foot steps' and try to continue until you reach further than this and you will set a new record, which will be a challenge for the next generation to follow.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the concept 'teacher leadership' and how it was practiced at a rural Namibian primary school. Most of the Namibian national policy documents in education allow for and expect teachers to be involved in the leadership of the school to bring about change and thereby contribute positively to the development of their whole school. So far, only two teacher leadership research studies have been carried out recently in Namibia and their findings indicate that there is an urgent need to embark on further research studies on the topic. This prompted me to design a study on teacher leadership. This chapter describes the context of my study. It focuses on a brief overview of the literature and theoretical framework of the study as well as the methodology. To conclude, the chapter provides an outline of how the thesis is structured.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Since independence in 1990, Namibia has undergone some radical reforms. 'Toward Education for All - A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training' (1993), a policy document which translates the Namibian philosophy on education into concrete and implementable government policies, was developed to guide the education system in the country. This document entails four major goals of the Namibian Education system which are: access, equity, quality and democracy. It is recommended in the same document that:

In democratic education for a democratic society teachers must be active creators and managers of the learning environment and masters or caretakers. We must structure our education system so that the organisations its participants choose to form for example teachers' and students' unions can play active roles alongside communities in shaping, guiding, and assessing it (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 42).

This policy expects teachers to create and own policies and participate in whole school development and bring about change rather than only being implementers of policy. Democratisation of education was one of the changes that were brought about in post-independent Namibia and it went along with the decentralisation of education. In addition, the national policy 'Guidelines for School Principals' (2005, p. 143) states that:

Democracy is one of the key concepts in our education system and should be fundamental in the way the schools are managed and administered. The principal should therefore involve various stakeholders (teachers, parents and senior learners) in specific aspects of school management and administration. The expertise, talents and interest of parents, staff members and learners should be utilised for the benefit of the school, learners and community.

This policy is in alignment with contemporary educational leadership literature which sees leadership as a shared endeavour which includes the leadership of teachers in schools. The policy implies that the principal of a school cannot lead and manage the school alone but should involve teachers and other stakeholders in leadership activities. The policies clearly make provision for teachers to play leadership roles in Namibian schools. My study was designed to look at teacher leadership in practice to see whether it was in alignment with policy. Similarly, the national policy document 'The Work of the School Board' (1999, p. 4) which includes all the above stakeholders, highlights that a "school board is the highest decision making body of the school at the local school level". Teachers are a part of the school board and as such, are expected to play important leadership roles at given platforms in whole school development as leaders outside their classrooms. Furthermore, the most recently launched policy document 'National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia' (2006, p. 77) reiterates that teachers should:

participate in school decision-making structures and processes. Furthermore, this area of competence addresses the leader/manager role of the teacher, rather than the formal post appointment (i.e. not as Principal or HOD). Teachers often have other involvements and life experiences which equip them with leadership skills.

This policy indicates that teachers should not only lead in classrooms but also in whole school development. It also makes it explicit that teachers are expected to be involved in school level decision-making. The policies clearly make provision for teachers to play leadership roles in

Namibian schools. I was interested to know what was happening in practice in relation to teacher leadership and to see whether it was in line with policy. This provided the stimulus for my study.

Teacher leadership, the focus of my study, fits within the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). ELM, according to van der Mescht (2008), is a relatively new field in South Africa but it exhibits characteristics similar to those found in countries where the field is more established, notably the United Kingdom and United States of America (p. 16). Since Namibia and South Africa share a similar historical background in terms of the apartheid system, this field of ELM is equally new in Namibia, if not more so. Within the field of ELM internationally, teacher leadership is not a new concept; it has its roots in the education reform initiatives of the 1980s, particularly in the United Kingdom, United States of America and other developing countries. It falls into the category of contemporary theories of leadership that focus on the relationships among individuals within the organization (York-Barr & Duke, 2004 and Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research (HKIER), 2006). It was developed out of the leadership in schools where all people in schools, especially teachers and principals, participate, encourage and support one another in school leadership in order to improve and develop their schools (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; HKIER, 2006; McCauley, 2009 and Kelly, 2011). In the next section I present a brief overview of the literature and theoretical framework of my study.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Various literatures define teacher leadership differently. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p. 5) define teacher leadership as: “Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence other towards improving educational practice”.

Recent studies carried out in some Namibian and South African schools on teacher leadership by various researchers found that different people had different perceptions and understandings about the concept of teacher leadership. A study in Namibia by Hashikutuva (2011) reveals that teacher leadership was successfully enacted at one school and at the other two it was restricted to

classrooms and was emergent. She recommends that “more research needs to be conducted on the concepts of distributed leadership and teacher leadership in Namibia” (p. 114). A study by another Namibian, Nauyoma-Hamupembe (2012), reveals that teacher leadership was restricted within an authorized distributed leadership framework within her case study school. She recommends that: “In Namibia, little research has been done on the topic of teacher leadership; therefore much still ‘needs’ to be done to gain more insightful understandings of the terrain of teacher leadership” (p. 107).

In the South African studies, Singh and Grant (2009) state that there was no common understanding of the concept teacher leadership among participants in either of their two effective South African rural schools. Molefe (2010) explains how her findings highlighted the enactment of teacher leadership by post-level 1 teachers in a school. However, she argues for the need for more research on the notion of teacher leadership. Nene (2010, pp. 111-114) in her study on teacher leadership in South Africa says that the three teachers in her study had a similar understanding of the concept teacher leadership and that they were involved in leading curriculum matters. However they were not involved in decision-making. In her concluding remarks, Gumede (2010, p. 89) maintains that “there was an enactment of teacher leadership. However, especially in zone three, it was restricted and operated within an authorized distributed leadership framework”. She further says that the work of the case study school is now to shift its culture and invite emergent teacher leadership within a culture of collaboration and trust. This literature is relevant to my study as it indicates what these studies found in terms of teacher leadership practice and also gives a conceptual understanding of the concept teacher leadership in various studies and various countries. This is exactly what my study aimed to do.

My study was framed by distributed leadership theory because it is a theory within which teacher leadership is located. However my research focus is on teacher leadership. I believe distributed leadership theory is a useful theoretical framework because it encompasses goal number four of the Namibian policy which is democracy. Copland (2003, p. 376) explains distributed leadership as:

a set of functions or qualities shared across a much broader segment of the school community that encompasses administrators, teachers and other professionals and

community members both internal and external to the school. Such an approach implies the need for school communities to create and sustain broadly distributed leadership systems, processes and capacities.

Harris (2004) as cited in Bush (2011, p. 13) indicates that:

Distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through collective formal positional roles.

She also claims that it is characterised as “a form of collective leadership” (ibid. p. 14) and notes that the collegiality is “at the core of distributed leadership” (ibid., p. 15).

I discuss distributed leadership as the theoretical framework of my study in more detail in Chapter Two. In the next section I move on to focus on the rationale of the study.

1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

All the above studies on teacher leadership identified the field of teacher leadership as insufficiently explored in the African context and indicate that there is still a big gap to be filled in terms of the research required to understand teacher leadership more fully. In this regard, my study contributes towards filling this gap. I heard of the concept of teacher leadership for the first time when I was given articles to read for my interview to be admitted to Rhodes University for my current studies. This concept immediately triggered my interest and I decided that given the opportunity, I would explore this concept.

From my pilot research study on the understanding of the concept ‘leadership’ at the Namibian primary school which I carried out as part of my course work for this Masters’ degree (Uiseb, 2012), my preliminary findings indicated that there was not a common understanding of the concept ‘leadership’ in general, let alone ‘teacher leadership’. Since Namibia and South Africa share a similar historical background it is also interesting to gain insights about this phenomenon of teacher leadership and develop a new theoretical perspective about it if possible.

The study is of potential value in the sense that it may be useful to the Namibian Ministry of Education, teachers, principals, trade unions and other stakeholders in the Namibian education

society as well as researchers who are interested in a study on teacher leadership. I move on to offer a brief overview on the methodology of the study.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The main aim of the study was to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership in a Namibian rural primary school. To achieve this goal, I looked for answers to the following questions:

- How was the concept teacher leadership understood?
- How was teacher leadership enacted?
- What organisational factors inhibited and enhanced the practice of teacher leadership?

I believed that these questions were not mutually exclusive and that they were inter-related.

1.5.1 Research orientation

My research was qualitative in nature and was located within the interpretive paradigm as I was interested in exploring the concept and practice of teacher leadership within a rural Namibian primary school.

Maree (2007, p. 60) explains that:

The ultimate aim of interpretive research is to offer a perspective of a situation under study to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people make sense of their situation or phenomena they enter. The ontology and epistemology underlying this type of research is that there are multiple realities, as reality is socially constructed and it is perceived differently by different individuals. Meaning is constructed by individual groups, in interaction with each other. Researchers can gain access to individuals' reality by engaging with the actors in a particular situation.

I selected a case study because it enabled me to focus on a specific setting and assisted me to obtain rich descriptive data on the phenomenon of teacher leadership. According to Leedy and

Ormrod (2010, p. 137), in a case study, “a particular individual, program, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time”.

1.5.2 The research site and duration of study

The school was selected in terms of its accessibility to me as a researcher. Convenience sampling was thus used to select the site. McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 175) explain that, “a convenience sample is a group of subjects selected on the basis of being accessible or expedient”. I spent one month at the school during my research study.

1.5.3 Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of participants for my study. A sample of six teachers was selected, taking into account issues of gender and experience. The principal, the school board chairperson, the trade union Leader, the traditional leader and a head of department were selected based on their positional leadership roles. The remaining educators of the school were my secondary participants.

I used the following tools to collect data: questionnaires, observation, document analysis, focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews. In my study, these tools were used at different stages in the research process and I discuss this process in more detail in Chapter Three of this study. With regard to data analysis, data were coded and categorised according to themes and I used the model of Grant (2008) on zones and roles of teacher leadership to assist me in analysing my data.

In the next section, I move on to give the outline of the thesis.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

My thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter One discussed the context of the study, the literature and theoretical framework, its rationale and potential value to education in general. It

outlined the research goal and research questions and offered a brief summary on the methodology of the study.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the literature on teacher leadership, the theoretical framework of the broader concept of leadership and, in particular, distributed leadership. The discussions focus on the characteristics of these theories and their relevance to teacher leadership. The chapter also focuses on explaining the term teacher leadership; it includes a discussion of the range of roles of teacher leadership as well as the enhancing factors and barriers to it.

Chapter Three of this thesis entails the research methodology used in the study. It gives a description of the research approach and methods and the reasons for the choice of these. The chapter also highlights the research site and research participants. It gives the outline of data collection tools namely: questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, focus group interviews and observation. The chapter also provides a brief discussion of the data analysis process as well as issues of validity and ethical considerations. It concludes by providing the limitations of the study.

Chapter Four presents the data and discusses the main findings. The findings are then discussed in relation to the relevant literature.

Chapter Five presents the summary of my findings, categorizes teacher leadership in the case study school according to categorisations of Muijs and Harris (2005). It further categorizes the distribution of leadership in the school according to MacBeath (2005) and offers recommendations for action and further research based on my findings.

In the next chapter, I move on to focus on the literature review of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of a review of local and international literature which is related to the topic of teacher leadership. To remind the reader, the aim of my study was to explore teacher leadership in a rural Namibian primary school, thus this chapter aims to acquire insight from the literature relating to the topic of teacher leadership. In particular, the chapter presents how teacher leadership is understood and practiced and I also look at what factors enhance and hinder the practice of it.

This chapter begins by exploring leadership and management as these two concepts are in most cases used interchangeably, however both are important. I then move on to discuss traditional leadership theory, because it is the most pervasive type of leadership which may well exist in the case study school and which could be a barrier to teacher leadership. I then move on to discuss distributed leadership; this is of paramount importance, because it is the theoretical framework for my study. I look at how distributed leadership is defined and characterised in the literature as well as the criticisms leveled against it. I then move on to a discussion of teacher leadership as one of the manifestations of a distributed leadership practice and the main focus of my study. I focus on the definitions of teacher leadership, formal and informal teacher leadership roles as well as the enhancing and hindering factors to teacher leadership from different authors' points of view. I conclude the chapter by summarising the main points of the literature review. In the following section I explore the concepts of educational leadership and management.

2.2 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

According to Coleman (2005, p. 6), “the concepts of leadership, management and administration overlap in their usage and the usage of these concepts varies at different times, in different countries and across different professional cultures”. She further states that in the United Kingdom, ‘leadership’ tends to be viewed as the most important of the concepts, ‘management’ tends to make a connection to more operational matters and ‘administration’ relates to work which is routine and always done in the same way. Furthermore, Coleman explains that the word ‘administration’ is the term used the most in the USA and that this has the same meaning as the term ‘leadership’ does, in the UK. It is of utmost importance for me to discuss the difference between the concepts of educational leadership and management as I conceptualise them differently in my study.

2.2.1 Distinctions between the concepts of educational leadership and management

I believe that although leadership and management are sometimes used interchangeably the two concepts are not synonymous. In support of my argument, Bush (2011, p. 9) explains educational leadership as influencing others’ actions in achieving set objectives, while he explains that management is about maintaining efficiently and effectively the current organisational arrangements. According to Clarke (2007, pp. 1-2), educational leadership is about direction and aim. He further highlights that leadership is about getting things to change. In contrast, Clarke (2007, pp. 1-2) contends that management is about getting systems to do things right and to do the right things. In their explanation of the concept of leadership, van Deventer and Kruger (2003, p. 44) are of the view that “educational leadership relates to mission, direction and inspiration”. Furthermore, they propose that there should be a mission and direction towards which one needs to be led, in education. However, they explain that management involves designing and carrying

out plans, getting things done and working effectively with people. I contend that leadership is about influencing others towards the achievement of set goals or objectives. In my view, leadership is about change while management is about efficiency, effectiveness, and is about maintaining the status quo. In the next section, I deliberate on the relationship between the concepts leadership and management.

2.2.2 Relationship between the concepts of educational leadership and management

While the two concepts of leadership and management can be defined differently, they are still closely related. In support of this position, Bush (2011, p. 9) explains that “leading and managing are both distinct, but both are important”. In his explanation, Clarke (2007, pp. 1-3) writes that “strong leadership and good management are both essential for the success of a school, and a good principal is skilled at both”. In her explanation, Coleman (2005, p. 10) argues that “both educational leadership and management contribute to effectiveness in education”. Furthermore she argues that in practice, leadership and management functions are likely to overlap and to be carried out within the same role. However, for analytical research purposes, we need to conceptualise and keep the terms separate. Sterling and Davidoff (2000, pp. 12-13) also acknowledge that in reality leadership and management work together and they view these concepts as ‘two sides of the same coin’. It is against this background that I concur that these concepts are necessarily different but related. Next I move on to discuss traditional leadership theory, as alluded to in the introduction earlier, as it is the most pervasive form of leadership which may well exist in the case study school and which could be a barrier to teacher leadership.

2.3 TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

The research and literature illustrate that traditional leadership theory is absolutely equated with physically big as well as strong male people. The *Great Man Theory*, according to Coleman (2005,

p. 9), “is an example of identifying leadership with the qualities or quality of an individual. The connotation is that leaders are not made but born”. Furthermore, she says that this could to a certain extent be a sad and discouraging way of thinking, as it implies a kind of outcome and that there could be no such thing as effective leadership training. She further argues that it tends to be connected with stereotypes of leaders in a heroic mould, who are normally of the male gender. Thus, it is known as the *Great Man Theory*.

In terms of trait theories, according to Cawood, Kapp and Swartz (1989, p. 33), “the leader is a particular kind of person blessed with a personality and a set of character traits to which his capability as a leader can be ascribed”. Similarly, Wood (2003, p. 13) explains that “the trait approach maintains that a person either does or does not possess the particular traits that are considered to be determinants of leadership”.

Coleman (2005) explains another set of theories which includes contextual, situational and contingency theories. These sets of theories are those that relate the leader to the *situation* in which they find themselves. Furthermore, these theories allow for the fact that the leader does not operate in isolation but will be affected by his or her circumstances. In the context of the UK, Coleman (2005) contends that Churchill is often identified as a ‘great man’ but he was much more successful as a leader in war than in peace.

The most well-known of the contextual theories is that of Hersey and Blanchard (1988) as cited in Coleman (2005) who considered the relationship of the leader to the follower on the foundation of two variables, one was the know-how of the person being led and the other their level of dedication. On this foundation, leaders might vary their behaviour with different people, for example delegating more to the knowledgeable and dedicated staff, directing the experienced staff and coaching or supporting the experienced but less committed staff. Again, this assumption according to Coleman (2005), appeals to their intuition but does depend on the leader being able to switch his or her attitudes to accord to the needs of a particular individual.

According to Wood (2003, p. 12-13), contingency leadership theory is that of Fiedler (1964) who maintains that “the contingency model maintains that personal styles and situational

characteristics combine to determine leadership. A 'proper match' between styles and situations determines who will lead a group".

I believe all these above mentioned traditional theories still play a large role in Namibia, especially the Great Man Theory because in Namibia most cultures equate leadership with males and strength. Most of the educational institutions and schools are led by men although women are the majority in the teaching profession according to the annual education census statistics.

Next, I move on to discuss the theory of distributed leadership. A discussion of distributed leadership as one of the contemporary leadership theories is very important as one needs to differentiate between them, as distributed leadership offers an alternative to traditional leadership and both might be prevalent in my case study school.

2.4 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

According to Moos, Hargreaves, Fink, and Southworth (2003, p. 46), more recently there has been less enthusiasm for lone leadership and a growing interest in leadership at all levels of an organisation as well as a demand to empower others. I concur with Harris, as cited in Bush and Middlewood (2005, p. 9), where she points to distributed leadership as "a shift from autocratic styles of leadership to a greater focus on teams and distributed leadership as the school improved". Distributed leadership is the theoretical framework of my study because teacher leadership, which is the main focus of my study, is one of the manifestations of a distributed leadership theory. I therefore now turn to a discussion of the definitions of distributed leadership, characteristics of this form of leadership and the criticisms of it from different authors.

2.4.1 Definitions of distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is defined differently by different authors. Distributed leadership, in my view, involves a sharing of leadership roles and responsibilities across the school as an organization. In line with the above view, Copland (2003, p. 376) explains distributed leadership as:

a set of functions or qualities shared across a much broader segment of the school community that encompasses administrators, teachers and other professionals and community members both internal and external to the school. Such an approach implies the need for school communities to create and sustain broadly distributed leadership systems, processes and capacities.

Similarly, Yukl (1999, pp. 292-293) highlights that some leadership functions (e.g. making important decisions) may be shared by a number of members of a group, some functions may be given to individual members and a particular leadership may be executed by different people at different times. The leadership actions of any individual leader are much less important than the combined leadership provided by members of an organization. A study by Storey (2004, p. 261) indicates that “the concept of distributed leadership is all about emphasising many people being able to make decisions rather than keeping the decision-making process centralized”. I agree with Coles and Southworth (2005, p. 37) who explain that distributed leadership means “more than acknowledging that the work of leadership in schools involves multiple individuals. In arguing for a distributed view, we mean to convey that leadership is a practice which is stretched over leaders, followers and their situation”.

Adding their explanation to the above mentioned arguments and explanations are Harris and Lambert (2005, p. 9) who contend that a distributed perspective focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among positional and informal leaders as well as their followers. Furthermore, this distributed view of leadership incorporates the activities of multiple individuals in a school who work at mobilising and guiding school staff in the instructional change process, rather than seeing leadership practice as solely a function of an individual’s ability, skill, charisma and cognition. Harris and Lambert (2005) further argue that distributed leadership could be

viewed as practice distributed over leaders, followers and their situation. Corresponding to the afore mentioned arguments, Spillane (2006, p.3) states that “a distributed perspective is about leadership practice”. He further cites that this practice is a product of collective interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situations such as tools and routines. Figure 1 illustrates leadership practice from a distributed perspective as described above by Spillane (2006, p. 3). This diagram as explained by Spillane illustrates that “a distributed perspective is initially about leadership practice which shifts attention from principals and other formal and informal leaders to the network of leaders, followers and their situations that gives form to leadership practice. This perspective of distribution is also referred to as leader-plus aspect”.

In addition a further group of authors highlight the purpose of distributed leadership in making others powerful. In support of this argument, Moos, Hargreaves, Fink and Southworth et al., (2003) explain that distributed leadership is about making others powerful and about sharing out leadership across the school. It is a move from a belief in the power of one to a belief in the power of everyone. In line with the above arguments, Woods, Bennett, Harvey and Wise (2004, p. 449) explain that “distributed leadership is concerned with how an organization constrains or enables different organizational members to take initiatives and contribute to the development of practice”.

I believe that leadership in educational institutions such as schools needs to be distributed throughout the entire organisation and not restricted to individuals in formal leadership positions. I believe that a distributed perspective on leadership is about shifting the focus from those who are in formal management positions to concentrate also on those who lead informally, as valuable and untapped leadership qualities might be vested in those that are not in management positions. Defined in this way, the concept of distributed leadership assisted me in the analysis and interpretation of data in my study. I now move on to discuss the characteristics of distributed leadership in the next section.

2.4.2 Characteristics of distributed leadership

As distributed leadership is defined differently by different authors, it is also categorised differently. However, there are a few instances where there is an overlap in characteristics as evident in the explanations that follow. In this section I discuss the characteristics of distributed leadership according to the various literatures and I regard this discussion of characteristics as imperative, as it assisted me in understanding what my study aimed for within the framework of distributed leadership. Various terms are used in the literature to mean the same as classification: for example, taxonomy, property, typology etc. MacBeath (2005, p. 357) uses the term 'taxonomy' and developed his taxonomy of distributed leadership which I found useful for my study.

MacBeath (2005, pp. 357-363) has six stages in his taxonomy of distributed leadership. He explains: (1) *distribution formally* "as responsibility is structurally delegated it carries with it an attendant expectation of delivery. It may be accompanied by recognition that others have expertise that you do not have and that when responsibility is distributed in this way the headteacher's role is to support and provide". This is similar to Gunter (2005, p. 51) where she characterises distributed leadership as "authorized is where work is distributed from the headteacher to others. In the system it is through delegation of the leader to the led; and in the market it is empowerment of the led to work in a particular way". In the Namibian context delegation from the school authorities to teachers still plays an important role as this is regarded as empowerment and this delegation is in most cases carried out because it is regarded as an official instruction from higher authority and is regarded as part of the job description. According to the Namibian Ministry of Education (2008, p. 3): "A teacher should perform any other duty or responsibility that might be reasonably requested by the principal".

In his taxonomy, MacBeath (2005, p. 358) goes on to explain (2) *distribution as pragmatic*, "as characterised by its ad hoc quality. Distribution plays an increasingly large part as pressures on schools mount and initiatives multiply. Headteachers may ask people to take on responsibility to ease the logjam and to spread the workload". He further explains that these decisions regarding the choosing of the right people should be a pragmatic one and should be informed by the knowledge of capable staff to share the burden and should not just be given to everyone. In the

Namibian context this type of distribution becomes prevalent as school principals ask teachers to represent them or the school at one or another meeting which he or she cannot attend due to other equally important work related commitments. The principals normally distribute these responsibilities to those staff members who are capable of doing things and whom they regard as responsible, as having the 'know-how' - not just everyone is approached.

MacBeath (2005, p. 359) then moves on to present (3) *distribution as strategic*. He explains that "the distinguishing feature of strategic distribution is its goal orientation and that it is not about pragmatic problem solving but it is focused on a long term goal of the school improvement. It is expressed most saliently in a carefully considered approach to new appointments". Furthermore, he says that these may be seen less in terms of individual competencies and more in terms of people as team players, perhaps with potential to fulfill certain roles that are still only a gleam in the eye of the head or senior leadership team. In line with this, Copland (2003, p. 379) highlights that "this view of distributed leadership implies a need for consensus regarding the important problems facing the organization". Furthermore, he cautions that the leadership work "can become dissipated and undirected". One would argue that this type of characterization is where the principal recruits a staff member based on specific qualities and needs of the school. Head hunting plays an outstanding role in this context.

MacBeath (2005, p. 360) explains (4) *distribution as incremental* as working in the following way: "As head teachers become more comfortable with their own authority and feel more able to acknowledge the authority and feel more comfortable to acknowledge the authority of others they will be able to extend the compass of leadership and to 'let go' more". Furthermore, MacBeath (2005) explains that the main purpose is supported growth and its orientation is essentially professional development in which, as people prove their ability to exercise leadership, they are given more. The emphasis is more on attitude and professional development. I am of the view that Copland (2003, p. 380) is in line with this in his explanation of distributed leadership as he says that: "It implies a need for rich expertise with approaches to improving teaching and learning among all those working in the school, inclusive of role". This is where school principals are starting to empower the others through letting go certain leadership responsibilities as he or she observes qualities of growth in individuals.

MacBeath (2005, p. 361) then explains (5) *distribution as opportunistically*: This is where “leadership does not appear to be distributed at all. It is dispersed. It is taken rather than given. It is assumed rather than conferred. It is opportunistic rather than planned and there is a natural predisposition to take a lead, to organize, to see what needs doing and make sure it gets done”. Furthermore, he explains that distribution as opportunistic involves a symbiotic relationship in which progressive and powerful staff members willingly taking up leadership roles and are motivated to do so by head teachers and there is clarity of purpose amongst staff. I understand that this is where teachers take up leadership initiatives in the school on their own without these being enforced on them by management members. This description is in line with Gunter (2005, p. 52) who characterises distributed leadership as dispersed and explains that “it is where most of the work goes on without the formal working of a hierarchy. This distribution is accepted because of different skills and knowledge of those who take up leadership”. I agree with Woods, Bennett, Harvey and Wise (2004, p. 441) who argue that “distributed leadership highlights leadership as an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals”.

MacBeath (2005, p. 362) explains (6) *distribution as culturally* “when leadership is intuitive, assumed rather than given, shared organically and opportunistically it is embedded in the culture”. Furthermore, he explains that “leadership is expressed in activities rather than roles or through individual initiative and people exercise initiative spontaneously and collaboratively, with no necessary identification of leaders or followers”. MacBeath (2005, p. 362) further highlights that ‘distribution as cultural’ views the power of the school as situated in its collective intelligence and collective ability to do the work. Furthermore, he contends that the main concepts in cultural distribution are agency and reciprocity. Similarly Copland (2003, p. 379) explains that “the development of a culture within the school that embodies collaboration, trust and professional learning implies reciprocal accountability”. He goes on to explain that “reciprocal accountabilities require that teachers have professional learning opportunities provided which are expected in their schools”. This is in line with the third characteristic of distributed leadership, according to Gunter (2005, p. 57), which “is democratic and democratic leadership opens up possibilities for leading teachers because it widens their gaze from the school as an organization to the wider role of the school as a public institution within a democracy”. In the Namibian context in a democratic

society respect of others leadership skills and qualities are a norm even at school level. Everyone can lead and can be led.

Figure 2 Taxonomy of distribution

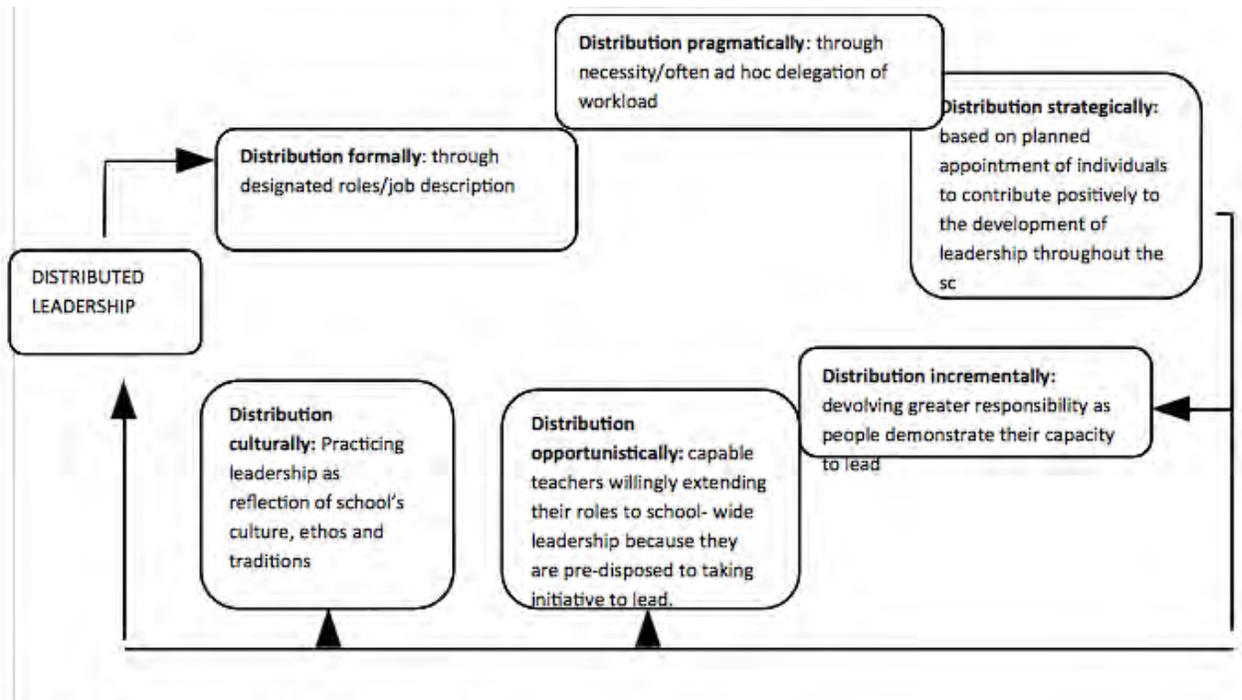


Figure 2 Taxonomy of distribution

Next I now move on to discuss the criticisms of distributed leadership.

2.4.3 Criticisms of distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is criticised by different authors in a number of ways. These criticisms I believe, are not necessarily only from the authors who are opposing its manifestation, but include some of them who advocate for it. I would argue that the most important criticism of distributed leadership is that it lacks conceptual clarity. Woods, Bennett, Harvey and Wise (2004, p. 439) explain that “the concept, attracts a range of meanings”. Affirming this claim, Spillane (2006, p.

22) contends that “when different authors try to define distributed leadership, a variety of concepts are used”. Bennett et al. (2003), in their explanation of distributed leadership, use the term devolved leadership while Kets de Vries (1990) as cited in Harris and Spillane (2008) defines distributed leadership in terms of “effective teamwork linked to a social activity theory” (p. 22). Harris and Spillane (2008, p. 22) further maintain that the employing of all these concepts mark both theoretical confusion and theoretical overlap. Furthermore they claim that, as a result, the build-up of these concepts does not only obscure the significance of distributed leadership but it also presents a real risk that distributed leadership will be used as a ‘catch all’ expression to explain any nature of devolved, shared or dispersed leadership practice. Spillane (2005, p. 149) highlights that “the lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of distributed leadership in promoting instructional improvement and increasing student achievement is considered a weakness”. I fully support the argument of Hartley (2007, p. 202) who highlights that “distributed leadership admits some confusion: its conceptual elasticity is considerable and this very lack of conceptual clarity does not allow for a clear operationalisation of the concept in empirical research”. I also agree with Spillane (2006, p. 102) who suggests that “the appeal of distributed leadership lies in the ease with which it can become all things to all people [...]”. Bennett et al. (2003, p. 15) refer, for example, to the field “as ‘disparate’ with multiple and differing definitions of distributed leadership”. In the same way, Woods et al. (2004, p. 439) say that “it is associated with a variety of practices, with varying - and largely unresearched - implications for organizational processes and values”.

Another criticism as highlighted by Gunter (2010, p. 521) is that “at school level the current popular term among researchers is distributed leadership, but, in fact, power is being distributed upward by centralising policy over curriculum and instruction through high-stakes testing and mayoral control”. Hatcher (2005, p. 521) explains that “the contradiction between the proclaimed intention of greater freedom for teachers and the continuing, and in some cases stricter, apparatus of centralised control over them has been noted by a number of commentators”. Notwithstanding the various criticisms labeled against it, I still consider distributed leadership as a viable option to frame my study as teacher leadership finds its manifestation within it.

I fully support Harris who argues that: “Quite simply, we cannot continue to ignore, dismiss or devalue the notion of teacher leadership as a form of distributed leadership - to do so is to knowingly invest in forms of leadership theory and practice that make little, if any difference ,to the achievement of young people” (2003, p. 322). With these concluding remarks, I now move on to discuss literature related to the focus of my study, teacher leadership.

2.5 TEACHER LEADERSHIP

2.5.1 Definitions of teacher leadership

There are different definitions from the literature of teacher leadership as is the case with distributed leadership. None of these definitions are exact or wrong. I define teacher leadership as a type of leadership which goes further than the official management positions in the school such as that of the principal, deputy principal and/or head of department. In line with my definition, Grant (2008, p. 186) highlights that teacher leadership is “a form of leadership beyond headship or formal position. It refers to teachers becoming aware and taking up informal and formal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond”. Similarly, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p. 17) define teacher leadership as “those teachers who lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teachers, learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice”. In addition they refer to teacher leadership as the exercise of leadership by teachers in spite of position or designation.

I am in accordance with Harris (2003, p. 316) who writes that “teacher leadership is centrally concerned with forms of empowerment and agency which are also at the core of distributed leadership”. In line with this idea, Howey (1988) defines teacher leadership as:

Coalescing others to act, where they otherwise might not have. Teachers assume leadership positions that enable them to model methods of teaching, coach and mentor colleagues, study critically and thoughtfully various aspects of classroom life, develop curriculum and instructional materials and strengthen relationships with school and home (p. 28).

In addition I agree with Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996, p. 2) who say that “teacher leadership facilitates principled action to achieve whole school success. It applies the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth and adults. It contributes to long term,

enhancement of community life". I regard this as similar to the explanation of Ingram and Fessler (1997, pp. 1-7) who state that teacher leadership "is a concept essential to meaningful school improvement". I agree with Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2002) who argue similarly and explain that "teacher leadership is about action that transforms teaching and learning in a school, that ties school and community together on behalf of learning, and that advances social sustainability and quality of life for a community". Wasley (1991, p. 23) explains teacher leadership as "the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without influence of the leader".

In addition, Grant (2008, p. 186) contends that teacher leadership "includes teachers working collaboratively with all stakeholders towards a shared and dynamic vision of their school within a culture of fairness, inclusion, mutual respect and trust". In line with Grant's description, Ingram and Fessler (1997, pp. 1-7) contend that teacher leadership "requires that teachers become full partners in school-based planning, decision-making, and assessment". Furthermore, they emphasize that accountability must be shared among stakeholders, including teachers.

Now that I have discussed a few definitions of teacher leadership, I move on to discuss the formal and informal roles of teacher leadership. I regard a discussion of formal and informal roles as pivotal because it is only through knowing these roles that I determined the presence or otherwise of teacher leadership in my case study school. Sometimes definitions also clarify the role an individual has to accomplish.

2.5.2 Formal and informal teacher leadership roles

In this section I discuss the formal and informal roles of teacher leadership. York-Barr and Duke (2004, p. 263) explain that teacher leadership is practiced through a variety of "formal and informal roles and channels of communication in the daily work of schools". Drawing on my experience and from reading the literature, it becomes evident that formal and informal roles of teacher leadership include: teaching and learning, serving on various curriculum committees at school level and beyond, serving as shop stewards, school board members and working with educational development institutions or national committees.

I strongly believe that the primary and paramount role of teacher leadership is the act of teaching and learning in the classroom. In line with my argument, Grant (2008, p. 92) states that “continuing to teach and improve on one’s own teaching” is one of the six roles of teacher leadership. Similarly Ash and Persall (2000, p. 15) propose that “student learning must become the focus of our educational efforts, and school leaders must create systematic change and pursue ever higher levels of student achievement”. In addition, Devaney (1987, p. 23) states that the “teachers’ relationship with students is the central one in the school”. I tend to agree with Day and Harris (2002, p. 973) who explain that one of the discrete dimensions of teacher leadership roles “concerns the way in which the teachers help translate the principles of school improvement into the practice of the individual classroom. This brokering role stays a fundamental task for the teacher as leader”. Furthermore, Day and Harris (2002, p. 973) explain that this role guarantees that the contact within schools are safe and sound and that opportunities for meaningful improvement among teachers are taken full advantage of. In line with the above, York-Barr and Duke (p. 263) highlight that “teacher leaders sometimes assume the full-time role of leadership and sometimes continue with the full-time role as classroom teachers, while also taking on various personal and collaborative responsibilities”. This role, I contend, is one of the formal roles of teacher leadership. In the next paragraph I move on to discuss another role of teacher leadership, which is serving on various curriculum committees at school level.

I argue that one of the roles of teacher leadership is to serve on various curriculum committees at school level. In line with my argument, Day and Harris (2002, p. 973) write that the “teacher leader role focuses upon participative leadership where all teachers feel part of the change or development and have a sense of ownership”. Furthermore, Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995, pp. 95-96) explain that as teacher leaders assume greater responsibility for a cooperative profession, they also turn out to be more comfortable with the idea that seeking and leading collective improvements are aspects of a professional role. Moreover, Day and Harris (2002, p. 973) say that teacher leaders “work with colleagues to outline school progress attempts and take some lead in guiding teachers in the direction of a combined aim”. I am in line with Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995, pp. 95-96) who describe this role of teacher leadership as follows: “Teachers as mentors and teacher educators”. I also agree with Devaney (1987, p. 23) who refers

to this role “as mentoring and coaching”. I regard this role as a formal role of teacher leadership. In the next paragraph I move on to discuss another role of teacher leadership, which is to serve on other decision-making bodies of the school.

I view a further teacher leadership role of serving on decision-making bodies of the school as of utmost importance. In support of my argument, Devaney (1987, p. 28) in discussing this role makes reference to “teachers’ participation in decision-making”. Furthermore, Devaney elaborates that teachers need to take part in setting the policies of their schools in determining the routines, rules, tasks, schedules and relationships in their day to day work. In line with Devaney (1987), Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995, p. 97) highlight, “teachers as curriculum developers and decision makers as well as teachers as problem solvers and change agents”. Similarly Day and Harris (2002, p. 973) argue that “a third dimension of teacher leadership in school improvement is the mediating role”. In my view, this role is most often carried out during conflict resolution processes. Similarly, Grant (2008, p. 92) also referred to “participating in school level decision-making” as an important role of teacher leaders.

I believe that serving on professional development committees is of pivotal importance as teachers will be involved in professional development and curriculum development aspects. In line with my argument, York-Barr and Duke (2004, p. 266) refer to this dimension of practice as “contributing to the profession and pre-service teacher training”. Similarly, Grant (2008, p. 92) refers to “providing in service education and assisting other teachers in their own school”. Taking these ideas further, Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995, p. 98) refer to “teachers as researchers” as an important part of the work of a teacher leader.

In the above discussions of the roles, references have been made to the roles as explained by Grant (2008) and these roles are illustrated in the following model of teacher leadership. The table connected to the model makes the roles explicit by providing the indicators of each role found in teacher leadership.

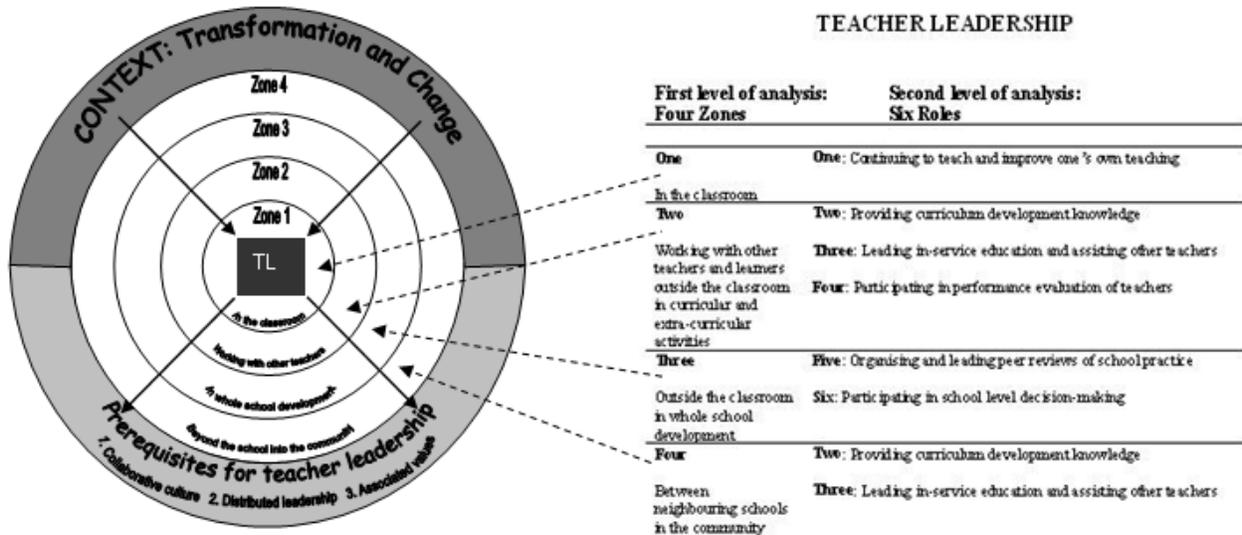


Figure 3 Model of teacher leadership with zones and roles (Grant, 2008)

In the next section I move on to discuss the factors enhancing and hindering teacher leadership. I discuss some of the factors that enhance teacher leadership first and then move on to discuss some of the hindering factors to teacher leadership. However, in doing so, I acknowledge that the absence of an enhancing factor might make it a hindering factor and vice versa.

2.5.3 Factors that enhance teacher leadership

There are various factors that can enhance teacher leadership. I have elected to focus on collaboration, decision-making and professional development as important enhancing factors to the leadership of teachers.

2.5.3.1 Collaboration

Collaboration means involving all staff and stakeholders in any decision or activity to be carried out at any institution. It also refers to teamwork, cooperation or joint efforts. I strongly believe that collaboration amongst teachers and other staff members of the school is of utmost importance in order for teacher leadership to be enhanced in a school. In support of my

argument, I draw on the work of Day and Harris (2002, p. 962) who highlight that “collaboration represents a horizontal rather than hierarchical power distribution within the school and is at the heart of teacher leadership”. In line with them, Harris and Lambert (2003, p. 44) explain that “collaboration is at the heart of teacher leadership as it is premised on change that is undertaken collectively”. Furthermore, they argue that for teacher leadership to be effective, it has to encompass mutual trust, support and enquiry. In addition they claim that where teachers learn together the possibility of securing better quality teaching is increased. I am also in line with Leithwood (1992, p. 10) who contends that “in collaborative school cultures staff members often talk, observe, critique and plan together and that norms of collective responsibility and continuous improvement encourage them to teach one another how to teach”.

In line with the above, Muijs and Harris (2003, p. 443) explain collaboration and point out the imperativeness of shared norms and values and collaborative practice between teachers. Furthermore they highlight that it is fundamental that teacher leaders work in collaborative teams in order for them to make improvement on learners’ performance and whole school development. In addition, they suggest that teacher leadership should not only flourish in collaborative settings but should also be one of the responsibilities of teacher leadership to promote collaboration in school and to develop similarity in schools. Similarly, Leithwood is of the view that “at the reins of today’s new schools will be not one but many leaders who believe in creating the conditions that enable staffs to find their own directions” (1992, p. 8). Guided by this quote, I move on to discuss decision-making as one of the enhancing factors of teacher leadership.

2.5.3.2 Decision-making

Sarason (1990, p. 61) explains if teacher participation in decision-making is “... a process which makes people feel that they have a voice in matters that affect them, they will have greater commitment to the overall enterprise and will take greater responsibility for what happens to the enterprise”. Drawing on this explanation, I maintain that being party to decision-making binds teachers to adhere to the stipulations or actions taken by that school as teachers are involved from the initial stage of the whole decision-making process. The sense of ownership from teachers

is promoted at the same time. I agree with Leithwood (1992, p. 9) who highlights that “participative decision-making is based more on a radically different form of power that is consensual and facilitative in nature - a form of power manifested through other people, not over other people”. In line with the above, Pashiardis (1994, p. 14) contends that “in schools where a clear commitment to student learning is apparent, more teacher participatory decision-making is crucial to the overall effective operation of the school”. Furthermore, he highlights that there is an urgent call from educational reform to involve increasing numbers of teachers in decision-making and extend their involvement in the overall decision process in order to make school policy and management responsive to societal needs. Similarly, Muijs and Harris (2003, p. 442) contend that “traditional top-down leadership styles need to be replaced by an emphasis on more devolved and shared decision-making processes”. I agree with Harris and Lambert (2003, p. 42) who maintain that “in schools where decision-making is shared, devolved and owned by many rather than the few, possibility for improvement and development is significantly enhanced”.

I am in line with Stone, Horejs and Lomas (1997, p. 52) who stress that “teachers have the expertise and experience to engage in all aspects of schooling; therefore, they should be given the opportunity to engage in meaningful decisions about their schools and classrooms”. In the same way Leithwood and Riehl (2003, p. 5) explain that “educational leaders enhance the performance of their schools by providing opportunities for staff to participate in decision-making about issues that affect them and for which their knowledge is crucial”. In line with this argument, Barth (1988, p. 40) highlights that: “It is imperative that heads hand over decision-making power to teachers”. However, he contends that by involving teachers in decision-making at school level, when problems arise, it is common for heads to make an instant decision and then request the teacher to handle the circumstances. He further maintains that in reality the idea of teachers and heads sharing decision power is as risky as it shows potential. Drawing on this literature, I argue that schools and teachers will benefit if teachers play an active role in school level decision-making and in controlling their work environment. Therefore, it is my opinion that school level decision-making can contribute positively to the enhancement of teacher leadership in a school.

Ash and Persall (2000, p. 22) maintain that “the importance of effective professional development is magnified substantially when schools embark on site-based, collaborated decision-making”.

These new responsibility expectations present new opportunities for leadership to emerge from the teaching ranks. I now move on to discuss the next factor that enhances teacher leadership, which is professional development.

2.5.3.3 Professional development

Professional development, as explained by Day and Harris (2002), is “continuous learning focused upon the central goal of making a difference in the lives of diverse students”. I contend that teachers need to be developed professionally before taking up any leadership role and should continue to do so for their personal and whole school improvement. Similarly to my argument, Harris and Lambert (2003, p. 45) explain that “empowerment and encouragement of teachers to become leaders and to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their leadership skills are the requirements of generating and sustaining teacher leadership”. Furthermore, they argue that opportunities for uninterrupted professional development that focuses not just on the development of teachers skills and awareness but on aspects explicit to their leadership roles such as leading groups and workshops, collaborative effort, mentoring, coaching adults and action research should be encouraged. This is in line with Sandholtz (2002, p. 828) who suggest that “similar to their students, teachers appreciate opportunities to explore, reflect, collaborate with peers, work on the authentic tasks, and engage in hands-on-active learning”.

I regard professional development as very important in any attempt to enhance teacher leadership. It is vital for teacher leaders to know where, how and why they ought to lead their colleagues. They need to have a strong professional background in order to lead the teachers to the expected outcomes of the school. One needs to have the know-how regarding the curriculum and other professional related matters as well as the knowledge of and involvement in the vision of the school. I agree with Zimpher (2005, p. 6) who maintains that “knowledge from teacher leadership is needed at regional and circuit level as teachers will be expected to weigh up, understand and prioritize at regional level and circuit level teachers’ wishes and concerns”. Furthermore, Zimpher (2005) highlights that teachers need knowledge for interpersonal and adult

development, for experimental supervision and instructional support as well as an ability to do action research.

Drawing from this literature, I believe that professional development can enhance teacher leadership at a school, therefore I believe that teachers should be developed professionally both at pre-service and in-service levels to take on teacher leadership roles, as professional development is a lifelong learning process.

Next I now move on to discuss the hindering factors to teacher leadership.

2.5.4 Hindering factors to teacher leadership

Although there seems to be many advantages to teacher leadership, there are various factors that can hinder teacher leadership. Discussion of hindering factors to teacher leadership in this study is vital and in this chapter I focus on the following factors which might well hinder teacher leadership: the principal, teachers themselves and time.

2.5.4.1 The principal

The literature reveals that the principal of a school can be a key barrier to teacher leadership because if she or he does not support the idea of teacher leadership at the school as an accounting officer then all the concerted efforts will prove futile and teacher leadership will remain dormant. In line with my argument, Stone, Horejs and Lomas (1997, p. 60) highlight that “the principal is the pivotal player in the teacher leadership in that he or she must be willing to share power, encourage teacher leadership, and set a tone that validates teachers’ views and expertise”. I believe many principals, particularly in Africa, are used to hierarchical leadership practice associated with the headship of one person and therefore find it difficult to entertain the possibility that leadership can be shared with teachers at the school. Principals sometimes regard teacher leadership as a threat as they fear that they will lose control and decision-making power over the school. For example, Barth (1988, p. 42) explains that sometimes “teachers competitive attempts to outdo the principal cause the principal to hope that the teachers will fail”.

Furthermore, he explains that in such cases, attempts to expand school leadership serve only to encourage an adversarial relationship between teachers and principals. In support of the argument, Troen and Boles (1994, p. 41) highlight that where “it is doubtful that teacher leaders will come forward from where teachers are ineffective to influence the school-wide policy and where Principals fear that they will be relegated to becoming operational managers as a consequence of teachers’ taking on new leadership roles, teacher leadership cannot be successful”.

A study by Lashway (1988, p. 5) reveals that “teachers and principals entered the relationship with individual agendas that they did not immediately put aside, as principals were concerned with protecting certain prerogatives, such as exercising the ability to make key decisions, representing the school to the community, and knowing what activities were going on in the school”. In support of this argument, Timperley (2005, p. 412) argues that “even though officially appointed leaders automatically demand respect and power, teacher leaders may be particularly vulnerable to be openly disrespected and disregarded because they do not carry formal authority”. In line with the afore-mentioned argument, Troen and Boles (1994, p. 41) claim that “due to the fact that principals are expected to be instructional leaders they normally feel endangered when they are asked to shift over and create opportunity for teachers”.

Drawing on the literature and from my personal experience, I have little doubt in regarding principals as one of the possible barriers to teacher leadership. I now move on to discuss teachers themselves as barriers to teacher leadership.

2.5.4.2 Teachers as barriers to teacher leadership

I would argue that teachers themselves can be the stumbling blocks in their quest for teacher leadership at schools. Most of the time teachers are reluctant to advance the opportunity to carry out leadership activities at the school. In line with my argument, a study by Muijs and Harris (2007, p. 120) revealed that one of the things that could stand in the way of teachers becoming leaders was “the willingness of teachers to take up leadership roles as some teachers saw themselves as classroom practitioners and therefore could be very reluctant to see themselves in

a leadership role or indeed to take on such a role". In line with my argument, Troen and Boles (1994, p. 41) state that teachers are often most concerned with issues of teaching and life in the classroom and so are often unwilling to consider themselves as leaders and look on with some uneasiness at the thought of taking up quasi-administrative or expanded teaching functions. Lashway's (1998, p. 5) study revealed that teachers were concerned with "maintaining their relationships with peers, protecting their responsibility for working with students, and avoiding conflict with the principals".

Similar sentiments are echoed by Grant (2006, p. 529) who contends that one of the main barriers to teacher leadership in her study included teachers who from the word go did not go along with this change because of their lack of comprehension of the complexity of the change process. She further emphasised that these obstacles must be taken seriously in the quest for teacher leadership. I agree with Zinn (1997) who found in her study that a number of teachers had troubled feelings about their colleagues, their achievements and their visibility. She furthermore explained that the teachers were therefore reluctant to take on leadership responsibilities.

I now move on to discuss time as one of the barriers to teacher leadership.

3.5.4.3 Time

Drawing on the literature and my own experience, I am of the opinion that time is overwhelmingly one of the biggest barriers to teacher leadership. Even though teachers would like to take up leadership roles at school, time is one of the determining factors. Every concerted effort can be made to enhance teacher leadership at schools, but I strongly believe that it will prove futile as long as additional time is not allocated to teachers to carry out this important function. Stone, Horejs and Lomas (1999, p. 59) in their findings, highlight that "collaboration and collegial activities enhance teacher leadership and professional practice; however, more time and opportunities must be found to accommodate collaborative activities". Zinn (1997) contends that "the hindrance of time has numerous facets. She further argues that there is basically too much to accomplish and too limited time in which to execute it". In their contribution, Muijs and Harris (2006, p. 970) highlight that "lack of time for teachers to engage in activities outside of classroom teaching and administration appears to be a key inhibitor to teacher leadership, as it is to other

educational initiatives". Similarly, and in support of my argument, Sawyer and Rimm-Kaufman (2007, pp. 229-230) report in their findings that "teachers cited lack of time, both personal and for colleagues in order to collaborate and for administration". In addition they claim that the teachers and management were not prepared to sacrifice the time to do so.

Leblanc and Shelton (1997, p. 34) also contend that "the major barrier to teacher leadership, as reported in the literature, is time, and the lack thereof". Furthermore, they say that teachers are unable to accomplish their usual load and to assume new leadership roles. In a similar argument, Day and Harris (2002, p. 964) explain that "conditions of service for most teachers mean that little time is available". This claim is in line with what Sandholtz (2002, p. 828) revealed from her study that "the workload of teachers and tightly scheduled day of teachers often reduce their interest and willingness to participate in various activities".

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the review of local and international literature related to educational leadership and management and in particular teacher leadership which is the focus of my study. This chapter discussed traditional leadership theories which equate leadership with headship and then moved on to discuss more contemporary leadership theories which work from the premise that all people in an organization can lead, especially teachers who can lead both within and beyond the classroom. The chapter also discussed various definitions of distributed leadership and presented some of the criticisms leveled against it. A focus of the chapter was teacher leadership and the roles teachers can play, as well as other leaders in schools. The chapter concluded with a presentation of some hindering factors and some enhancing factors to teacher leadership. In the next chapter I discuss the methodology I used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present and explain the methodological processes chosen in order to generate and analyse data that enabled me to answer the research questions. This chapter begins where I give a brief background of my research aim and questions, followed by an explanation of how I set up the research design. I describe the research orientation used, the approach, the research site and sampling of the school as well as the participants involved in my study. I then move on to focus on the data collection process and techniques used to collect data. Thorough descriptions of how each tool was used are provided, together with my motivation for their use, and a critique of their usefulness. Literature relevant to each method is used to substantiate and validate the choices made. I then move on to focus on data analysis and ethical issues. In this section I explain how I went about analysing the data and I also explain the ethical issues I took into consideration before I embarked on and during the data collection process. I then focus on the limitations of my study and conclude the chapter with a brief summary.

3.2 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To remind the reader, this study aimed to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership in a Namibian Rural Primary School. In my attempt to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership, I came up with the following research questions.

- 1 How is the concept teacher leadership understood?
- 2 How is teacher leadership practised?
- 3 What organisational factors inhibit and enhance the practice of teacher leadership?

Now that I have presented the aim and research questions, I move on to the next section where I focus on the research orientation of this study.

3.3 RESEARCH ORIENTATION

My research was qualitative in nature and was located within the interpretive paradigm as I was interested to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership within a rural primary school in Namibia.

Maree (2007, p. 60) explains that:

The ultimate aim of interpretive research is to offer a perspective of a situation under study to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people make sense of their situation or phenomena they enter. The ontology and epistemology underlying this type of research is that there are multiple realities, as reality is socially constructed and it is perceived differently by different individuals. Meaning is constructed by individual groups, in interaction with each other. Researchers can gain access to individuals' reality by engaging with the actors in a particular situation.

A qualitative research study, according to Peshkin (1993) as cited in Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 136), serves one or more of the following purposes:

- In terms of description, they can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems, or people.
- Interpretation. They enable a researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon, and or discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon.
- Verification. They allow a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories, or generalizations within real-world contexts.

I was prompted by the above reasons to select a qualitative study as I regarded it as the most suitable approach to assist me with what I was exploring.

3.4 A CASE STUDY

Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 137) highlight that in a case study “a particular individual, program, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time”. In addition to this they say that sometimes researchers focus on a single case, perhaps because it is unique or because exceptional

qualities can promote understanding or inform practice for similar situations. A case study may be especially suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation. I focused on a small scale study in a rural primary school in Namibia. I selected a case study because it enabled me to focus on a specific setting and assisted me to obtain rich descriptive data on the phenomenon of teacher leadership. Furthermore, mine was an exploratory case study where I explored the concept and practice of teacher leadership to lay guidelines for further investigations. This is in line with Rule and John (2011, p. 8) who explain that “an exploratory case study often examines the phenomenon that has not been investigated and can lay the basis for further studies”. This is what I alluded to earlier that the concept teacher leadership is new in most of the Namibian schools and their environments and therefore needs to be understood better. I have only found two Masters of Education half theses case studies that have begun to explore teacher leadership so far. The first study was done by Nauyoma (2012) entitled “Teachers’ leadership roles at a public rural school in the Ohangwena Region, Namibia”. The other study was carried out by Hashikutuva (2011) entitled “The enactment of teacher leadership: A case study in the Eenhana School Circuit, Namibia”.

I conducted this study as an individual and the outcome of the study is presented in a language which is understandable to educational professionals and researchers. It is in line with what Nisbet and Watt (1984) as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) highlight:

The results are more easily understood by a wide audience (including non-academics) as they are frequently written in everyday, non-professional language; they catch unique features which might hold key to understanding the situation, thereby assisting interpretation of other similar cases; they can be undertaken by a single researcher without needing a full research team and they can embrace and build in unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables.

Nisbet and Watt (1984) as cited Cohen et al. (2007, p. 256) highlight some weaknesses of a case study:

The results may not be generalizable except where other readers/researchers see their application; they are not easily open to cross-checking, hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective and they are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity.

The above mentioned strengths and explanations of case studies tempted me to prefer and select a case study approach for my study; however, I considered the potential weaknesses and tried my utmost best to overcome them by indicating my subjectivity and indicating possible limitations. I acknowledge that my study was a small scale study and thus the findings cannot be generalized and, in response to the weaknesses in the study, I make recommendations for the need for further research which are included in Chapter Five of this study.

3.4.1 The research site and duration of study

This research was undertaken in a rural primary school in Namibia. The school is situated in a settlement area about 70 kilometres west of Otjiwarongo, the regional capital of the Otjozondjupa region in Namibia. The school falls under the Otjozondjupa Regional Council, Directorate of Education, where I am employed as a regional Education Officer for Lifelong Learning. The school is a state owned school which was opened in 1966 to provide education to the previously disadvantaged children in the settlement area. The demographics of the learners are such that they come mainly from poor backgrounds. All of them are from the African population. The current enrolment of the school is 334 learners.

There are 15 teaching staff members, including one principal (female) and one head of department (male) for the lower primary phase (Grade 0-4) as formally appointed school management members. Fifteen of the teaching staff members are permanently employed while one is temporarily employed; however all of them are paid by the state. All the teaching staff members are professionally qualified to teach various phases and subjects.

The non-teaching staff members consist of two institutional workers and one school secretary all of whom are appointed and remunerated by the state. All the non-teaching staff members are permanently employed and work on a full time basis. These staff members however, do not work during school holidays.

The School Board is elected from parents and teachers and is fully functional as they were given in-service training after being elected. There is a commitment to teaching and learning at the case

study school with the aim of developing the child holistically. To realize this task, the school offers curricular and extra-curricular programmes. The school is fenced.

In terms of my study, the school was selected because of its accessibility to me as a researcher. Convenience sampling was thus used to select the site. McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 175) explain that a convenience sample is “a group of subjects selected on the basis of being accessible or expedient”. I spent one month at the school which assisted me in the process of becoming more of an ‘insider’ in the entire school community.

3.4.2 Participants and Sampling

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) explain that “more often, qualitative researchers are intentionally non-random in their selection of data sources. Instead their sampling is purposeful: They select those individuals or objects that will yield the most information about the topic under investigation” (p. 147). I selected in total 16 participants in my study. My primary participants included the principal, one head of department, six teachers, the trade union leader, the school board chairperson and the traditional leader of the case study school. The principal, the school board chairperson, the leader of the teachers' union, the traditional leader and the head of department were selected based on their positional leadership roles. A sample of six teachers was selected, taking into account issues of gender and experience. To get breadth of voice, I used as secondary participants all the educators at the school.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

I used the following tools to collect data: questionnaires, observation, document analysis, focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews. In my study, these tools were used at different stages in the research process as indicated below. My aim with these tools was to ensure that I collected rich and varied data.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

At the outset of my study, I did a short survey using a closed questionnaire (Appendix 1). I used closed questions as I regarded this as advantageous. According to Oppenheim (1992, p. 15):

Closed questions prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose. Highly structured, closed questions are useful in that they can generate frequencies of response amenable to statistical treatment and analysis. They also enable the comparisons to be made across groups in the sample.

In addition, O'Hanlon (2003, p. 82) describes a questionnaire as "an economical method of collecting data. It will reach more people and take up less time than interview". Walker (1985) explains that a "questionnaire offers considerable advantages in administration. It presents an even stimulus, potentially to large numbers of people simultaneously, and provides the investigator with an easy (relatively easy) accumulation of data" (p. 91). I gave questionnaires to all the educators of the case study school to ensure that all the educators had the opportunity to have their voices heard on my topic of teacher leadership. In total 15 questionnaires were handed out personally by me to the participants. Fortunately all 15 questionnaires were completed and returned, a 100% return rate, although it took a while before all of them were returned.

The advantage was that as I went through the responses in the questionnaires I could pick up responses which assisted me with possible probing and follow up questions which I then used during the individual and focus group interview processes. Some of the participants also preferred to express themselves in writing and this was an opportunity for that. The participants were able to respond to the questions in the questionnaires with the assurance that their responses would remain anonymous.

3.5.2 Document analysis

Documents analysis, as explained by McEwan and McEwan (2003, p. 82), "can fill in some missing data pieces or it can raise a host of new questions regarding the accuracy of observation and interpretations". Document analysis gave me insight into what was happening in relation to teacher leadership in the case study school and it also assisted me in how to go about preparing for the interview process. In addition, it helped me to uncover information which was not

revealed during completion of questionnaires and the interviews by the participants for one or other reason. In this regard, Shank and Brown (2006, p. 63) explain that “material analysis looks at the ‘stuff’ that cultures generate and use in day-to-day life. These materials are often fascinating windows into the types and roles of meanings we might find within a given culture”.

I studied the set job descriptions of teachers, principal, subject head/phase heads and the job description of school board members; and the minutes of the subject/phase, school board, staff, management and parent meetings and the internal policies of the school as well as documents relating to the leadership from the school and the Ministry of Education. See Appendix 2 for more information relating to document analysis.

3.5.3 Focus group interview

I used a focus group interview in this study where I focused on semi-structured interview questions (Appendix 3). Morgan (1997, p. 2) explains a focus group interview as:

a form of qualitative research, focus groups are basically group interviews, although not in the sense of an alteration between a researcher’s questions and the research participant’s responses. Instead the reliance is on the interaction within the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who typically takes the role of a moderator. The hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group.

In line with Morgan (1997), Shank and Brown (2006, p. 63) explain that the goal of a focus group interview is “to get information and insights in a collective fashion. Quite often, this collective format leads to a deeper exploration of issues by participants”. I conducted a focus group interview with six teachers. I was the interviewer and also the moderator of the process because of the nature of the whole activity. The strengths of a focus group, as Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 148) explain, is that “people feel more comfortable talking in a group than alone and interaction among participants may be more informative than individually conducted interviews. It is useful when time is limited”. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 376) stresses that focus group interviews are useful for:

orienting to a particular field of focus; developing themes, topics and schedules flexibly for subsequent interviews and/or questionnaires; generating hypotheses that derive from the

insights and data from the group; gathering qualitative data; generating data quickly and at low cost; gathering data on attitudes, values and opinions; empowering participants to speak out in their own words; encouraging groups rather than individuals.

Some of these uses like encouraging groups rather than individuals helped me in my study as the participants felt free to express their opinions and were at the same time supported by other members of the group. I was able to gather a lot of qualitative data in one interview. In relation to the weaknesses of focus group interviews, Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 148) highlight that “the weaknesses can be that some participants might be dominant in the process of participation and that it is sometimes difficult to control the group”. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007, p. 377) maintain that focus groups are not without their drawbacks:

They tend not to yield numerical, quantifiable or generalizable data; the data may be difficult to analyse succinctly; the number of people involved tends to be small; they may yield information than survey; the group dynamics may lead to non-participation by some members and dominance by others and the data may lack overall reliability.

I was not aware of any of these challenges as mentioned by Leedy and Ormrod in my study as I was able to manage the group because we set the ground rules for the entire process that we had to adhere to before we kick-started, like to feel free to speak openly and without fear of intimidation, to speak only through the moderator, to respect others’ views and opinions in order to minimize group dynamics as all the members played their part. This is why I chose to use focus group interviews as a tool for data gathering in this study.

3.5.4 Individual interviews

I used individual interviews in my study to get information relevant to my research questions by interacting individually with the participants (Appendix 4). An interview gives one an opportunity to ask the participants questions on the phenomenon under study and gives one the opportunity to probe where necessary for clarification from the participant to get a better understanding of the meaning. My selection of this method of data collection was based on what Cohen and Manion (1980, p. 241) define as a “two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation”. Similarly, an

interview according to Shank and Brown (2006, p. 63), “is a specialized form of conversation”. They further explain that when we interview someone, we are gathering information, opinions, and insights from that person. I selected interviews in my study with a similar reasoning in my mind and I conducted one on one individual semi-structured interviews with the principal, head of department, school board chairperson, trade union leader and community leader.

I interviewed the principal and head of department after school in their respective offices. I also interviewed the trade union leader after school in his classroom. The school board chairperson and traditional leader were also interviewed after school in the staffroom. I used semi-structured interview questions to guide the process and, with permission obtained from participants, recorded the interviews. I used the local vernaculars (Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero and Afrikaans) to conduct interviews where necessary to ensure that the participants expressed themselves freely to the best of their abilities so that I could get the information I was looking for. It helped to avoid a communication gap which might have been caused by language barriers in the process. I did the translations of the interviews directly after each interview. I am multi-lingual and therefore was fortunate not to need a translator.

3.5.5. Observation

An observation schedule (Appendix 5) was used to observe teachers’ participation in leadership practices and to determine the enhancing factors and barriers to teacher leadership at the case study school. Observation was of significance in my study as it provided me with the information which the other tools could not provide. As Wellington (2000, p. 95) explains, “Observation with whatever degree of participation is clearly an important part of case study”. Observation assisted me to understand the actions of participants very well as Stake (1995, p. 60) comments that “observations work the researcher toward greater understanding of the case”. Similarly to these descriptions, Simpson and Tuson (2003, pp. 61-81) highlight the strengths of observation that:

Observation can give direct access to social interactions; observation can give permanent and systematic records of social interactions, observation can enrich and supplement data gathered by other techniques and observation techniques are extremely varied as it can be applied through a wide range of techniques, it can yield very different types of data, it can

demand a variety of research skills, it can be applied in a variety of contexts and it can be used to address a variety of types of research questions.

Based on the above advantages, I used observation as my data collection tool in the case study school where I was an observer. I planned and observed the following: a staff meeting, a phase meeting for the lower primary phase (grade 1-4), a school board meeting and a morning briefing session in order to determine how teachers were involved in leadership at various levels and what roles they played. I wrote down my observations without any delay in both my field note booklets and on the observation schedule (Appendix 5) and typed them up later and summarised them at the end of the day. This action is in line with what Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) recommend that one needs to record the notes as soon as possible because even if information is being given slowly it can suddenly flow a lot faster and can easily be forgotten. Moreover, Simpson and Tuson (2003, p. 18) do not let the weaknesses of observation go unnoticed as they identify two challenges to observation as:

its high demand on time, effort and resources; and its susceptibility to observer bias. The second challenge is its susceptibility to bias, which occurs because the observer records what he or she thought occurred rather than what actually took place, or observer's lack of attention to significant events-is little more difficult to deal with.

I did not experience any one of the above challenges even though they might have been there. In the next section I move on to discuss data analysis.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 182) "involves organising, accounting for, and explaining the data; in short making sense of data in terms of participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. Typically in qualitative research data analysis commences during data collection process". In line with Cohen et al. (2007) data analysis as defined by Watling (2002, p. 262) is "the researcher's equivalent of alchemy - the process by which you hope you can turn raw data into nuggets of pure gold". Similarly Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 138) are of the view that "a case study researcher often

begins to analyse data during the data collection process; preliminary conclusions are likely to influence the kinds of data he or she seeks out and collects in later parts of the study”.

In line with this thinking, I analysed my data using thematic content analysis. I began analysing documents while I was still collecting data with other tools like questionnaires which were still with participants and interviews which were scheduled to be conducted at different times. I analysed the data immediately as the first data collection tool was employed and the process continued until all the data from the five tools were analysed. I read the transcribed data more than once. I identified the topics that emerged from the data. I put the topics which were similar in the same categories as they were answering the research questions of my study. I discarded the data which was not relevant; I looked for any negative and discrepant cases. In addition, I used as my analytical tool the model of teacher leadership of Grant. (2008). This model helped me to code the data by zone and then by role. See Fig. 3 in Chapter 2.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

I asked permission from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, (Appendix 6) to get access to carry out my research through an official letter in which I stated the purpose of my study, the research topic, the duration of my study and provisional dates of commencement and end of my study. I also indicated the name of the school and the region where I wanted to carry out my study. To avoid unexpected delays and inconveniences, the same letter was sent to the regional director, the circuit inspector and the principal of the case study school. Permission to conduct the research study at the school was granted by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education through the office of the regional director (see Appendix 7). All the invitation letters (Appendix 8) to the participants were channelled through the principal with the permission letter from the Permanent Secretary’s office attached to it.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 101) explain the need for an ethical approach in research as follows:

Within certain disciplines - the social sciences, education, criminology, medicine, and similar areas of study - the use of human beings in research is, of course, quite common. Whenever

human beings or other creatures with the potential to think, feel, and experience physical or psychological distress are the focus of investigation, we must look closely at the ethical implications of what we are proposing to do.

In this study, to adhere to ethical issues I drew on the explanation by Merriam (2007, pp. 212-213) that ethics “begins with the conception of the research project and ends with how we present and share with others what we have learned”.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 103) state that “any research involving human beings should respect participants’ right to privacy”. Furthermore, they suggest that the researcher must keep the nature and quality of participants’ performance strictly confidential. I adhered to this calling to protect the anonymity of participants and the school by using pseudonyms in this study. The right of participants to participate voluntarily was also considered and guaranteed in my study. In this regard, Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 101) highlight informed consent as follows:

When people are intentionally recruited for participation in a research study, they should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice either to participate or not participate. Furthermore, they should be told that, if they have agreed to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Any participation in a study should be strictly voluntary.

I gave each participant a consent letter (Appendix 9). I also told them that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any given time if they so wished. The permission to record the data during the interviews was requested from the participants, at the same time as the prior explanation of the study’s purpose before the commencement of the data collection process, and was granted. To protect the participants, I was given a ministerial oath of secrecy form which I completed and signed.

Concerning the honesty with professional colleagues, Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 103) explain that “the researcher must report their findings in complete and honest fashion, without misrepresenting what they have done or intentionally misleading the others about the nature of their findings”. In my study, I present my raw data by putting it in italics and discuss the findings and support it with the literature, by indicating the information that I used from other sources either by using direct codes or by paraphrasing it with the indication of the name (s) of the author(s) and year and page number during in text referencing and the full particulars of the

source in my list of references. In the next section, I move on to focus on how I went about ensuring the validity of my study.

3.8 VALIDITY

McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 407) contend that in qualitative research “claims of validity rest on the data collection and analysis techniques”. To ensure the validity of my data, I did an internal validity test on my data collection tools by asking my supervisors to review my interview questions, questionnaire and other tools. I had an opportunity to test my interview questions by piloting them on my supervisor and my fellow students who did the same course work component of the Master of Education degree with me. In line with my action, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 135) explain that internal validity “seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data”.

In relation to triangulation and validity, Rule and John (2011, p. 108) explain that:

The logic underpinning triangulation is that a multiplicity of sources, methods and other aspects of a study would strengthen the truthfulness (validity) of the assertion or findings by eliminating the inaccuracy or bias introduced by relying on a single source, method, theory or researcher.

To enhance validity I triangulated the information from all five data collection tools. I used various sources in my study to substantiate anything that I discussed or presented. I also did member checking with the participants. After I completed each interview, be it individual or focus group, I replayed the audio voice recorder to let the participants listen to the just completed process of the interview and asked them to add anything which might have been omitted. I went back to the participants after I transcribed the interviews to do the final member checking. In the case of documents, I requested the school principal to assist me with the copies of the documents which I studied and analysed. To avoid disasters and last minute embarrassments, I ensured that my voice recorder and all the tools were working properly before I started with the interviews. The

data collection tools and raw data were kept in a safe place to be produced or retrieved easily if needs arose for any scrutiny.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

3.9.1 Researcher subjectivity

Since the research study was conducted at the school which falls under the regional office of education where I work, this raised a number of questions about the influences and biases that I may have had as a researcher. I served as a mentor of the case study school from 2008 to 2010 although I am also the education officer responsible for adult education in our region. I have three years of working experience as mentor with the school staff although most of the current staff members are new at the school. The fact that I possessed background knowledge of the school culture and climate put me in a position as researcher, to understand and capture the unspoken culture and climate of the school which an outsider might have not seen and understood.

However, my position as an officer dealing with adult education placed me above the schooling staff in the education hierarchy when power relations came into play and, consequently, the staff may not have been as honest and open with me. To overcome this, I did not only rely on interviews in terms of data collection but opted also for document analysis and observation. Furthermore, as education officer for adult education and not school level education may have been a limitation. However, I believe that a little distance from the everyday working of the school allowed me to be more objective.

The fact that I worked at the regional office of education and was studying towards obtaining a higher qualification than what some participants possessed, could have raised the perception among participants that I was more knowledgeable than them. This could have prompted the participants to feel uncomfortable and may have caused them to withhold information from me.

However, I tried my utmost to overcome these challenges by applying the following as precautionary measures. During interviews I gave the preference of language to be used to

participants and the venue was the setup which they were used to: either their classrooms or their offices. I sat next to participants to create an informal and relaxed atmosphere. During focus group interviews and observations I sat among the participants to create and promote an atmosphere of being an 'insider'. The ground rules applied during the focus group interviews were proposed by the participants although I was the moderator. During interviews I sensitized the participants to the fact that I was not on a fault-finding exercise or doing an evaluation, but rather was attempting as part of my study, to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership. My dress code during my stay at the case study school was absolutely professional and presentable. During the afternoon hours during the data collection process, I turned up for extra mural activities together with the teachers and offered my advice where my expertise was needed or when I was invited to do so. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 199) state that "at the stage of data analysis there are several areas where invalidity lurks; these might be minimized by reducing the halo effect, where the researcher's knowledge of the person or knowledge of other data about the person or situation exerts an influence on subsequent judgements".

3.9.2 Lack of generalizability

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 115) state that purposeful sampling "while it may satisfy the researcher's needs to take this type of sample, it does not pretend to represent the wider population; it is deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased". The fact that this case study only targeted one school and in fact only involved some teachers at the school may be regarded by some as a limitation but I did not see it as such. I did not warrant the findings of my study to be generalized at all.

3.10 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the methodology adopted and sketched the steps that were followed in the research process. A case study approach was used to frame the investigation and a variety of data collection techniques were used in the quest for answers to the research questions. Enough data were collected about the concept and practice of teacher leadership for

analysis. The ethical considerations were taken into account during the study. I believe that the case study methodology was the most suitable one to respond to my research questions.

In the next chapter, I present and discuss the findings of my study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings which emerged from the data collected using questionnaires, observation, document analysis, individual interviews and focus group interviews as outlined in the previous chapter. To remind the reader, the aim of this study was to explore teacher leadership in a rural Namibian primary school, how the concept was understood, how teacher leadership was practiced as well as the enhancing factors and barriers to teacher leadership at this school.

In this chapter, the discussion of my findings is drawn from the analysis process where I interpreted the data systematically in line with the research questions and based them on literature from different authors on comparable issues. In presenting my findings, I chose to include excerpts from my data as they emerged from the different data sets.

I elected to use abbreviations to make reading easier and to provide clarity in identifying direct quotations sourced from the data. When referring to data collection tools in this chapter, I use the following abbreviations: Individual Interviews (II), Focus Group Interviews (FGI), Questionnaire (Q), Document Analysis (DA) and Observation (O). When referring to my primary participants in this chapter, I use the following abbreviations: Principal (P), Head of Department (HOD), School Board Chairperson (SB), Traditional Leader (TRL), Trade Union Leader (TUL) and Teachers (T1-6). I also regularly refer in this chapter to the model of teacher leadership (Grant 2008) because I used it as my analytical tool. For ease of reading, I refer to Grant's (2008) model simply as 'the model'.

In this chapter the themes that emerged from data are presented and discussed in the following order: The conceptual understanding of teacher leadership both inside the classroom and outside the classroom, the practice of teacher leadership in terms of zones and roles and the enhancing factors to teacher leadership and barriers to teacher leadership.

4.2 A CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP BOTH IN THE CLASSROOM AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

The Namibian national policy 'Set of Job Descriptions' (2008, p. 1) states that the basic job description for a teacher' is "to engage in class teaching, including the academic, administrative, educational and disciplinary aspects and to organise extra and co-curricular activities so as to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner". The policy expects teachers to lead within and beyond the classroom which is in line with the 'National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia' (2006, p. 77) as it also states that "teachers must keep attendance registers, subject files and preparation; assessment files and records; and records of classroom furniture, textbooks, stationery and other resources and participate in school decision structures and processes". These policies expect teachers to lead in the classroom by teaching learners and doing administrative work and, at the same time, the policies call on teachers to lead outside the classroom by leading the learners and teachers in extra-mural activities as well as being involved in leading whole school development activities.

In response to my first research question, the conceptual understanding of teacher leadership in the case study school was that teachers led both inside and outside of the classroom as uncovered across the data sets. In support of this claim, data from the questionnaires indicated that almost all (93%) of the participants, "*agree that they critically reflect on their classroom teaching*" (Q, pp. 1-2) and the same source indicated the understanding that the majority (87%) of the sample strongly agreed that: "*All educators can take a leadership role in the school*". In addition, almost all (93%) of the sample disagreed that: "*Only people in the formal positions of authority should lead*" (Q, pp. 1-2).

Qualitative data further highlighted that teachers were also leaders and were able to lead both within and beyond the classroom. In line with the quantitative trends, T1 highlighted his understanding of teacher leadership: "*I think teachers are leaders in the sense that they are subject heads, they are leaders in the classrooms, they are phase heads and they are union members as branch chairpersons and regional chairpersons*" (FGI, p. 2). In support of this claim, P described a teacher leader as an initiator and a person having responsibilities to lead learners, teachers and the community. She explained as follows: "*Teacher leadership for me means taking*

initiative – it can be a teacher in position of leading in his or her capacity as a teacher having the responsibility to lead, it can be leading the learners, it can be leading other teachers, it can be leading in the communities in which the teacher lives” (II, p. 1). This understanding of teachers being leaders both within and outside the classroom was affirmed during my observation of a school board meeting on 26 July 2012. My field notes read that teachers served, *“on the school board of the school and were thus playing an integral part in leading the activities in the school outside their classroom”* (O 1, p. 2).

Drawing on the evidence from across the sets of data it became clear that teacher leadership was understood to be both within and outside the classroom which is similar to how Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p. 17) define teacher leadership: “Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders and influence the others toward improved educational practice”. Similarly, Grant (2008, p. 186) contends that: “Teacher leadership is a form of leadership beyond headship or formal position. It refers to teachers becoming aware and taking up formal and informal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond”.

In the next section, I present and discuss the practice of teacher leadership in terms of zones and roles which is a direct response to my second research question.

4.3 THE PRACTICE OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN TERMS OF ZONES AND ROLES

Grant’s model of teacher leadership, hereafter referred to as ‘the model’, has four zones where teacher leadership is practiced: zone one (in the classroom); zone two (working with teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities); zone three (outside the classroom in whole school development) and zone four (between neighbouring schools in the community). The model has six roles of teacher leadership which are: role one: continuing to teach and improve one’s own teaching; role two: providing curriculum development knowledge; role three: leading in-service education and assisting other teachers; role four: participating in

performance evaluation of teachers; role five: organizing and leading peer reviews of school practice and role six: participating in school level decision-making.

Data in my study highlighted that teacher leadership was practiced across all four zones in the case study school but to varying degrees. However, it emerged that from the six roles of teacher leadership only three roles (one, two and six) were practiced in the case study school while the other roles were not practiced at all, despite the fact that policies made provision for them to be practiced. I now move on to present my findings, organized by using the zones of the model as my framework.

4.3.1 Zone one: Teachers as leaders within the classroom

According to the Namibian national policy 'Set of Job Descriptions' (2008, p. 2), in the basic job descriptions of teachers it is recommended to teachers "to provide learner-centred teaching to individuals and small groups in order to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the learners with varying intellectual abilities and to accommodate a variety of teaching activities". The policy expects teachers to lead within the classroom by teaching the learners using a variety of teaching methods including learner-centred teaching. What emerged from across the data sets in the case study school, and in line with the policy, was that teacher leadership took place mostly in the classroom where the focus was on continuing to teach learners and the improvement of one's own teaching. In this regard, T2 responded when asked how she leads in her classroom:

I think we are leading in our classrooms by managing the learners, even their morals and behavior - we take them step by step so that at the end of the day we can also achieve our goals and through the evaluation of the learners we get to see if they have gained the knowledge from what we have taught them. Sometimes due to overcrowded classes we might also ask learners to take the lead (FGI, p. 1).

In line with her explanation, the HOD elaborated: "*I sometimes make deliberate mistakes on the chalkboard and ask my learners to correct any mistake they observe on the chalkboard. My learners are then participating in teaching and learning as they are also fully involved*" (II, p. 1). Similarly T3 maintained: "*I am a leader as I am moulding the children - improving their knowledge in the classroom so that at the end of the day these learners can become leaders in their community or in society*" (FGI, p. 2). In accordance with T3, T5 highlighted that: "*Sometimes due to*

overcrowded classes I ask learners to lead others” (FGI, p. 3). In line with her above explanation, T3 further highlighted the activities that take place and involve learners:

We know when they are doing group work or are working in pairs that we must monitor the groups as to whether they are doing the right things or not, because at the end of the day I can give them group work but some learners will just play. I give them five minutes or ten minutes to do that work and I walk around the class to supervise and to see if they are doing the right things or not. That is leading. Thereafter learners have to share their findings and then later on the teacher has to evaluate himself as to whether he managed or did not achieve his objectives (FGI, p. 4)

The issue of teachers monitoring and controlling these classroom activities was also evident from the data as T4 explained:

I am leading when I plan the activities for the day. I prepare by writing out my lesson preparations and then start the day from what I have planned right up to the end. The fact that you are facilitating and you have control over the whole class means that you are a leader in the class as a teacher (FGI, p. 3).

Drawing on data it became evident that teachers in the case study school involved learners in teaching in the form of group work and other learner-centred teaching methods. This statement is in line with evidence from the literature as Devaney (1987, p. 23) states that: “In classroom teaching teachers relationship with students is the central one in the school”.

Drawing on the above, it became evident that this role of teachers as leaders in the classroom was strong in the case study school. In the next subsection I move on to focus on zone two of the model.

4.3.2 Zone two: Teachers working as leaders with other teachers and learners in curricular and extra-curricular activities

In this zone according to the model, teachers work with other teachers and learners in curricular and extra-curricular activities. In line with this, the Namibian national policy ‘Guidelines for School Principals’ (2005, p. 26) states that:

Administrative and extra-curricular duties and responsibilities must be allocated fairly to different staff members. The talents, interest and experience of each HOD and teachers should be considered in assigning responsibilities for specific sport teams, leading various cultural activities or undertaking administrative tasks such as textbook ordering and control.

Certain school activities such as a school bazaar or the annual athletics meeting will normally require participation of all staff members.

The policy expects teachers to be involved in leading curricular and extra-curricular activities. Teachers in the case study school led as subject/phase heads in curricular activities and as sports coaches and cultural coordinators in extra-curricular activities. The data linked in closely with the above policy and is discussed under the following sub-sections.

4.3.2.1. Teachers as leaders of teachers and learners in curricular activities

Teachers in the case study school were expected to lead other teachers in curricular activities. The national policy document 'Guidelines for School Principals' (2005, p. 145) outlines that:

Teachers of the same subject (e.g. English or Mathematics), or teachers of the same phase (e.g. Junior Primary) should form a "subject" committee or group, and should meet regularly (at least twice per trimester) with Subject/Phase Heads as chairperson. Subject groups should focus on better teaching, learning and assessment in their subject or phase, with teachers sharing best practices and best experiences.

This policy guides teachers to lead other teachers in subject areas and it is in line with the national policy document 'Set of Job Descriptions' (2008, p. 1) in basic job descriptions of teachers which outlines teachers to play a leadership role in curricular activities outside the classroom as: "...guiding proper subject planning and to assist and guide teachers by providing specialist assistance to the subject teachers in the subject and to conduct effective induction programs for newly appointed subject teachers".

In line with policy, evidence from across the data sets showed that teachers at the case study school were leaders beyond the classroom and served as subject/phase heads. To substantiate this claim, data from questionnaires highlighted that the majority (86%) of the sample agreed that: *"They choose textbooks and instructional material for their grades/learning areas"* (Q, p. 2). Selecting textbooks and other stationery for subjects/phase are roles of subject and/or phase heads and in line with this, T1 expressed himself as follows: *"I think teachers are leaders in the sense that they are subject heads, they are phase heads"* (FGI, p .2). Similar sentiments were alluded to as TUL contended that, *"In your subject area at school level we are divided into certain categories, the principal can give you any department to lead"* (II, p. 1). In line with his contribution, P highlighted that: *"Yes I do appoint teachers on the basis of subjects; I do have*

subject heads that take on a leadership role and I do have phase heads that are chosen from the teachers themselves – and they would then be leading and supervising other teachers”. It further became evident from the response of the HOD that teachers provided curriculum development in their own school when he responded as follows: *“We appoint teachers to become subject heads and to lead various projects at the school. Teachers should be given enough time to take up leadership roles through proper planning and prioritizing so that they can carry out activities and programs”* (II, p. 2).

Teachers in the case study school had specialized skills, knowledge and expertise in specific subjects and led other teachers and learners in their specific phase and subjects.

4.3.2.2 Teachers as leaders of other teachers and learners in sport as extra-curricular activities

Teachers in the case study school were expected to lead other teachers and learners in extra-curricular activities at the school. In support of this, the national policy document, ‘Code of Conduct for Teachers’ (2001, p. 6) states that:

It is recognized that much stimulation for physical development comes from outside the classroom. Teachers shall, therefore, encourage learners to explore these avenues for physical development through participation in school sport and club activities. Furthermore, teachers shall encourage learners to participate in and learn how to interact in teams, especially with a view of developing an understanding of individual and group needs. Individual and team identities are essential elements in the process of nation building.

This policy guides teachers to lead teachers and learners in extra-curricular activities like sports. Sport coaching was one of the most common extra-curricular activities at the case study school. To substantiate this claim, T4 confirmed: *“Yes, I think you are a leader outside the class situation, being a netball or football coach. By being a coach you are leading a team and giving them direction in becoming a winning team. Therefore, the teacher is also a leader outside the classroom”* (FGI, p. 5). In line with her response, SB contended that: *“They are coaching netball, volleyball and soccer teams”* (II, p. 2). In the same way, the HOD maintained: *“Yes our teachers are participating in sports and extra classes in the afternoon”* (II, p. 1). Similar sentiments were echoed in the data as TUL maintained: *“Although I am not a sports coordinator I am always available if the sports coordinator asks me to assist him. If I am instructed to do something, I have to do it. In this way I am taking a leadership role in sport.”* (II, p. 2). In line with him, TRL stated that: *“They are*

leading children in sport by coaching the teams” (II, p. 1). The fact that teachers were involved in sport was further noted in the ‘minutes of a staff meeting’ dated 11 March 2012: *“Soccer is active, netball must be changed”* (DA, p. 2)

The school calendar of activities (2012) indicated that there were sufficient extra-curricular activities offered and practiced at the case study school. During my informal observation of extra-curricular activities on 19 July 2012, I noticed teachers involved in coaching football teams after school. During this exercise, teachers led learners and other teachers by teaching them new skills and this is in line with what Cawood, Kapp and Swartz (1989, pp. 227-228) contend: “When sport is practiced sensibly, it serves as an educational tool for intellectual, physical, emotional, social and moral development”. Furthermore, these authors maintain that sport creates an ideal opportunity for a leader to prove his leadership abilities, because as a coach of a team he has to learn to work together with other people and mould them together as a team with a sound team spirit, trying to achieve a common goal. The quote echoes the situation at the case study school where teachers as leaders, were leading and empowering other teachers and learners through the extra-curricular activity of sports.

4.3.2.3. Teachers as leaders of other teachers and learners in cultural programmes as extra-curricular activities

Teachers were expected to lead other teachers and learners in extra-curricular activities at the case study school. In support of this statement, the national policy document, ‘Guidelines for School Principals’ (2005, p. 74) makes it explicit that: “Cultural programmes should be part of extra-curricular activities of all schools”. Similarly, another national policy document, ‘Code of Conduct for Teachers’ (2001, p. 3) affirms that “during the social and cultural development process of learners, teachers shall support and guide learners to develop acceptable social discipline; social courtesy; tolerance for different cultures; and respect for property and for constitution”.

The policies guide teachers to lead teachers and learners in extra-curricular activities in schools. Teachers at the case study school led learners and other teachers as group leaders in cultural activities as part of their extra-curricular activities at the school in the afternoon even at regional

level and, by so doing, provided in-service education and assisted other teachers in activities taking place outside the classrooms. In support of this, it became evident in the data that most (73%) of the participants agreed that: *“They co-ordinate aspects of extra-mural activities in their school”*. In support of this, TUL stressed that:

I am leading the cultural department - so I am responsible for everything happening in the cultural department. You can be a leader wherever you are appointed to lead and culture is the department I always lead. I invite learners to come in the afternoon for practices and we attend cultural festivals in our region. All of them are under my supervision as a group leader (II, pp. 1-2).

To substantiate the claim being made, T1 highlighted: *“Sometimes I acknowledge that there are structures at our school which empower teachers; work is delegated to make you feel responsible. If you feel responsible then you are a leader, for example there is a cultural leader”* (FGI, p. 8). In line with the thinking of T1, the HOD confirmed that teachers were involved in cultural activities: *“They also lead different committees like cultural groups”* (II, p. 2). In his contribution, TRL also highlighted that: *“They also lead the cultural groups”* (II, p. 1).

Drawing on the above data, teachers at the case study school were strongly involved in leading other teachers and learners in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Next I move on to focus on Zone three.

4.3.3 Zone three: Teachers leading in whole school development at the case study school

Teachers at the case study school were expected to lead in whole school development. The most recently launched policy document ‘National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia’ (2006, p. 77) reiterates that teachers should:

participate in school decision-making structures and processes. Furthermore, this area of competence addresses the leader/manager role of the teacher, rather than the formal post appointment (i.e. not as Principal or HOD). Teachers often have other involvements and life experiences which equip them with leadership skills.

In addition, the document titled ‘The Work of the School Board’ (1999, p. 4) highlights that: *“It is pivotal to note that one of the most critical tasks of school board members is to work with the school authorities to make sure that quality education is provided to all children”*. Teachers are a

part of the school board and, in this role they are called on to lead outside the classroom in the area of whole school development. Teachers served as school board members in the case study school and this is relevant to the study as the school board and other bodies like trade unions in the case study school dealt with whole school development policies. The policies expected teachers to lead in the whole school development of the school. Data linked with the policies is discussed under the following sub-headings:

4.3.3.1 Teachers served on various school level decision-making bodies

In my study, teachers were involved in leading whole school development activities at school as they served on most of the decision-making bodies of the school, for example the school board, the trade unions, sport clubs, cultural clubs, etc. In these decision-making bodies they took the initiative, were involved in discussions and participated in school level decision-making. In support of this claim, data from the questionnaires highlighted that almost all (93%) of the participants agreed *“that the SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision-making and that they values teachers opinions”*. Furthermore, the same source confirmed that all (100%) of the participants agreed that *“they are allowed to try out new ideas”* (Q, p. 2). The fact that teachers were involved in decision-making was further confirmed as T1 outlined that: *“Some of us are school board members, making very important decisions relating to the school. So as teachers we are very much involved, as leadership goes hand in hand with initiating”* (FGI, p. 5). In support of this, T4 highlighted that: *“Every morning we come to morning devotion to share information and ideas and take some decisions together”* (FGI, p. 9).

In line with the above data, P highlighted the extent to which teachers’ involvement in decision-making was promoted:

It is promoted as such at my school: we meet each and every morning and there is an open platform whereby we share information. Anyone can come up with a proposal or announcement or an idea which we can deliberate on and either come to an agreement or move it to the next day due to the limited time we have in the morning. It is a brilliant opportunity for us to share information and take decisions. It is like having a staff meeting every day for those ten to fifteen minutes (II, p.3).

During my observation of a morning briefing session on 29 July 2012, I noted that teachers were involved in decision-making, as my field notes testified:

There were daily opportunities at the school where teachers came together, shared information and ideas, held discussions and made decisions at school level. I also observed that in all cases the final decision-making always considered teachers' views expressed during the discussion and was made through consensus (O, p. 5).

Teachers' decisions in this morning briefing session were considered and accepted after discussion and clarification, as indicated in the minutes of the staff meeting dated 17 July 2012.

The issue of the cleanliness of the classrooms was discussed:

A teacher suggested that learners could also help once a week in order to clean the classrooms and the principal agreed with the point of allowing learners to assist in the cleaning of the classrooms while awaiting the appointment of a second institutional worker. The principal agreed that the classrooms would be cleaned on a weekly basis (Tuesday and Thursday) and a program would be set (DA, p.1).

Drawing on data it became evident that teachers in the case study school served on various school level decision-making bodies like school and other clubs in whole school development. In the next sub-section I focus on teachers as leaders of other teachers as trade union members.

4.3.3.2 Teachers as leaders of trade union members in the school

A further example of teacher leadership in whole school development which emerged in the case study was leadership of teachers in relation to their union membership. In support of this claim, data made it explicit that three teachers served as shop stewards of teacher unions at the case study school and they played a mediating role. In this regard, TUL responded: *"Yes, I regard myself as leader of NANTU as a teacher leader, because I am leading teachers in our union. So if a teacher was concerned about anything they would come to me before I took it to the next level"* (II, p. 1)

This claim was substantiated by T1 who stated that: *"I think teachers are leaders in the sense that they are union members and serve as branch chairpersons and regional chairpersons"* (FGI, p. 2).

In the case study school it became evident that teachers were leaders of trade unions and served on decision-making bodies by virtue of their positions as leaders of these bodies in their school. In line with these ideas, I observed during the school board meeting of 26 July 2012 that: *"The shop steward of a trade union was also present at the meeting and made contributions during the meeting"* (O 2, p. 2).

Considering my findings, it became clear that teachers served on the decision-making bodies which dealt with whole school development. In the next section I move on to explore teacher leadership in zone four as I further try to understand where and how teacher leadership was practiced.

4.3.3 Zone Four: Teachers leading in the provision of curriculum development knowledge across schools into community

National policy calls on teachers to lead other teachers across schools in the community in the provision of curriculum development knowledge. In line with this statement and as an example, the national policy document 'Guidelines for School Principals' (2005, p. 190) explains a school cluster system as:

a group of schools that is geographically as close and accessible to each other as possible. The two main purposes school clustering serve are: to improve teaching and learning practices by sharing expertise, experience and resources among staff from different schools, and to improve and facilitate general administration of schools and to pool resources from several schools.

The policy calls on teachers to provide curriculum development knowledge to teachers across the schools in their particular cluster of schools. The teachers in the case study school provided curriculum development knowledge to schools in their cluster. This claim was supported as data stressed that more than half (60%) of the participants agreed that: *"They co-ordinate cluster meetings for their learning areas"* and that most (70%) of the participants agreed that: *"They keep up to date with developments in teaching practices and learning areas"* (Q, p. 2). To affirm this claim, T2 maintained: *"Sometimes we take part in cluster activities like meetings and the setting up of question papers for clusters"* (FGI, p. 5). Similarly the SB maintained that: *"Our teachers are serving on cluster committees"* (II, p. 2) In the same way, P highlighted that teachers provided curriculum knowledge beyond their school as she responded that: *"Yes, on the basis of the different subjects, I do have some subject coordinators from my school who are serving on the cluster level coordinating committee for the Otjiwarongo Primary Schools Cluster"* (II, p. 2) In line with P, the HOD affirmed: *"They are also leading in tea clubs and some are coordinators in the clusters and give feedback to the whole school after cluster meetings"* (II, p. 2). In support of the views of the HOD, T3 maintained: *"We lead even at workshops and training that we attend. So we*

are leading in many ways - we are not only leaders at our schools, we are leading outside” (FGI, p. 2). I learnt during my stay at the case study school that teachers were involved in cluster activities as a staff meeting was postponed because it clashed with an urgent cluster meeting in Otjiwarongo which some teachers went to attend. It emerged from the discussions regarding the clustering system in the staff meeting of 17 July 2012, as stated in the minutes that “Schools benefited from cluster activities and it should not be stopped, as the schools will help each other. However, NANTU is against the cluster issue” (DA, p. 3).

Drawing on data, it became evident that teachers in the case study school provided curriculum development knowledge beyond their school to the schools in the community. In a similar way, when explaining where teacher leaders extend their reach, Donaldson (2007, p. 18) highlights that:

Teacher leaders contribute beyond their own school when they participate in a district wide teacher evaluation team or curriculum team, make a presentation at a state or national conference, serve on a state standards board, or speak at a school board meeting as the voice of teachers in the community.

In this section I referred to teacher leadership within the cluster system which is currently piloted and practised in the Otjozondjupa region in Namibia. It is also important to note that this policy on clustering is not officially enacted. Some regions in Namibia started implementing it and it was stopped along the way as trade unions were not satisfied with some issues in the implementation process. In summing up, it can be seen that teacher leadership was practiced in the case study school and the extent of the teacher leadership differed from zone to zone. I now move on to discuss the enhancing factors as well as the barriers to teacher leadership that emerged in my study.

4.4 ENHANCING FACTORS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP

This section is in response to the third question of this case study research where I looked at factors that enhanced teacher leadership in the case study school. Data revealed that there were a number of factors that enhanced teacher leadership in the case study school. The most

prevalent factors which were uncovered were collaboration and participation in school level decision-making.

4.4.1 Collaboration

Teachers have to cooperate among themselves and also with the school management team and other stakeholders in education in order to enhance teacher leadership at schools. In support of this statement, the national policy document 'A Set of Job Descriptions' (2008, p. 3) in the basic job description for teachers state that they are to: "...build mutually beneficial relationships with the teaching and non-teaching staff as well as with the parents and to develop positive working relationships with and between all staff members". This policy expects teachers to work together as a team.

It became clear from across the data sets that teachers in the case study school adhered to this policy as indicated in the quantitative data where an overwhelming 100% of the participants agreed that *"teamwork is encouraged"* at the case study school (Q, p. 3). In support of this information, T3 in his contribution shared the following sentiments: *"We can work as a team, as people sharing the same vision. Let team work be promoted as we are learning as teachers from each other"* (FGI, p. 6). Similarly, SB stated that: *"Teacher leadership begins as we are entering the school premises. You are working as a team from the word go. When you are working as a team you have a goal towards which you work and you realize it together as a group"* (II, p. 1). This claim was further substantiated by T5 as she maintained that: *"Another thing that promotes teacher leadership is that we do not undermine each other but see each other as a team. We consider each other's ideas"* (FGI, p. 6). In line with this, T4 contended that: *"According to my observation from the few months that I have been here, there is cooperation between us as every morning we are forced to be in the morning devotion, sharing information and ideas. If there was no cooperation we could go directly to our classrooms or just ignore the whole situation"* (FGI, p. 9). TRL also maintained that: *"Our teachers support each other; if one teacher is not at the school or is sick the other teachers put these learners in their classrooms and look after them while still teaching. This seems like a good idea to me"* (II, p. 2). Similarly, the HOD highlighted: *"Small*

problems are everywhere, but people are working together at our school. I am happy with the way teachers are assisting each other as colleagues at this school. It is like a soccer team” (II, p. 2).

Data illustrated that the teachers in the case study school came together as a team every morning - a norm in the school - and planned together their activities of the day and shared information and ideas which emerged not only from one person but from the team as a whole. Drawing on the data, it became clear that teachers in the case study school worked in a culture of collaboration. In support of these claims and in his explanation of a collaborative culture, Leithwood (1992, p. 10) states that, “In collaborative school cultures staff members often talk, observe, critique and plan together and that the norms of collective responsibility and continuous improvement encourage them to teach one another”.

Drawing on the above data and substantiated by the literature, one would argue that collaboration among teachers at the case study school was strong. Looking at the above given definition of collaboration I would argue that collaboration is the most important factor to enhance teacher leadership in education and that this was evidenced at the case study school. I now move on to focus on data which uncovered participative decision-making as a factor that enhanced teacher leadership in the case study school.

4.4.2 Participation in school level decision making

Teachers in the case study school were expected to serve on the school level decision-making bodies of the school. This is in line with the Namibian national policy document ‘National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia’ (2006, p. 77) which indicates that: “Teachers should participate in school decision-making structures and processes”. Another policy document, ‘The Work of the School Board’ makes it clear that “the School Board is the highest decision-making body at local school level”. These policies guide teachers to serve on school level decision-making bodies in the case study school. In support of these policies, data from the questionnaires portrayed that all (100%) participants agreed that: “*Teachers are allowed to try out new ideas*” and almost all (93%) the participants agreed that: “*The school management values teachers opinions and that they allow teachers to participate in school level decision-making*” (Q, p. 2). Similarly, T1 in his explanation reiterated: “*Like my colleagues said, consultation, being known,*

being part of decision-making is what is important. If you want teachers to act like leaders, you must recognize their ideas and feelings as leaders, starting from management to inspectorate level” (FGI, p. 7). In line with T1, TRL underscored the significance of school level decision-making as an enhancing factor to teacher leadership as he suggested that they need to “*consult teachers when you are making decisions so that they can have an input in that decision” (II, p. 1).* In support of this data, I observed during the lower primary phase meeting of 02 August 2012 that: “*The two teachers who co-chaired the meeting were very encouraging to each other during decision-making and showed maturity in their decisions which at the end of the day was supported by all the parents who were present” (O p. 4,).* The fact that teachers were involved in school level decision-making was further confirmed as T1 outlined that “*Some of us are school board members, making very important decisions relating to the school. So as teachers we are very much involved, as leadership goes hand in hand with initiating” (FGI, p. 5).* In support of this, T4 highlighted that: “*Every morning we come to morning devotion to share information and ideas and take some decisions together” (FGI, p. 9).*

In line with the above data, P highlighted the extent to which teachers’ involvement in school level decision-making was promoted:

It is promoted as such at my school: we came together and agreed that we would meet each and every morning - this is an open platform, a daily one whereby we share information. Anyone can come up with a proposal or announcement or an idea which we can deliberate on and come to an agreement or move it to the next day due to the limited time we have in the morning. It is a brilliant opportunity where we share information and take decisions. It is like having a staff meeting every day for those ten to fifteen minutes (II, p.3).

During my observation of a morning briefing session on 29 July 2012, I noted that teachers were involved in school level decision-making, as my field notes testify:

There were daily opportunities at the school where teachers came together, shared information and ideas, held discussions and made decisions at school level. I also observed that in all cases final decision-making always considered teachers’ views expressed during the discussion and was made through consensus (O, p. 5).

Teachers' decisions in this morning briefing meeting were considered and accepted after discussion and clarification, as indicated in the minutes of the staff meeting dated 17 July 2012. The issue of the cleanliness of the classrooms was discussed:

A teacher suggested that learners could also help once a week in order to clean the classrooms and the principal agreed with the point of allowing learners to assist in the cleaning of the classrooms while awaiting the appointment of a second institutional worker. The principal agreed that the classrooms would be cleaned on a weekly basis (Tuesday and Thursday) and a program would be set (DA, p.1).

In summarising, teachers in the case study school participated in school level decision-making and contributed to whole school development as they were granted opportunities to make decisions and their opinions and know-how were considered and valued by the school management team and other teachers. This claim is also supported in the literature as Stone, Horejs, and Lomas (1997, p.52) stress that, "teachers have the expertise and experiences to engage in all aspects of school, therefore they should be given the opportunity to engage in meaningful decisions about their school and classroom. Sarason (1990, p. 61) highlights teacher participation in decision-making as, "a process which makes people feel that they have a voice in matters that affect them, they will have greater commitment to the overall enterprise and will take the greater responsibility for what happens to the enterprise".

Teachers who served on the school board as the highest decision-making body of the school, were in a position to get involved in discussions on issues related to the problems the school faced and to take decisions at the end of the day.

Based on the data and substantiated by literature one would argue that teachers' involvement in school level decision-making at the case study school was strong and was an enhancing factor to teacher leadership at the case study school.

In the next section I move on to focus on the barriers to teacher leadership in the case study school.

4.5 BARRIERS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP

This section provides further answers to the third question of this case study research, where it looks at the factors that were barriers to teacher leadership practice in the case study school. Across data sets, the principal, a lack of time and a heavy workload, teachers' negative attitudes, a lack of incentives and a lack of professional development were identified as the main challenges experienced by teachers when trying to practice their leadership at the school.

4.5.1 The Principal

The principal of the school can be a major barrier to teacher leadership. In support of this sentiment the national policy document 'Guidelines for School Principals' (2005, p. 3) highlights that:

The principal can make or break a school. If the principal has a clear vision for the school, creates and maintains a healthy team spirit among teachers, learners and parents and provides inspirational leadership and effective administration, the school will be a 'good' school. Unfortunately the opposite also holds true: the uninterested, uncaring and ineffective principal will variably have a 'bad' school.

This policy directs the principal towards creating a 'good' school and avoiding a 'bad' school. However, data uncovered that the principal of the case study school unfortunately did not always contribute to a 'good' school and thus was a barrier to teacher leadership. In line with this argument T6 maintained that:

At our school there are lots of factors that are hindering teacher leadership. The principal plays a big role in the school. As teachers, if you come to work it can be frustrating, especially at our school as we have a lot of problems such as a lack of resources and bad working conditions, but the principal doesn't act. As principal there are things that you should observe and deal with it (FGI, p. 9).

He was supported by T3, who maintained that:

The management of the school can also prevent teacher leadership. If the school vision and mission is not known to every teacher and kept as a motto in your heart and in your memory, you know you won't move in the same direction. It depends on how management communicate, how they bring teachers closer to themselves (GFI, p. 7).

These claims were in line with P as she highlighted that: *“Sometimes as a principal you do not give the people that opportunity because you are worried that the person will take over all the other stuff that can be linked to it”* (II, p.3). The consequences of information not shared with the teachers by the principal could be a serious constraint as the literature is not silent on this claim. For example, Stone, Horejs and Lomas (1997, p. 60) highlight that, “the principal is the pivotal player in that he or she must be willing to share power, encourage teacher leadership, and set the tone that validates teachers’ views and expertise”. The unwillingness of the principal to share leadership roles and information likely prevented untapped leadership from teachers. This was problematic in Lashway’s study (1988, p. 5):

Teachers and principals entered the relationship with individual agendas that they did not immediately put aside, as principals were concerned with protecting certain prerogatives, such as exercising the ability to make key decisions, representing the school to the community, and knowing what activities were going on in the school.

Holding on to power and not letting it go, could be regarded as a barrier to teacher leadership. Therefore, drawing on data I argue that the principal was a barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school.

In the next section I focus on the lack of time due primarily to a heavy workload as a potential barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school.

4.5.2 Time and Workload

Time was one of the limited resources in the case study school and teachers felt they did not have sufficient time to carry out additional leadership roles. In line with this statement, the national policy document ‘The Sets of Job Descriptions’ (2008, p. 2) in basic job descriptions highlights that educators need to, “manage school time to ensure maximum time on task with minimal disruptions”. This policy sensitizes teachers and principals to the fact that time should not be wasted. It became evident that time was one of the barriers to teacher leadership in the case study school. In his contribution on the lack of time to take up any additional workload, T6 contended: *“The workload carried out by the teachers is already hundred percent taken up by teaching hence other responsibilities are delegated to other teachers to do administrative work”* (FGI, p. 9) In support of this claim, T3 maintained that: *“The workload is too much for teachers*

and there is no time to do extra work". TRL agreed with this as he elaborated that: *"Teachers don't have time to rest"* (II, p. 1). Drawing on data it became evident that time was a barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school. In line with this argument, Muijs and Harris (2006, p. 970) contend that, *"lack of time for teachers to engage in activities outside of classroom teaching and administration appears to be a key inhibitor to teacher leadership, as it is to other educational initiatives"*. In line with them, Leblanc and Shelton (1997, p. 34) maintain that *"the major barrier to teacher leadership, as reported in the literature is time and lack thereof. Teachers are unable to carry out their regular load and to assume new leadership roles"*.

Drawing on data and the above literature it became clear that that even if the teachers were willing to take up leadership responsibilities, the fact remained that time was insufficient for them to do so.

I now move on to focus on the lack of incentives as a barrier to teacher leadership.

4.5.3 Lack of Incentives

Payments for jobs accomplished or activities carried out, in kind or in monetary reward is a normal practice in societies nowadays. This could however not be said about the case study school where it was alluded to that a lack of incentives was an obstacle to teacher leadership. In support of this claim, T2 maintained that: *"Apart from availing ourselves, we are not being paid to do the job of a management member. Yes, we know it is not only the salary that we are working for but to learn from each other, but we can't do the job that other people are being paid for"* (FGI, p. 8). In support of this statement, T3 in his contribution contends that there is a *"lack of incentives for extra-mural activities attended. It extra workload without pay"* (FGI, p. 8). This remark did not go without support from other data sources as SB confirmed: *"As a school board chairperson, I have tried my best to encourage the teachers to take up other responsibilities at the school, but they always say that they are not being paid for working overtime and for doing other peoples work"* (II, p. 2). Similarly and in support of this claim, the HOD highlighted that: *"Teachers are talking about overtime payments and do not want to sacrifice their time to do the job for which they are not paid; there are no incentives for extra work or input"* (II, p. 2). In line with him, T1 said: *"Salaries are not paid on time and teachers are unhappy and an unhappy teacher is not a*

productive leader. This demotivating factor contributes to teachers not being willing to take up leadership roles” (FGI, p. 8). Data made it clear that the lack of incentives for additional work done was a barrier to teacher leadership as teachers in the case study school wanted to be remunerated for a job done. Lack of financial reward for teachers was a challenge. This statement is in line with literature as Harris (2003, p. 319) states that: “There are financial barriers as formal leadership positions in schools carry additional increments. Consequently to secure informal leadership in schools requires heads to use other incentives and seek ways of remunerating the staff who take on leadership responsibilities”.

Drawing on data, it became evident that teachers in the case study school wanted to be paid for additional tasks carried out at the school which involved leadership and this was a barrier to teacher leadership as they contended that they would not do the work which they were not being paid for.

Next I move on to focus on teachers’ attitude as a barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school.

4.5.4 Teachers’ negative attitudes as barriers

Data uncovered that various teachers’ negative attitudes were a barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school. This claim became evident as T1 highlighted that:

Lack of commitment from teachers is the biggest obstacle at our school. I believe that a leader doesn’t need motivation from somebody else and we really need to do self-introspection. Mini meetings most of the time cause problems at our school (FGI, p. 8).

In line with this, data made it clear that teachers’ negative attitudes were a barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school as the HOD maintained that:

Sometimes teachers lack self-confidence while some don’t work together with their colleagues. Teachers are afraid to make mistakes and learn from it. Some teachers don’t want to take initiative themselves. They lack interest in taking up leadership roles and do not willingly avail themselves. (II, p. 2).

In support of his explanation, SB in his contribution highlighted that: “Most of the teachers don’t want to take leadership responsibilities at this school as they are scared, I don’t know of what.

There is a lack of openness from teachers and most of the times they withdraw in these situations” (II, p. 2). Similarly data disclosed and I informally observed that handshakes, wishing each other the strength before the start of the lesson was the order of the day at the school. I believe these were signs of a collaborative culture amongst staff. However, this ritual was not followed by one of the teachers as stated that: *“I noticed that as of today she does not shake anybody’s hand – she just says good morning but does not greet by shaking hands”* (DA, p. 2).

I observed during the staff meeting of 23 July 2012 that the teachers were asked to provide points for discussion from their side on the agenda to be discussed during the staff meeting, but that they failed to do so. During the meeting the staff members went through the agenda and the principal asked whether anybody had any points to be added to the agenda for discussion and still there was no reaction from the teachers and the agenda was closed. *“I felt like the teachers were busy shooting themselves in the foot, as the meetings and conferences are platforms where you can raise your concerns and reach solutions at the end of the day”* (O, p. 1).

Meetings are platforms where one can raise one’s concerns and advocate for some agendas that one wants to be put through and if it is not done at that platform one wonders where this could be done. In substantiation, Troen and Boles (1994, p. 41) state that, *“teachers are concerned with issues of teaching and most fascinated in life in the classroom ... are unwilling to consider themselves as leaders and look with some uneasiness on the thought of taking up quasi-administrative or expanded teaching functions”*. Similar sentiments are echoed by Muijs and Harris as they explain that: *“...some teachers saw themselves as classroom practitioners and therefore could be very reluctant to see themselves in leadership roles or indeed to take on such a role”*. As long as teachers do not see themselves as leaders and refuse to change their mindset of being confined to classroom activities, teacher leadership in schools is unlikely to prosper at all and teachers themselves will be regarded as barriers to teacher leadership which was the case in the case study school.

In the next section, I move on to focus on professional development as a barrier to teacher leadership.

4.5.5 Professional Development: the centrality of empowerment?

Both pre-service and in-service professional development of leadership is central to the empowerment of teachers to take up leadership roles. This statement is in line with the national policy document 'The Sets of Job Descriptions' (2008) which makes provision for professional development as it states that teachers have "...to contribute to the professional development of colleagues by sharing knowledge, ideas and resources" (p. 3). The same policy document guided principals "...to be involved at school management level responsibilities relative to grade implementation, evaluation of teaching programmes, teaching, supervision, administration and in-service development, inspection and guidance of teachers at the school" (p. 1). In Chapter Two I referred to professional development as one of the enhancing factors to teacher leadership, according to the literature. However, it emerged at the case study school that there was a lack of professional development which was a barrier to teacher leadership. A lack of leadership training in both in-service and pre-service teacher training could be a barrier to teacher leadership. The above policy document 'Sets of Job Descriptions' (2008) called on teachers and principals to offer professional development to teachers. However this was not the case in the case study school. It became evident from the sets of data that the lack of professional development was cause for an outcry at the case study school. In support of this claim, quantitative data indicated that only 40% of the participants agreed, *"that they give in-service training to colleagues"* and most (73%) of the participants disagreed that teachers provided, *"curriculum development knowledge to teachers in other schools"*. These responses implied that teachers were limited in empowering each other in the same school and their participation in activities to empower teachers in neighbouring schools was also limited. In line with this argument that teachers' participation in professional development was limited, T6 suggested the following to promote teacher leadership:

I believe that every one who is here is an expert in a specific subject that they are teaching, but we also need to understand the school as an organization - because it is not only the teachers who are involved here ,there are other stakeholders involved and so we need to empower each other (FGI, p. 7).

In support of his explanation, the HOD proposed that: *“The regional office of education must facilitate leadership training workshops for teachers, mostly the newly appointed ones”* (II, p. 3). In line with the HOD, P stated that: *“Another issue is the confidence that the teachers have in the language of instruction that is used or supposed to be used at the school. Some people have not been exposed to the language and don’t have the courage to try. However we are trying very hard and maybe one day we will succeed in training these ones and then it will be a better school* (II, p. 4). The plea for provision of professional development was further supported as SB stated that: *“Teachers must be given training in leadership at the school, for example - the principal and head of department in order to lead”* (II, p. 2). In line with the above, TRL highlighted a lack of professional development when he said: *“There is a lack of learning opportunities from others”* (II, p. 2).

It became evident from the data that there were not enough professional development activities offered at the case study school which was a barrier to teacher leadership. Teachers in the case study school appealed for further knowledge and skills development, something which Day (1999, p. 20) also understands:

If teachers are to develop, then, attention must be paid to their thinking, moral purposes and skills as change agents, their pedagogical and management skills and the leadership and cultural context in which they work. Finally, if schools are to be part of the lifelong learning community they need to be concerned with the lifelong development of all their members.

The negative effect of the deficit in professional development is further supported in literature as Day (1999, p. 20) contends that: *“In the absence of continuing professional development it is not unreasonable to predict that their capacities for development and abilities to model these capacities for students who will live and work in a world which is already characterized by change are likely to be diminished”*. These claims are in line with Hoppey and Dana (2010, p. 155) as they highlight that:

Even in spite of a century of research indicating the importance of cultivating an inquiry stance in teachers and providing on the job learning opportunities, professional development has remained a ‘sit and wait’ activity”.

Furthermore, they say that to make professional learning a part of, rather than apart from, the daily work of teachers, requires preparing teachers to make the shift from traditional to job-embedded professional development.

Similarly, Leblanc and Shelton (1997, p. 34) substantiate that “since teachers lack training, they quickly become immersed in conflict with administrators and peers and lack requisite group process skills to pull themselves out of conflict”.

Drawing on data and supported by the literature, it became evident that in order for teachers to take up leadership roles, they needed to be developed professionally to know what was expected from them as a leader and that the absence of professional development had negative repercussions on them and on the case study school.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I presented data and discussed the findings. It emerged that the conceptual understanding of teacher leadership was that teacher leadership was understood to take place both within and outside the classroom. Data also indicated that teacher leadership was evidenced across all four zones in the case study school. It was more successful in zone one (in the classroom) and in zone two (leading curricular and extra-curricular activities). In zone three (teachers leading in whole school development at the case study school) and zone four (teachers leading in provision of curriculum development knowledge across schools into community) teacher leadership was restricted.

It also transpired from data that collaboration and participation in school level decision-making were the enhancing factors of teacher leadership. In addition, there were various factors which repressed teacher leadership. For example, the principal, a lack of time and a heavy workload, teachers’ negative attitudes and a lack of professional development were barriers to teacher leadership.

In the next chapter, I summarise the main findings of the study, characterize the case study school in terms of its teacher leadership and the distribution of leadership and conclude the thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the main findings of the study are summarized. These are the main findings that emerged from the presentation and discussion of raw data collected at the case study school and presented in Chapter Four of the thesis. The chapter also theorizes the findings of the study and uses the categories of teacher leadership as put forward by Muijs and Harris (2005) to categorise teacher leadership in the case study school. This chapter also categorises the distribution of leadership that was evident in the case study school as formal, according to the taxonomy of MacBeath (2005). The chapter then moves on to present the recommendations for both practice and further research that emerged out of the study. I then move on to conclude the thesis with a brief conclusion. In the next section I move on to focus on the summary of findings.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section summarizes the key findings of the study which arose from the presentation and discussion of data in Chapter Four and which answered my research questions. In response to my first research question *on what the conceptual understanding of teacher leadership was*, my findings indicated that teacher leadership in the case study school was understood to include leadership by teachers both within and outside the classroom. This initial finding is in accordance with the idea of Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) that teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom. My finding further aligns with the findings of a study done by the Namibian, Hashikutuva (2011), who found teacher leadership to be understood in her study as teachers who lead in the classroom and beyond. Another study in the Namibian context by Nauyoma-Hamupembe (2012) found that teacher leadership roles started in the classroom and then moved beyond.

In response to my second research question which was *how teacher leadership was practiced* in the case study school, my study showed that the practice of teacher leadership was strong in zone one as teachers continued to lead through their teaching of learners and through improving on their teaching in the classroom. This finding affirmed what Ash and Persall (2000) discovered that student learning must become the focus of educational efforts, and school leaders must create systematic change and pursue ever higher levels of student achievement.

Findings further indicated that teacher leadership was practiced in zone two, at the level of both curricular and extra-curricular activities. This outcome echoed what Day and Harris (2002) discovered, that teacher leaders work with colleagues to outline school progress attempts and to take some lead in guiding teachers in the direction of a combined aim. This discovery further affirmed what Grant (2008) established that teachers provided curricula and extra-curricular leadership.

My findings also pointed to the fact that teachers in the case study school practiced teacher leadership in zone three in whole school development. This finding was similar to the research of Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995) who found that teacher leaders operated as decision-makers as well as problem solvers and change agents.

Finally, my findings indicated that teacher leadership was also practiced in zone four which was about leading teachers in provision of curriculum development knowledge across schools in the community. It emerged from my study that the leadership practiced in this zone was not as strong as the teacher leadership evidenced in the other three zones.

In response to research question three which was about *what the hindering and enhancing factors to the practice of teacher leadership* in the case study school were, it emerged from findings that collaboration was one of the pre-eminent two factors that enhanced teacher leadership in the case study school. This finding concurs with the view of Muijs and Harris (2003) that it is fundamental that teacher leaders work in collaborative teams in order to make a positive contribution to the learning of learners and development score of the school. The findings also affirmed what Leithwood (1992) established, that in collaborative cultures staff members often talk, critique and plan together. In addition, teachers' participation in school level decision-making

in the case study school was another factor which enhanced teacher leadership. Teachers in the case study school participated in school level decision-making and contributed to whole school development when they served on various committees at the school, as school board members and trade union leaders.

In addition and also in response to the third research question, but as a *barrier to teacher leadership* in the case study school, findings indicated that the principal of the school was a barrier to teacher leadership as she held on to power and did not always 'let go'. This finding aligns with what Lashway (1988) uncovered that teachers and principals entered working relationships with individual agendas that they did not immediately put aside, as the principals were concerned with protecting certain prerogatives. The findings are also in line with Troen and Boles (1994), who uncovered that principals normally feel endangered when tasked to shift over and create opportunity for teachers.

Time and heavy workloads were further barriers to teacher leadership in the case study school. This discovery confirmed what Zinn (1997) found, that there was basically too much to accomplish and too limited time in which to execute it. The findings also recognized what Leblanc and Shelton (1997) established as they said that teachers are unable to accomplish their usual load and to assume new leadership roles. Findings also established a lack of incentives as a barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school. This outcome affirmed what Harris (2003) found, that there were financial barriers as formal leadership positions in schools carry financial worth. Consequently to secure formal leadership in schools required heads to use other incentives and seek ways of remunerating the staff who took on leadership responsibilities (Ibid).

Findings also established teachers' negative attitudes as barriers to teacher leadership in the case study school. Teachers' refusal to change their mindset of being confined to classroom leadership and their refusal to take up leadership roles were barriers to teacher leadership. This discovery confirmed what Muijs and Harris (2005) established, that one of the things that could stand in the way of teachers becoming leaders was the willingness of teachers to take up leadership roles, as some saw themselves as classroom practitioners and therefore could be very reluctant to see themselves in leadership roles and indeed to take on such a role. The final barrier to teacher

leadership that emerged from the findings was a lack of professional development in the case study school. This finding established what Day (1999) found, that in the absence of continuing professional development it is easy to predict that teachers' capacities for development and abilities to model these capacities for students, are likely to be diminished. Having presented a summary of my findings, I move on in the next section, to categorise teacher leadership in the case study school according to the categorizations of Harris and Muijs (2005).

5.3 EMERGENT TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOL

Harris and Muijs (2005, pp. 100-120) categorise teacher leadership as being successful, emergent and restricted. In the category of successful teacher leadership, the school in the Harris and Muijs study made remarkable progress in moving from a top-down autocratic way of leading and management to a more distributed, democratic form of leadership. Teacher leadership was not merely a particular management style or way of working, but it was fundamental to the vision and culture of the school. Distributed leadership went beyond the leadership of staff members as teachers and pupils became increasingly involved in leadership roles as well. It reinforced the message that teachers are key to capacity building and that their leadership is more likely to bring changes that impact positively on teaching and learning.

In the emergent teacher leadership category, according to Harris and Muijs (2005, pp. 100-120), the head of the second case study school in their study was clearly committed to developing more distributed leadership and democratic leadership in his school. Attempts were made to distribute leadership beyond the SMT; however, moving from a top-down style of leadership to a more distributed form of leadership proved challenging. Teachers felt they were less likely to initiate decisions, but felt that they were consulted on decisions. Teachers felt able to lead new initiatives and were of the view that they were strongly supported by the SMT in doing so. The idea of teacher leadership was positively embraced as both managers and teachers said they could make a positive contribution to school improvement. Distributed leadership had clearly started to emerge and expanded to middle management; while to some degree, teachers appeared to be allowed more decision-making power and initiatives.

In the restricted categorization of teacher leadership, according to Muijs and Harris (2005), the head in their third case study school showed a clear intellectual commitment to distributed leadership, but teachers did not feel involved in decision-making and consequently remained disenfranchised from leadership. There was no clear consensus on the extent to which teachers were involved in decision-making. Involvement in leadership at the whole school level was seen to be limited to the SMT only, although others felt that middle management members like subject heads were involved as well. Teachers tended to be consulted on decisions, rather than being given the opportunity to instigate ideas. Few examples of teacher leadership tended to be forthcoming. Teacher leadership was thus not particularly developed in this school.

Using the Harris and Muijs (2005) categorizations, my study offered an example of emergent teacher leadership. My reasons for this categorization were that the head of my case study school was in the process of developing distributed leadership, although she found the move from a top-down style of leadership to a more distributed form of leadership challenging. The head encouraged teachers to participate in decision-making and considered their ideas. However, she sometimes held on to power and was scared to let it go. Teachers in the case study school participated in leadership as they led learners within the classroom. They also led learners and teachers in in curricular and extra-curricular activities in their school as well as in school level decision-making where they contributed to whole school development to some degree. Many were granted opportunities to make decisions and share their opinions which were considered and valued by the school management team and other teachers. Teachers were encouraged to take initiative and their ideas were considered. The emergence of teacher leadership in the case study school was further demonstrated where teachers led other teachers in the provision of curriculum development knowledge across schools in the community. Teachers in the case study school collaborated with each other and worked as a team.

However, teacher leadership was slow to emerge and could not yet be described as successful at the case study school. This was perhaps due to the lack of professional development activities. Other factors that indicated that teacher leadership was moving at a snail's pace were insufficient time and heavy workload. The success of teacher leadership was hindered by the fact that there were a lack of incentives and, in addition, teachers had negative attitudes to the idea of teacher

leadership. Having, I categorized teacher leadership in the case study school as emergent, in the next section I move on to categorise the distribution of leadership.

5.4 'FORMAL' DISTRIBUTION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOL

As discussed in Chapter Two, in his taxonomy of distribution, MacBeath (2005) identified six forms of distribution as: distribution formally, distribution pragmatically, distribution strategically, distribution incrementally, distribution opportunistically and distribution culturally. According to MacBeath (2005), distribution formally is when responsibility is structurally delegated and carries with it an attendant expectation of delivery. It may be accompanied by the recognition that others have expertise that you do not have and that when responsibility is distributed in this way the head teacher's role is to support and provide.

My findings indicated that leadership in the case study school was distributed formally by the head. Teachers led across the four zones but leadership was distributed largely in relation to their formal job description and in relation to designated roles. The responsibilities were delegated structurally and carried with them a consequent expectation of delivery. Teachers who led in these zones were appointed to these positions by virtue of their expertise and were accorded the accompanying collaboration and recognition by other teachers and management members of the school. The management of the school supported these teachers in their leadership by providing them with policies and resources that assured stability and efficient management to all in the school. Teachers in the case study school accomplished their role as leaders as they adhered to structures and protocols in the school and that is why this study found that distribution of leadership was done formally.

In the next section I make recommendations for practice as a result of my study.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This section proposes some recommendations on what can be done to further promote teacher leadership in the case study school. The study uncovered that the nature of teacher leadership in the case study school was emergent and not successful because of the many factors which

emerged as barriers to the leadership of teachers. In order for teacher leadership to be successful in the case study school, this study suggests that in-service professional development on the topic of leadership could be offered to teachers. The Namibian national policy documents (the Sets of Job Descriptions and National Professional Standards as well as Guidelines for School Principals) which make provision for professional development to teachers could be considered for implementation and monitored by all stakeholders concerned. I agree with Harris and Lambert (2003) who maintain that empowerment and encouragement of teachers to become leaders and to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their leadership skills are the requirements of generating and sustaining teacher leadership.

The study also recommends that teachers could be more stimulated to take up leadership roles in the case study school. For example, a platform could be created where teachers could come together weekly or fortnightly to be given a presentation by an experienced person on teacher leadership. Trade union and teachers serving on committees responsible for whole school development could ongoingly sensitize the stakeholders about the concept teacher leadership in the case study school.

To overcome the barrier of teacher leadership with regard to the principal, I contend that the principal will only benefit through the letting go of power to teachers in order to make use of their untapped leadership skills and experiences. I therefore recommend that the principal of the case study school be given official training on change management in order to minimize fear of an 'unknown syndrome' and be given help in developing trust in others and in distributing leadership culturally as explained by MacBeath (2005). The principal can also invite someone with know-how on teacher leadership to give a lecture or do a presentation to all the stakeholders at the school. In the next section I move on to focus on recommendations for future research.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The concept teacher leadership is under researched in Namibia, therefore much needs to be done to carry out further research on the topic. Two of the recent studies carried out are small scale studies as is mine, therefore more studies need to be carried out especially to explore the concept

among other stakeholders like regional office's staff members, management members, school board members, trade unions, churches and other non-governmental organisations.

The aforementioned studies explored teacher leadership in rural primary schools. I therefore recommend that similar studies be carried out in urban schools. Future studies need to be carried out at secondary schools which offer different contexts from combined schools and primary schools. The studies were carried out in public schools therefore teacher leadership in private schools needs to be explored as their experiences might be different compared to public schools. Various methodologies apart from case studies can be used to carry out future research on this important topic.

I would also recommend that all the tertiary institutions offering teacher education courses should acquaint themselves with the concept of teacher leadership and consider including it as part of the courses offered at their institutions. This will be helpful in the sense that teachers will enter the profession equipped with skills and knowledge needed for teacher leadership in schools. There is a need for a professional body which will keep on with research in the field of teacher leadership. Trade unions should embark on a research study and bargain and advocate for it to be practiced in Namibian schools. In the next section I focus on the conclusion of this chapter and the study.

5.7 CONCLUSION

After the presentation and discussion of data and after going through various theories during the exploration of the concept teacher leadership in a rural Namibian primary school, the study found that the conceptual understanding of teacher leadership was that the leadership of teachers occurred both within and beyond the classroom. This study also uncovered that teacher leadership in the case study school was practiced in all four zones according to the teacher leadership model of Grant (2008). The findings of this study indicated teacher leadership as emergent according to the categorizations of teacher leadership by Harris and Muijs (2005). Distributed leadership according to the taxonomy of MacBeath (2005) was within the 'formal distribution' category in the case study school. The study calls for more teaching and research into

this critical topic of teacher leadership so that its transformative powers can be realised. Along with Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) I believe that teachers possess valuable leadership skills and abilities which if utilized will awake the 'sleeping giant' of teacher leadership in Namibian schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1- TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

- Use a BLACK or BLUE ink pen. Please do not use a pencil.
- In the interests of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire.
- Please respond to each of the following items by placing a CROSS, which correctly reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership in your school.
- This questionnaire is to be answered by an educator.¹

¹

The word 'educator' refers to a post level 1 educator

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

2. Age

21-30		31-40		41-50		51+	
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3. Your formal qualification is:

Below M+3		M+3		M+4		M+5 and above	
-----------	--	-----	--	-----	--	---------------	--

4. Nature of employment

Permanent		Temporary		Contract	
-----------	--	-----------	--	----------	--

5. Employer

State		SGB	
-------	--	-----	--

6. Years of teaching experience

0-5yrs		6-10yrs		11-15yrs		16+yrs	
--------	--	---------	--	----------	--	--------	--

B. TEACHER LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Instruction: Place a **CROSS** in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of teacher leadership in your school.

Scale: 4= Strongly Agree 3=Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly disagree

B. 1

I believe:	4	3	2	1
7. Only the SMT should make decisions in the school.				
8. All educators can take a leadership role in the school.				
9. That only people in positions of authority should lead.				

10. That men are better able to lead than women				
---	--	--	--	--

B. 2

Which of the following tasks are you involved with?	4	3	2	1
11. I take initiative without being delegated duties.				
12. I reflect critically on my own classroom teaching.				
13. I organise and lead reviews of the school year plan.				
14. I participate in in-school decision making.				
15. I give in-service training to colleagues.				
16. I provide curriculum development knowledge to my colleagues.				
17. I provide curriculum development knowledge to teachers in other schools				
18. I participate in the performance evaluation of teachers.				
19. I choose textbook and instructional materials for my grade/learning area.				

20. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities in my school.				
21. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities beyond my school.				
22. I set standards for pupil behaviour in my school.				
23. I design staff development programmes for my school.				
24. I co-ordinate cluster meetings for my learning area.				
25. I keep up to date with developments in teaching practices and learning area.				
26. I set the duty roster for my colleagues.				

Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on what factors support or hinder teacher leadership.

Scale: 4= Strongly Agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree

B.3

My school is a place where:	4	3	2	1
45 The SMT has trust in my ability to lead.				
46. Teachers resist leadership from other teachers.				
47. Teachers are allowed to try out new ideas.				
48 The SMT (School Management Team) values teachers' opinions.				
49. The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision-making.				
50. Only the SMT takes important decisions.				
51. Only the SMT takes initiative in the school.				
52. Adequate opportunities are created for the staff to develop professionally.				
53. Team work is encouraged.				
54. Men are given more leadership roles than women.				

Thank you for your time and effort!

APPENDIX 2 - DOCUMENT ANALYSIS:

Date.....

Examine teachers' leadership in a case study school

Documents to be analyzed:

- Job description for principal/ teachers
- Internal policy
- Minutes of staff meetings
- Departments' meetings/Phase meetings
- School committees meetings

Area focused:

- Attendance of teachers in meetings.
- Decision reached in meetings.
- Leadership development e.g. chairing meetings, committee chairing, secretaries and subject head among teachers.

Remarks.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX 3 - SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Date

- 1 Talk to me about leadership. What does the word leadership mean to you?

.....
.....

- 1 What is your understanding of teacher leadership? Please explain what it means to be a teacher leader.

.....
.....

- 1 How do you expect your teachers to lead in the classrooms?

.....
.....

- 1 Have your teachers ever been involved in leading in any school related activities, outside of your classroom? Give example

.....
.....
.....

- 1 What do you think can be done to promote teacher leadership in your school and in general?

.....
.....

- 1 In your opinion what do you think can prevent teacher leadership in your school?

.....

APPENDIX 4 - QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Date

- 1 Talk to me about leadership. What does the word leadership mean to you?

.....
.....
.....

- 1 What is your understanding of teacher leadership? Please explain what it means to be a teacher leader.

.....
.....
.....

- 1 How do you lead in your classroom?

.....
.....
.....

- 1 Have you ever been involved in leading in any school related activities, outside of your classroom? Give example

.....
.....

- 1 What do you think can be done to promote teacher leadership in your school and in general?

.....
.....
.....

- 1 In your opinion what do you think can prevent teacher leadership in your school?

.....
.....

APPENDIX 5 - OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

DATE OF OBSERVATION: _____ TIME: _____

SITUATION/CONTEXT WHERE TEACHERS DISPLAY LEADERSHIP INIATIVE AND DECISIONS ARE TAKEN:

PARTICIPANTS:

WHO IS THE INITIATOR?

Principal

Head of Departments

Teachers

WHO DOMINATES THE DISCUSSION?

Principal

Head of Departments

Teachers

TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING: (indicate the teacher)

Lack of commitment

Resistance/ barrier

Lack of confidence

Full participation

Encouraging

THE ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS THOSE THAT SHOW LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE AND CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE MAKING OF A DECISION.

Encouraging

Dismissive

Resistance

THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE SMT: (indicate SMT member)

Autocratic

Democratic

Distributive

Transactional

Transformational

Other (indicate)

THE SMT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SHARED DECISION MAKING:

Supportive

Discourages

Context driven

THE OPPORTUNITIES MADE AVAILABLE TO TEACHERS TO TAKE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES AND SHARE IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

IS DECISION MAKING MORE

Authorised

Emergent

Dispersed

Democratic

TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IS MORE

Restricted

Emergent

Successful

CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE MAKING OF DECISIONS. (Indicate who experiences the challenge/s)

Opinions/suggestions are dismissed

Opinions/suggestions are resisted

Principal's attitude (accountability)

Hierarchical structure of school

Lack of trust by principal/SMT

Lack of confidence by teachers

Lack of skills

Time constraints

Workload

Lack of initiative to participation

DID THE FINAL DECISION TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DURING THE DISCUSSION

Yes

No

Partially

WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION?

Principal

SMT

Teachers

Consensus

APPENDIX 6 - Request for permission to carry out a research study

Enq: Mr. G.Uiseb
Cell: +264 812408173
Email: g.uisieb@yahoo.com

11 Hills View
Grahamstown
South Africa
20 June 2012

To: The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Republic of Namibia

Dear Sir

Request for permission to carry out a research study

I am a full time Masters of Education student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. I am presently engaged in a research study which aims to explore the concept and the practice of teacher leadership in a Namibian rural primary school. The research study is to be undertaken in Otjozondjupa Region. In this regard I have, for conveniently purposes, selected NEW Primary School in Otjiwarongo Circuit for my research study which I plan to do from 9 July to 10 August 2012. I would very much like to work with the principal and three teachers. I promise that my research study will not disturb the daily execution of teaching and learning.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of the principal or teachers. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form.

It is against this backdrop that I am requesting your permission to conduct my research study at the aforementioned school in Otjozondjupa Region. Attached please find a copy of the confirmation letter from my supervisors, Prof. Hennie van der Mescht and Dr. Callie Grant who can be contacted as follow: Hennie Tel: +267 46 6038384 email: h.vandermescht@ru.ac.za and Callie Tel: +267 46 6037508 email: c.grant@ru.ac.ca

Yours sincerely

.....

G. Uiseb (Researcher)
Student Number: g12u7059

APPENDIX 7 - Invitation to take part in the research study

Enq: G.Uiseb (Mr.)
Cell: +264 812408173
Email: g.uisieb@yahoo.com

11 Hills View
Grahamstown
South Africa
20th June 2012

Dear Mr/Ms.....

Invitation to take part in the research study

I am sending this invitation to you as a teacher who might be interested in participating in a research study. I am a full time Masters of Education student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. I am presently engaged in a research study which aims to explore the concept and the practice of teacher leadership in a Namibian urban primary school. In this regard I have, for conveniently purposes, selected NEW Primary School for my research study which I plan to do from 09th July to 10th August 2012.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of your performance or competence. I undertake to uphold your autonomy and will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. In this regard, you will be asked to complete a consent form.

It is against this backdrop that I am humbly inviting you to participate in the research study at your school. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

.....

Gerson Uiseb (Researcher)

APPENDIX 9 – Declaration of participants

I (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of Teacher Leader

Date

Appendix 10 – Permission from Directorate



Republic of Namibia
**OTJOZONDJUPA
REGIONAL COUNCIL**



Tel: 264 67 308000
Fax: 264 67 304871/307217

Private Bag 2618
Otjiwarongo
NAMIBIA

**DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
Office of the Director**

Enq: Mrs. Mutenda

23 July 2012

To: Mr. Gerson IUseb
11 Hill View
Grahamstown
South Africa

Dear Mr. G. IUseb

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN
OTJIWARONGO CIRCUIT, OTJOZONDJUPA REGION, NAMIBIA**

Permission is hereby granted to you, Mr. Gerson IUseb to conduct research in schools in Otjozondjupa Region. The Regional Director does not have any objection if you would like to conduct research at schools in Kalkfeld including NEW Primary School in Otjiwarongo Circuit.

It is our hope that your research will benefit our office in the near future. We believe that the outcome of your research will contribute towards the provision of quality education in our schools.

Thank you very much and wish you well in your studies.

Yours sincerely

OTJOZONDJUP

Ms. Faustina N. aley
Director

REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR TEL: 067-308000
PRIVATE BAG 2615 FAX: 067-304871/OTJIWARONGO
OTJOZONDJUPA REGION