

**The Development of Teacher Leadership: A Formative  
Interventionist study in a semi-urban secondary school of  
Khomas region in Namibia**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

(Educational Leadership and Management)

**Rhodes University**

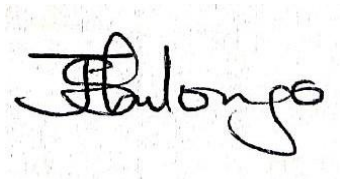
by

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**DECEMBER 2019**

## **Declaration of Originality**

I, JUSTINA SHILONGO, hereby declare that this thesis is my own work in my own words and it has not been submitted for any degree in any other university. Where I have drawn on the words and ideas of others, these have been acknowledged by using references according to the Rhodes University Education Department Guide to referencing.



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**Signature**

4 December 2019

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**Date**

## **Abstract**

Historically the education system in Namibia was shaped by the policies of the apartheid ideology (Amukugo, 1993). During that time, authority and responsibility were centralised and teachers were not part of the decision making process. By then, most people expected to be told what to do and would not initiate something on their own, a culture inherited that even exists today. In addition, opportunities were not given to teachers to develop as leaders. While Namibians have this history on record, the fact remains that the way in which apartheid laws were put in place, the ideological basis of the policy of apartheid and its impact, was not supportive of the ideas of democracy that Namibia is advocating for today. Despite a number of series of policy guidelines and directives issued to guide the development of a democratic culture in the education sector, less is happening about the leadership of teachers in schools. This stimulated me to conduct an activity theoretical interventionist research, aimed at exploring what opportunities there are for teachers to develop as leaders.

This study is a case study, operating from a generative standpoint. The study was conducted in a semi-urban secondary school in Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia. The study took a formative intervention approach as it sought to bring about change to practice in the case study school and also to contribute to a body of knowledge in the field of study. This qualitative study employed interviews, observations, document analysis and WhatsApp messaging as data generation tools. Crystallised data revealed multiple realities that demonstrated meaningful and trustworthy data. To analyse data the study employed inductive and abductive analysis to make data meaningful to the reader. Thus, to explore teacher leadership development in a semi-urban secondary school, Change Laboratories Workshops was used as a method to gather and analyse data, as underpinned by 2<sup>nd</sup> generation CHAT. Grant's (2017) model of teacher leadership was also used to analyse the data and indicate where teacher leadership roles were mostly visible from all four zones.

The findings revealed that there were different understandings of the notion of teacher leadership. It was understood as the possession of certain qualities, a managerial role, an involvement in the decision-making process and a form of social responsibility. It was also revealed that teachers led in all four zones (Grant, 2017b), however participants were not active in all the roles. High participation was noticed in zone one, within the classroom; zone two, leading in curricular and extra-curricular activities and zone four, leading beyond the school into the community. This study explored teacher leadership development and at length

identified the conditions that constrained and enabled teachers to develop as leaders in a secondary school. The factors that constrained teacher leadership in the case study school were: lack of time, demanding workloads and other commitments, lack of interest in extramural activities and SMT support for initiatives. Fear and unwillingness to take on leadership roles, narrow views on leadership and ingrained traditional leadership structures, limited leadership capacity building initiatives and the absence of clear educational policies on teacher leadership were also identified. The high involvement in zone one, two and four were attributed to some mechanisms the school put in place to promote teacher leadership, such as through various committees set-up, as well as a culture of mutual care and love. During the change laboratory workshops, teachers opted to be trained in leadership-related matters and to revive the CPD committee.

**Keywords:** *leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership, expansive learning, CHAT*

## Dedication

I dedicate this study to my late father, Oswald Tshiningayamwe ya Shilongo “*Tshikombati tshaM’mbala, ongaMpingana, Mpinganaandje*”.

He is my father, now in heaven. A Consolidation Diamond Mine worker, a cattle herder and a true Herbalist, my father believed in me from the day I was born. Amongst his nine children, I am the last born and was his favourite. The day I left the hospital he carried me all the way home and made sure he initiated me through the cattle kraal to symbolise the birth of a baby girl ..., something he did not do with my other siblings. He was the one who decided to put the traditional neck beads (*onyoka*) around my neck, something that he did not do for the other siblings because he knew I was the last born; he gave me unconditional love. I was popularly known among his colleagues during his stay at Oranjemund where he worked as a driver, because he used to call himself *Mpingana*, my traditional name. He brought a tennis racket just for me, his last born. I have come to imagine his vision for me through the racket; to be successful in life.

Even though my father didn’t have a deeper understanding of education-related matters by then, he supported my endeavours through various means. During their time, parents especially fathers used to send their children to the cattle post, where they herded the cattle, depriving the children their right to education. My father was however different. He made sure every one of us had a fair chance to attend school. The love he gave us his children and the support was enormously visible to all. We never went to bed on an empty stomach because he made sure we had plenty and a variety of food to eat. I am so proud of him to have raised me in a warm and loving house where I would not go astray but was kept by the warmth and love and finally found solace in my books.

“Daddy I am here today, not as a tennis champion but as an academician. One day I will make you proud as I turn into Dr Shilongo”. May you continue guarding over us wherever you are daddy, and may your soul continue resting in peace.

## Acknowledgements

“Be still and know that I am your God” (Psalm 46:10). I first and foremost thank the Almighty God for his blessings bestowed upon me up until this moment. He wonderfully blessed me with a healthy mind and body to be able to take on this huge task of writing up this thesis. Without His grace, protection, guidance and blessings, I would not have managed to pull through this study and make a great contribution towards teacher leadership discourse.

Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude to:

- My academic main supervisor Doctor Farhana Kajee. She brought light to me, introduced me to the fascinating world of academic views and thinking. I will forever cherish her guidance during the write up of this thesis. To my co-supervisor, Professor Carolyn ‘Callie’ Grant, thank you for the steadfast continuous support and meticulous guidance throughout this academic journey. Together they not only fascinated me with their tactical teaching methods but taught me to think critically and independently.
- Dr Caroline van Der Mescht my academic literacy lecturer. As a student who could not have the best foundation of the English language in school or college, she came in my life and introduced me to academic literacy, I am forever indebted to her for improving my academic writing skills.
- My big sister housemates Saara, Hileni and Jacobina for being pillars of strength and a shoulder to cry on when the going gets tough. Thank you, colleagues, for your willingness to help in any situation.
- My senior scholars, David, Tomas, Sanet, Isak, Linekela and Loide thanks for availing your expertise on the CHAT theory and readings at the time I needed it the most.

I wish to thank;

- My working colleagues particularly: Fiina Kashaka for academic moral support, and Mabeline Izaks and Immanuel Hamulungu for volunteering to take over my duties where necessary during my absence from office.
- Specific thanks to Maria Ausiku my IT Specialist, for her unreserved attention and help she renders to me with regards to technology. Her support really helped me in producing a quality thesis.

Special thanks go to my family;

- My beloved husband, Silvanus, for the unconditional love, support and understanding during my study time. He took care of our family without fear, gave them love and care in my absence from home.
- My children Atusheni Ndeulita, Tuvoye Nalishe and Tuuda Ndahuma. As young as they are they humbly got an understanding that Mommy is studying. They embraced it with open hearts and gave me a nickname ‘book worm’. They are my source of courage and inspiration; one day when they grow up and understand things I will sit with them and tell them a story. A story of success where all three are a part of it. May God bless them to become successful, God-fearing, humble and hardworking citizens.
- My sister Aloisia Mwayolandje, who always has my back, paying for my school fees and encouraging me to think for the future and not the present. With six children of her own, she took care of me as if I was her own daughter.
- My other sister in heaven, Julita Talamondjila, for the love you have for me I know you could have been proud of me wherever you are.
- My nieces Patrisia Itshizi, Aloisia Katjeckie and my nephew Gerson Ndemufayo, thanks for the support you gave to my children, dropping them at school and helping with their homework while I was attending classes.
- My mother, Lioba ‘Kaangombe nkero’ who gave me the gift of life. Her tough upbringing did not go to waste. She instilled in me values of hard work and perseverance, because to her I was not the last born who needed to be spoilt rotten but a child who needed to be disciplined to be able to withstand the hardships in life in her absence one day.

Lastly, I thank all my friends and acquaintances who prayed for me during my study. May God bless them abundantly and continue to pray for others studying as well.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>CHAT</b>	-	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
<b>CL/CLW</b>	-	Change Laboratory/Change Laboratory Workshop
<b>CPD</b>	-	Continuous Professional Development
<b>ELM</b>	-	Educational Leadership and Management
<b>HOD</b>	-	Head of Department
<b>MOE</b>	-	Ministry of Education
<b>NAMCOL</b>	-	Namibian College of Open Learning
<b>NANSO</b>	-	Namibia National Student Union
<b>NANTU</b>	-	Namibian National Teachers' Union
<b>PAAI</b>	-	Plan of Action for Academic Improvement
<b>SDP</b>	-	School Development Plan
<b>SMT</b>	-	School Management Team
<b>SSE</b>	-	School Self-Evaluation
<b>TLC</b>	-	Teacher leadership council
<b>TUN</b>	-	Teachers Union of Namibia

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study focused on exploring the development of teacher leadership practices in a semi-urban secondary school in the Khomas region, Namibia. I begin this chapter by offering the background and context of the study. For this, I draw on both international and local literature to give a sense of the context of teacher leadership. The argument on what prompted the need for this research, in other words, the rationale of the study is presented in this chapter. To achieve this, the discussion begins from a scholarly point of view, followed by a professional drive and my personal motivation. Thereafter, the research objectives and questions of this study are made explicit. Finally, the research orientation and methodology embraced in the study is presented before the chapter concludes with the thesis outline.

At the outset, I deem it necessary to orient the reader to the definition of the word teacher as used in this study. According to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia* (2006), a teacher is “a person who teaches or instructs as part of their professional responsibility” (p. 128). In this study, the word teacher refers to the classroom instructor without a management function in the school. The other key concepts and terms used in this study are explained in detail in Chapter Two. These fundamental concepts are leadership and management, teacher leadership, distributed leadership, cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), expansive learning and change laboratory.

After the above mentioned, I now turn to present the background and context of this study.

### **1.2 Background and Context of the Study**

The history of prolonged unjust treatment and/or exercise of authority under apartheid left the ‘natives’ militarised and bureaucratised (Angula & Lewis, 1997). While Namibians have on record this history, the fact remains that all aspects of the inflicting apartheid regime were directly opposed to democracy (Angula & Lewis, 1997) and so too the development of education for Africans. The way in which apartheid laws were put in place, the ideological basis of the policy of apartheid and its impact was not supportive of the ideas of democracy,

which Namibia is advocating for today. On top of that, “the Bantu Education Act of 1953 administered by the South African apartheid regime from 1969 aimed at suppression of Africans” (Angula & Lewis, 1997, p. 234). By then most people expected to be told what to do and would not initiate something on their own, a culture that is inherited and still seen today. Students who emerged as teachers in the post-colonial era came from apartheid’s racially oppressed and militarised contexts (Angula & Lewis, 1997). Most of these teachers although retired today, gave rise to teachers of my generation and instilled in them a belief that leadership is a positional construct, located either in the role of the principal or in the structure of the school management team. This idea that leadership in education rests in the hands of school managers, became a commonly held misconception which teachers in Namibia today inherited (Nikodemus, 2013).

The above could be possibly true because during that time authority and responsibility were centralised and teachers were not part of the decision-making process (Amukugo, 1993). In addition, opportunities were not given to teachers to develop as leaders. This is because the hierarchical and autocratic conception of school leadership precluded the practice of teacher leadership (Amukugo, 1993). Hence, the invisibility of the concept today can be largely accounted for by the supremacy of apartheid ideology in Southern Africa (Amukugo, 1993; Grant, 2009).

Soon after independence in 1990, Namibia made great strides in improving the state of education in the country, by putting numerous policies in place; a move geared towards replacing the philosophy and practices of the past with the new philosophy and practices appropriate to education of our time (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993a). However, despite a number of series of policy guidelines and directives issued to guide the development of a democratic culture in the education sector, less is happening about the leadership of teachers in schools. To demonstrate this, shortly after independence, the educational policy *Towards Education for all* (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993) called for a democratic education system. Besides that, the *National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia* (2006) and the *National Curriculum for Basic Education* (2010) indicate that teachers are full of life experiences which equip them with leadership skills, thus there is a need to develop in them democratic principles and promote democratic practices at the school level. In spite of this, still, teachers do not take the initiative



to lead and often withdraw from participating in daily activities of the school; hence very little teacher leadership emerges.

The context within which I base my argument is twofold. Firstly, while acknowledging the presence of various policies that promote teachers to fully participate in decision-making, I strongly argue that the gap between educational policies and the implementation in the Namibian context keeps on widening (Hanghuwo, 2014). This might be the reason for failing somehow to ignite teacher leadership at the school level. This implies that changing policies to suit the current need is easy, but implementing to serve its purpose still poses a challenge.

Secondly, policy documents in place (as mentioned above) put more emphasis on the work of managers at the expense of teacher leadership roles. Equally important, what has been gathered by Grant (2010) in her study conducted in South Africa, that these policies lack guidelines on how to introduce teacher leadership into schools, is a fact. I believe that the same can be said for Namibian policies about leadership. Therefore, what I extracted earlier from the above-mentioned policies were just clauses which are scattered all over national, regional directives and school educational policies. Thus teachers lack clarity about the differences between the roles of managers and those of leaders. As a result, teachers conflate leadership and management (Ribbins, 2007). This means, promoting teacher leadership through distributed leadership may also be a huge task as educators in the school believe being a teacher is what it is, to teach.

From the discussion above one cannot dispute a need for further research in the sub-field of teacher leadership. Hence I now turn to present the rationale and significance of this study.

### **1.3 The Rationale of the Study and its Significance**

The rationale for undertaking this study originates from multiple considerations. I began this project with increasing interest driven by scholarly, professional and personal reasons. Certainly, the initial source of motivation to carry out this study emerged from the scholarly point of view. While engaging with leadership literature, it became evident that the concept of teacher leadership is gaining increasing interest in the international literature (Grant, 2017a). To demonstrate this, a considerable amount of studies have been done into teacher leadership in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada over the past years (see Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Gunter, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2005). However, in the African continent, Hallinger

(2017) reveals that “a large number of African societies have demonstrated limited or no capacity for producing research on school leadership and management” (p. 368). Thus, it may be difficult for the concept of teacher leadership to emerge in most African societies, despite the embeddedness in policy discourse (Grant, 2017a). I therefore agree with Grant (2017a), who affirms that the construct of teacher leadership is less obvious on the African continent, and thus lacks an empirical base in the African context (Hallinger, 2017). The above propelled my thinking, enough to say that this was sufficient to consider it as a motivation to research ways in reviving the phenomenon of teacher leadership, starting with my contribution on the local front.

Moreover, little has been done in this regard in the context of Namibia. Only a few studies on teacher leadership have been conducted thus far (see Hashikutuwa, 2011; Nauyoma-Hamupembe, 2011; Uiseb, 2012; Zokka, 2012; Hanghuwo, 2014; Hamatwi, 2015; Ndakolonkoshi, 2018; Iyambo, 2018). It is an undeniable fact that ELM, in which leadership is embedded is not yet an established field in Africa and Namibia is no exception (Hallinger, 2017). Thus, studies conducted in Namibia strongly recommend that there is a need for more research on teacher leadership, as academic research is still in its infancy stage.

Another related problem identified is that the field generally lacks a strong theoretical base, as it is relatively new in the Namibian context. This gap in literature motivated me to conduct research on teacher leadership using a robust theory, which seeks to challenge the status quo, intervene in practice and bring about change to practice. In this case, cultural-historical activity theory is used as a theoretical and analytical framework to bring about improvement to the underdeveloped sub-field. Additionally, only two studies conducted in Namibia so far have been interventionist (see Ndakolonkoshi, 2018; Iyambo, 2018) and the rest were interpretive in nature. This is because interventionist studies are not a norm in the Namibian context, hence the need exists for the use of CHAT which will form part of the discussion in Chapter Two.

Equally significant to this section is a lack of creative methods of collecting data, as another problem identified in the field. Therefore, WhatsApp messaging was a novel method introduced in this thesis, as well as change laboratory workshops in an attempt to fill the gap identified in the literature and bring changes to the troubled field. These two methods will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Professionally, as a subject advisor, embarking on this study put me in a better position to advise teachers on the benefits of showing their agency in matters concerning the school, as this could increase their ‘voice’ (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Finally, going back in time and drawing on my personal experience of when I was a teacher, I did not understand then that apart from classroom teaching, there were also leadership roles that needed to be fulfilled by teachers outside the classroom. This was so because of the lack of proper guidance in terms of teacher leadership. This led to seeing the need to develop leadership within teachers and to research ways of doing this. To this end, I now move on to introduce the objectives and research questions that guided the study.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives and Questions of the Study**

The overarching goal of this study was to explore the development of teacher leadership at a semi-urban secondary school. To achieve this the study had four main specific objectives.

- To determine how the concept of teacher leadership is understood by teachers and SMT.
- To determine the extent to which teachers are involved in enacting leadership within and beyond the school.
- To explore the opportunities that enhance teacher leadership in the school and to reveal constraining conditions to teacher leadership development.
- To find solutions as to how teacher leadership can be developed through change laboratory workshops.

To achieve these objectives, the study attempted to answer the following main research questions.

1. How is the concept of teacher leadership understood in the case study school?
2. What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?
3. What are the conditions that promote or constrain teacher leadership development in the case study school?
4. How can teacher leadership be developed through change laboratory workshops at the case study school?

## **1.5 Research Orientation and Methodology**

This study used a qualitative research orientation. A qualitative research orientation allowed me to explore the problem at hand by developing a detailed understanding of teacher leadership by providing rich data or information (Creswell, 2012). In this study, my focus was on exploring the development of teacher leadership practices at a semi-urban secondary school. Thus my intention was to explore the current leadership practices looking for the opportunities that there are for teachers to develop as leaders and then bring in the transformation process.

The study took a critical stance to educational research, combined with a formative intervention. I adopted a critical stance to my research as it is based on the ideology of structuralism, which focuses on the structures and power relations within a society (Maree, 2014). The use of a critical approach to research was that it is oriented towards critiquing the current situation with a hope to transform current practice. This study took the form of a single case study design. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., teacher leadership activity in this case) based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2012). In my study, I looked into one case which was Kongolo High School (pseudonym), where I particularly focused on the teacher leadership activities with the aim of exploring any opportunities and transforming the leadership of teachers in the case study school.

Data were gathered from 12 participants [nine teachers and three school management team members]. The participants were selected by employing a purposive sampling technique, because of the researcher's knowledge of the population. Purposive sampling is about hand-picking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of researcher judgement (Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison, 2007).

During phase one of the analysis stage, data were inductively analysed using thematic analysis. The data were coded and categories created to generate themes and patterns. During the second phase of analysis, I applied the abductive analysis approach, whereby CHAT, as well as Grant's (2017) Teacher Leadership Model, was used to surface contradictions and indicate the roles in which teachers were actively involved.

Ethical considerations were privileged during the research process. Access was negotiated as I obtained permission from the Khomas Regional Director, then from the school principal of

the research site. Participants also filled in a consent agreement including the WhatsApp messaging consent form, as a commitment to participate in the study.

## **1.6 Outline of the Chapters in the Thesis**

In Chapter One, I first provided the background and context of the study. In the process, the justification of the study was also highlighted. Secondly, the main research questions that guided this study were highlighted in this chapter. I then presented the research orientation and the detailed plan of how data was gathered. Lastly, I presented the sequence and outline of the chapters in this thesis.

Chapter Two provides a brief background of the field of ELM as well as the difference between the concepts of leadership and management. This includes an elaboration on the traditional views on leadership theories and an argument for a need to focus on distributed leadership – a modern leadership ideology. Teacher leadership as a central concept to this study is discussed and the reader will be informed about why the study is so important. I then provide a description of the theoretical tenets underpinning this study.

Chapter Three discusses the research orientation and methodology that informs my study. Key research questions of this study are made explicit. The research site is described to give the reader a sense of the case study school. The research participants and how they were selected are also elaborated upon in this chapter. The discussion goes further to explain how data generation methods such as document analysis, observation, interviews, WhatsApp messaging and change laboratories were used in this study. The chapter also includes how data was analysed and how I navigated through the research ethics to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter Four and Five describe what was discovered in response to the main research questions of the study. The data generated through interviews, observation, document analysis, WhatsApp messaging and change laboratories is presented and discussed in these chapters. **Phase one**, which is the contextual profiling, addresses the first three questions of Chapter Four which are: *How is the concept of teacher leadership understood in the case study school?; What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?; What are the conditions that promote or constrain teacher leadership in the case study school?* In summary, the chapter focuses on the understanding of the concept of teacher leadership, as well as the

roles teachers fulfil in the school. Moreover, the chapter also highlights the findings on the enabling conditions to the reader, as well as constraining factors to teacher leadership within the school.

Similarly, in Chapter Five, **phase two** which is the **formative** intervention phase, answers the last research question: *How can teacher leadership be developed through change laboratory workshops at the case study school?* In summary, this chapter focuses on presenting the findings obtained through change laboratory workshops, which guided participants in finding solutions to the problematic situations of their current practice.

Chapter Six is the concluding chapter of my thesis. The chapter summarises the key findings of this study from the data presented in Chapter Four and Five. It reminds the reader of the main research questions guiding this study. The chapter also reveals the potential value derived from the study. Moreover, the chapter presents my personal experiences derived from using CHAT as a theoretical and analytical framework in the study. Then the possibilities for future research are highlighted and finally, the chapter is summed up with my final thoughts on this research journey.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter forms the basis of understanding and describes the position and viewpoints of different authors in literature pertinent to the phenomenon under study. The chapter also introduces key concepts of (a) teacher leadership, (b) distributed leadership, as well as (c) cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) as the theoretical framework of the study.

To do this, the chapter will be crafted as follows: firstly a derivation of the field ELM will be given so as to direct the reader of my study to where, how and when the field originated. Secondly, the chapter will unpack the two main field concepts framing my study. Here leadership and management will be defined and the relationship between the two concepts will be discussed. Thirdly, I will also shed light on the two theories: teacher leadership and distributed leadership, their interconnectedness to each other and to CHAT, plus their significance to my study. Finally, the chapter will cover the discussion on the theoretical assumptions of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) as a framework for the study and this will conclude the chapter.

#### **2.2 A Historical overview of the field of Educational Leadership and Management**

The field of Educational Leadership and Management can be traced back as far as the 1950s when educational administration, a much older term, had developed strongly in the United States (Bush, 1999). This distinct discipline later spread to the United Kingdom where it was developed further and established itself as a field, which saw the first specialist courses offered at the London Institute of Education in the 1960s (*ibid.*). Since then, management – a relatively newer term – was derived from management principles first applied to business and industry mainly in the United States (Ribbins, 2007). This was brought forth to bring about improvement to business' profit or productivity (Fitz, 1999). However, given that educational administration had a limited discourse, its first educational management courses borrowed heavily from other disciplines derived from business and commerce (Ribbins, 2007). As a result, leadership theories and practices drawn from business-oriented frames of reference were

adopted and adapted for use in educational settings in the United States and similarly in developed nations (Fitz, 1999). Unquestionably, educational leadership became popular as replacements of educational administration in recent years (Fitz, 1999). To date, educational leadership has progressed from being a new field dependent upon ideas borrowed from other settings, to becoming an established field with some theories and significant empirical data (Bush, 1999).

As literature has indicated, theories of educational leadership have been derived from a diversity of interdisciplinary conceptualisations and models over time (Fitz, 1999; van der Mescht, 2008). Obviously, theories of leadership can be considered emergent, dynamic, and subject to further evolution (Fitz, 1999) in pushing the boundaries of knowledge in this field of Education Leadership and Management. The likely idea of contemporary writing is to examine the extent of the influence of this discipline especially in education through research and practice and to investigate educational leadership theories to better understand the dynamics of leadership in a variety of educational contexts, which is one of the driving forces behind my research.

As indicated in the previous chapter, and as part of a larger research project on leadership development, my study sought to work with school teachers to expand their leadership. Therefore explaining the field concepts of leadership and management embedded in this study is of great significance and of great help to the reader of my study.

## **2.3 Conceptual assumptions**

### **2.3.1 Leadership and Management**

Understanding of the concept of leadership amongst Namibian teachers is likely to be very poor. Literature has also supported this by mentioning that one of the problems with a construct like leadership is, that although it may have some meaning in the management sciences, it is difficult to transport into schools and understand it in a way that makes much sense (Smyth, 1989). This piece of the chapter takes a stance of understanding; through describing, unpacking and critiquing the views of leadership in schools. It is against this background that the discussion to follow will strive to reach an understanding of leadership and management through definitions.



### **2.3.2 Defining management**

It is generally accepted that there is no all-round definition of management, simply because there are many definitions depending on each writer's perspective. However, various authors are in agreement on the definition of management, to say that it focuses on the safeguarding and sustaining of structures of the organisation (Spillane, 2005; van der Mescht, 2008; Christie, 2010). To achieve the above mentioned, members of management have to follow the arrangement that restricts people to work by following the rules and regulations given in a school setting (Heystek, 2012). For the context of my study, management in a school setting is about monitoring and planning the daily activities to create a conducive environment, where teaching and learning will take place harmoniously. My view resonates well with Kotter (2011) who, in the context of business, says management has to do with effective and efficient execution of duties by working on pre-determined routines in line with company structures and keeping stability in an organisation. I therefore argue, that management in schools has to do with managing processes (Heystek, 2012) by planning and implementing policies of the school as an organisation. Cementing my argument is Christie (2010), who links management to the organisational concepts pertaining to structures and processes by which the organisations meet their goals. On top of that, Bolam (1999) is in agreement with Bush (2003) when he writes that management is concerned with the internal operations of an institution and therefore serves an executive function for carrying out approved procedures and policies.

### **2.3.3 Defining leadership**

A single definition that captures what leadership is about does not exist (Yukl, 2002). Nevertheless out of the many definitions, I managed to pull out a few definitions to give a clear understanding of what leadership is in the context of my study. In some cases, literature presents leadership as bounded in the characteristics of an individual. Specifically, a group of authors reveal that leadership is a process of influencing and inspiring others to reach the intended goals or purpose (see Bush, 2003; Spillane, 2005; Christie, 2010). On top of that, Hallinger (2017) clearly puts it that leadership is a "process through which persons seek to bring change/or improvement in the organisation by influencing other people or organisational processes" (p. 364). In Harris and Muijs' (2005) words, leadership is defined as "the ability to encourage other colleagues to change, to do things they would not ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader" (p. 438).

Furthermore, in some instances, leadership is viewed as a position. To demonstrate this, to some, the school principal or school head is commonly thought to be the leader (Bush, 1999; Muijs & Harris, 2005). Just like Ribbins (2007), I take a stance to say that leadership is not about a position and that school leadership can involve everyone. Besides, every person regardless of position has an equal chance to influence the culture, performance and values of the organisation. Additionally, leadership is a practice where a vision is created and a desire in people is aroused to achieve more in the future; even to achieve what has never been achieved before (Ribbins, 2007). Therefore, it is right to say that leadership is an outcome of group dynamics rather than the actions of a person designated as a leader (Harris, 2008). In other words, a clear process of leadership should, therefore, be geared towards change and movement, from wherever we are now, to some future place or condition that is different (Astin & Astin, 2001). This is clearly linking to a central tenet of cultural-historical activity theory; that of learning ‘what is not yet there’, leading to transformation and change.

In my study, I saw leadership development at the case study school as a vehicle to empower teachers to become agents of positive social change in the school and society at large. This is because I believe that leadership is purposeful and is about moving men and woman towards achieving an objective, and that everyone in a school can do that (Astin & Astin, 2001).

To this end, leadership and management are interconnected, which means they have a strong relationship that makes it difficult for one to operate without the other. Thus a discussion on the relationship between leadership and management will now follow.

#### **2.3.4 Determining the relationship between educational leadership and management**

Separating management and leadership concepts by functions is impractical, since both are required for the smooth running of the organisation. In fact, as Ribbins (2007) asserts, the membranes between the two are thin and porous which means a person cannot use one in the absence of the other but they can be used interchangeably. Even though the difference can be in usage between these two terms, neither set of functions can exist in practice in isolation. For that reason, I fully support Bush (2007), who maintains that leadership and management are distinct but are both important in an organisation. For instance, a leader may steer a ship towards its vision and mission, however, without good management skills the vision might not be realised. My idea resonates well with that of Hamatwi (2015), who posits that, in a school setting, a good manager adopting inappropriate leadership styles will likely not achieve the

desired objective. I recommend that management and leadership are both necessary for the success of any organisation such as a school. Without doubt, together they can hold the organisation together for permanency and progress. Therefore I stress that schools should not attach a special value to either, since different settings and times call for varied responses (Fitz, 1999). To that end, I take a position not to see management and leadership as one, as these two concepts cannot be conflated (Ribbins, 2007) but should be seen as interrelated concepts complementing each other.

There are different views on leadership, a situation likely to drown many readers in a pool of confusion. Hence, there is a need to inform the reader where leadership theories informing my study today came from and how far they have influenced the current leadership practices in our schools, as this is pertinent to my study. Thus I now turn to present the traditional views of leadership.

## **2.4 Traditional Views of Leadership**

Up until today, education tends to be centralised with hierarchical and managerial leadership dominating in schools (Thurlow, Bush, & Coleman, 2003). This means that leadership that came before our time influenced the current leadership practice in schools (Christie, 2010). Tracing the history (answering the how and where questions) of how it all started, is targeted towards getting a better understanding of the concept of teacher leadership, the phenomenon under study. Moreover, it is important that the reader follows the history of progression in leadership theories in order to establish a link between theories. How the trait theory drove us to distributed theory, ‘a new kid on the block’ in terms of leadership and one of the main concepts framing my study is of significant importance. There are many competing models and theories on how leadership developed in literature (Bush, 2003). However, for the purpose of this study, I will focus my discussion on those that are related to education such as trait or great man theory, situational and contingency theories and transformational leadership theory.

### **2.4.1 Trait leadership theory**

Trait theory seems to be identified with the qualities of the individual. This implies that there are a variety of traits that are common to leaders, thus identifying leadership with the quality or qualities of the individual (Coleman, 2005). The most basic illustration is the ‘great man theory’ which strongly holds a common belief that leaders are born and not made (Coleman,

2005), a view strongly anchored to those who think there are universally agreed qualities that make an effective leader. This leadership theory focuses on identifying the qualities based on character traits such as power, intelligence, articulation, charisma and many others (Coleman, 2005), to separate leaders from non-leaders. However, it is a proven fact that it is not easy to measure and identify specific sets of traits that could noticeably be present in leaders. In the case of a school set up, the trait theory assumptions are that it recognises the principal as a sole leader, which limits other people such as teachers, learners and parents to showcase their leadership potential. While this may be the case in many of our schools, the principal might not even hold any of those qualities or characteristics. As I alluded to, the trait theory focuses on the qualities of a leader, neglecting the issue of developing leadership within the people through training, one of the criticisms that brought in a shift from individual attention to situational leadership theory. This opened doors for situational leadership theory which is explained hereunder.

#### **2.4.2 Situational and contingency leadership theories**

What the two theories discussed in this section do, is to shift from an individual focus to a situational and contingency type of leadership. The assumption in these types of theories is that they relate the leader to the situation in which they find themselves. This is because a ‘one size fits all’ approach to leadership may sometimes not fit a particular situation, taking into consideration disparities in the allocation of resources in schools (Bush, 2007). Moreover, contingency theory recognises the varied nature of school contexts and as such, leaders respond to their distinctive situation as they know which approach to use for which situation (*ibid.*). This means a situation a school finds itself in may not necessarily be the same situation other schools find themselves in, therefore different situations may require a different leadership style. In this case, a “leader does not operate in isolation but will be affected by his/her circumstances” (Coleman, 2005, p. 10) which in this case involves the followers, culture, behaviours and the social being of the organisation. Equally important, Heystek (2012) believes that in a “situational theory, a person may move between management and leadership depending on the situation they find themselves in” (p. 7). This means leaders assess the situation carefully rather than depending on a standard leadership model. Although this may be true, Bush (2003) “discovers a more ‘collegial’ management model with a central focus on leadership geared towards the commitment and capacities of organisational members” (p. 396). Thus transformational leadership was introduced and that is discussed here below.

### **2.4.3 Transformational leadership theory**

Transformational leadership theory according to Coleman (2005, p. 14), relates strongly “to building the capacity of members of the organisation, in which leadership might be exercised by people other than the principal”. The results in this type of leadership theory would be enhanced capacity and continuous improvement. This is because “this type of leadership focuses more on the collective interests of a group or a community” (Shields, 2009, p. 11). The leader avoids using power for personal gain as he is guided by high ethical standards shown in his daily conduct. On top of that, individual needs are considered through “embracing a culture of peer mentoring, daily coaching and delegation of activities in the organisation” (Coleman, 2005, p. 17), with the purpose of impacting the school and everyone in the organisation. However, the transformation described here is more organisational and does not give attention to issues of social justice.

In concluding this section that describes leadership evolution, it is worth noting why I am moving closer to contemporary types of leadership. This is because of the current thinking in light of distributed leadership which “shifts from leadership which is vested in one person (the principal) to leadership as a shared practice” (Coleman, 2005, p. 11).

To this end, my discussion on distributed leadership as an umbrella to teacher leadership, will now begin.

## **2.5 Distributed Leadership**

### **2.5.1 Understanding distributed leadership**

Distributed leadership is a leadership theory emanating from the 21st century which discourages leadership residing in a sole leader. In its simplest form as per Grant’s (2017a) thinking, “distributed leadership theory incorporates the notion of multiple leaders who interact with followers in dynamic ways” (p. 1). Grant’s line of thinking resonates well with other academics who have based their argument on the belief that leadership does not need to be positioned in the principal but should be extended over several leaders (Muijs & Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006; Bolden, 2011; Ho Pau Yuen, Chen, & Ng, 2016). What differentiates distributed leadership from other leadership theories, is that it arises out of a group or network of individuals who come together to share their expertise (Muijs & Harris, 2005). To simplify this view for the reader, distributed leadership suggests tapping into the expertise of everyone

in an organisation, for the environment to be made coherent by a common and supportive culture. Thus, distributed leadership is about creating conditions in which teachers work in an atmosphere where they rely on each other. In fact, distributed leadership speaks well to the notion of inclusivity and shared decision-making.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, distributed leadership is about finding a cultural way that works well for the school. This means finding a culture of using teachers' expertise, bringing them into discussions and ensuring that informal leaders form part of the leadership endeavour (Harris, 2008). In this case, leadership might be appropriately understood as "fluid and emergent rather than a fixed phenomenon" (Gronn, 2000, p. 324).

In a distributed leadership system, everyone has the capacity to have an effect on the development of leadership practices in the school. Indeed, distributed leadership is against the idea of people working in isolation, and rather than as a team. Therefore, the theory aligns well with invitational styles of leadership in which a formal leader creates an opportunity for informal leaders (in this case teachers) to come forward (Harris, 2008). In line with this thinking, Muijs and Harris (2005) emphasise that teachers, just like high-ranking supervisors, have to be given a chance to lead and to take responsibility for areas of change in the school, when the need arises. This is because teachers' engagement in leadership may be the most important part of the whole process of change. Therefore, I believe teachers carry expertise on school issues, given that they are the closest people to school problems and, as a result, are likely to be a valuable resource when deciding what is best for the learners.

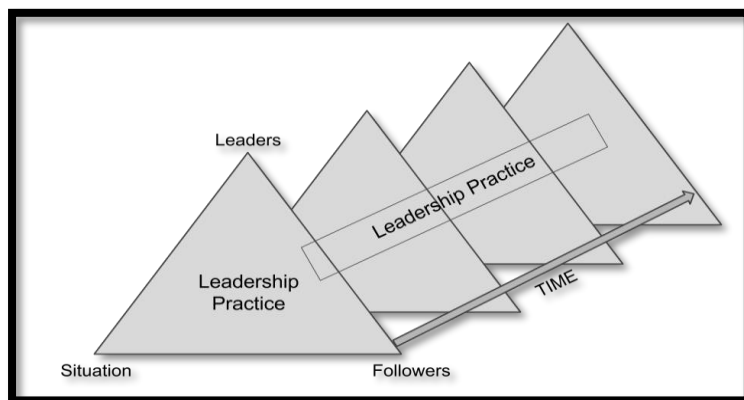
In support of Grant's (2008) thinking, I reckon that leaders can be present at all the different levels in a school; but first, roles in a school need to be created, people recognised and given more roles and more responsibilities for leadership to be distributed (Harris, 2008). For this purpose, leadership distributed in a school opens up opportunities (Muijs & Harris, 2003) for people to lead and bring change in the school. I therefore conclude that if well understood and implemented, distributed leadership can be an alternative to the redundant trait leadership theory (Grant, 2017a).

### **2.5.2 Leading through distribution**

To study leadership practice, there is a need to study leadership in action, rather than leadership as a role (Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008). Certainly, in a distributed

leadership perspective the interest lies with the practice and not with a person or a position. Moreover, Spillane (2006) argues that a distributed leadership perspective frames leadership practice as a creation of the joint-interactions of school leaders, followers and aspects of their situation. The critical aspect of distributed leadership is what Muijs and Harris (2003) demonstrate when they say it “implies interdependency rather than dependency embracing how leaders of various kinds and in various roles share responsibilities” (p. 439). Moreover, Harris (2004) maintains his view by saying that distributed leadership is not a technique or a way of thinking but focuses on how leadership practice is distributed. Overall it is the nature and quality of leadership practice that matters.

The above mentioned resonates well with Spillane (2006), who affirms that distributed leadership is not contextual, rather it is embedded in its cultural-historical and institutional setting. As a result, distributed leadership is not a one size fits all approach to leadership. This means the way leadership roles are being carried out vary from school to school, depending on the context and the situation teachers find themselves in.



***Figure 2.1: A distributed leadership practice (Spillane, 2006)***

Moreover, distributed leadership is not a blueprint or a recipe (Harris, 2008); however, it gives us a way “to investigate how leadership practice is stretched over two or more leaders and to interrogate how followers and the situation mutually constitute the practice” (Spillane, 2006, p. 15). In other words, it offers schools the opportunity to stand back and ponder on how leadership is distributed, and whether that distribution makes a difference or not (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Therefore, distributed leadership can be a useful conceptual and analytical tool that helps in analysing leadership work within schools and between schools (Harris & Spillane, 2008). As Harris and Spillane (2008) put it, distributed leadership is not necessarily a bad or a good thing, it depends on the context within which leadership is distributed and the main aim of the distribution. If leadership is purposefully distributed, it can bring a noticeable improvement in the leadership practice of teachers leading to organisational change (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

In addition, leadership is not what a principal or any other individual knows or does. Rather it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks (Spillane et al., 2004). Therefore, distributed leadership might work for those who are seeking for self-renewal and transformation through leadership practices. Indeed, I base my argument on the fact that distributed leadership “is not just a new kid on the block or simply a nuanced rebranding of traditional theories” (Lumby, 2013) rather it is “a robust and appropriate theoretical tool for investigating school leadership practice” (Grant, 2017a, p. 17).

### **2.5.3 Critiques and limitations of distributed leadership in schools**

One of the limitations of distributed leadership is that regardless of its admiration it lacks a clear standard definition, thus it “lacks conceptual clarity” (Grant, 2017a, p. 6). Therefore, it can attract a variety of meanings and be associated with a range of practices (Botha, 2014) which can easily be used to rebrand previous ideas. This resonates well with Lumby (2013), who claims that the concept in some cases is used interchangeably with concepts such as democratic, participative and/or shared leadership.

Distributed leadership can be used as a conceptual lens for school leadership. However, as Grant (2017a) writes, we need to “raise questions about the location and exercise of power within an organisation and examine what is distributed and how it is distributed” (p. 2). This is because in South African schools for example, centralisation of power is quietly noted to be the major hindrance to distributed leadership (Grant, 2017a), of which I think the reference above might be similar in the Namibian context. The notable danger, however, is that if power is misused in the process of distributing roles across people in the organisation or to people invited to come forward, it will not work. In the same vein, Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2009) warn that distributed leadership could be purposely misunderstood by those in positions of authority. This might be because those who are given additional responsibility and authority in schools might use it for destructive purposes (Bolden et al., 2009), underlying how distributed



leadership can go wrong and prove to be disastrous for those with formal management responsibilities. Explicitly, I argue that distributed leadership is not about giving away power or authority, but it is about creating conditions in the school where people will feel able to offer their expertise (Harris, 2008). Thus, I align myself with Harris (2003), when she writes that leadership needs “a shift in power, authority and control” (p. 551) from the hierarchical to a more heterarchical approach (Woods & Gronn, 2009). In other words, there is a need to spread power to other areas and create room for distributed leadership in schools, where principals and teachers work at an equal level.

A much greater understanding of power and the practice of distributed leadership is needed, otherwise, misunderstandings by principals that distributed leadership is about giving away power to the followers in the school will remain. Principals with this misconception and “still operating from formal authority positions, will continue to select leaders, delegate work and shape the parameters within which teachers function” (Lumby, 2013, p. 11). Additionally, distributed leadership is also not about giving people tasks a person in formal management would rather not perform (Harris, 2008; Grant & Singh, 2009), as this might result in more workload for teachers, which would frustrate them and undermine the successful implementation of distributed leadership in the school.

I would therefore argue, that while leadership may be shared in certain situations, this is not an adequate requirement for it to be regarded as distributed (Gronn, 2000). Additionally, the literature on distributed leadership highlights that “distributed leadership is not the answer to the leadership woes in present-day schools nor necessarily the right way to lead” (Grant 2017b, p. 8), but depends on the conditions created for it to flourish.

#### **2.5.4 Theorising distributed leadership and its links to CHAT**

In my study, there is value in using activity theory to comprehend the concept of distributed leadership. This is because distributed leadership, as defined by Gronn (2000) and Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004), draw upon socio-cultural activity theory. Moreover, activity theory’s position is that the activity system is the central unit of analysis, thus resonating well with distributed leadership theory which views the unit of analysis not as a person, but as leadership practice distributed over several leaders, followers and situations (Ho Pau Yuen et al., 2016). I would therefore further argue that the activity being analysed in this study is the teacher leadership activity. The subject in consideration is the teachers (leaders) while the

object is teacher leadership, of which the researcher's aim (objective) is to influence and achieve the desired change in the teachers' application of leadership (Ho Pau Yuen et al., 2016).

Activity theory is a vital interpretive lens for distributed leadership in “enabling a more refined understanding of ‘situation’ through its consideration of tools, rules/norms, and the community” (Ho Pau Yuen et al., 2016, p. 816). In activity theory, the unit of analysis is the social, collective activity itself, situated within a community-based context. This means learning takes place through interactions “facilitated by various components of the activity system namely community, tools, rules, and division of labour” (Yamagata-Lynch, 2001 as quoted in Ho Pau Yuen et al., 2016, p. 817)). In this manner, activity theory theorises distributed leadership, because the theory advocates for learning that takes place within and between multiple actors in the leadership system (Spillane, 2006). In this case, a group of teachers who are the subjects are involved in the activity with the intention to transform the current leadership practice of teachers, enabling them to take part in school leadership work.

Moving forward, cultural-historical activity theory used in my study embraces the concept of division of labour, “which arguably is aligned to distributed leadership’s principle of multiple leaders with different leadership roles” (Ho Pau Yuen et al., 2016, p. 816). This principle includes an outcome which could be aligned to the definition of leadership as being purpose-driven (Bolden, 2011). In the context of this study, “the division of labour may refer to the leadership actions and interactions of multiple levels of leaders within the organisational structure” (Ho Pau Yuen et al., 2016, p. 818). The teachers’ development of leadership practices can be mediated by rules which include the schools’ expectations, policies and tools. These include ideas shared by other participants who are part of the community, as well as the division of labour (Ho Pau Yuen et al., 2016). This is to say that teachers interact with the school management, parents and probably learners to initiate and bring about change in the school. Distributed leadership offers an opportunity to review exactly how leadership is distributed and the differences made by that distribution (Harris & Spillane, 2008) and that is exactly the aim of activity theory is to analyse leadership in its unique situation and in the context of a natural setting.

I therefore conclude that distributed leadership allows the beginning of teacher leadership to emerge in a school. Thus, teacher leadership is one manifestation of a distributed approach to leadership. As there are several others such as learner leadership and parent leadership, my

study aimed to expand the current leadership practices among teachers. I therefore discuss teacher leadership in the next section as it is a powerful tool in bringing about school change.

## **2.6 Teacher Leadership as a Central Concept to My Study**

To reiterate, leadership traditionally has been perceived to reside with school principals where power flowed down to teachers. This notion of ‘positional authority’ of the principals, has been working in a system which has not been organised to treat teachers as leaders, therefore the focus has entirely been on those in formal school leadership positions (Spillane et al., 2004). Furthermore, the literature on educational leadership maintains that slight consideration has been given to the teacher as an educational leader in the school, other than in the classroom (Bush, 2007). This is clear testimony from the leadership literature, that leadership has largely been premised on the individual and associated with authority and position (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Hence the speculation has been, that teaching is meant for teachers while leading is meant for school principals.

The notable point here, is that teachers are detached from leadership, and that leadership has hardly ever been recognised outside the classroom territory (Lumpkin, Claxton, & Wilson, 2014). Thus, the broad views of leadership are tightly linked to domains of responsibility which assign school-wide leadership to principals and classroom leadership roles to teachers (Murphy, 2005). For that reason, one significant interest in my work is to enable schools to place more emphasis on teachers assuming greater leadership at the school, inside and outside the classroom. To this end, this new emerging concept which came about as a school improvement strategy needs further exploration in terms of its meaning, in order to grasp its importance in education. Therefore in the next section, I present the meaning of teacher leadership.

### **2.6.1 Understanding the concept of teacher leadership**

It should be undoubtful from the onset that what has been learned about leadership in schools over the century has not relied on any clear, agreed-upon definition of the concept (York- Barr & Duke, 2004). This is affirmed from the literature on teacher leadership, because many of the authors attest that there are “vast overlapping and competing definitions of the term teacher leadership”, hence coming up with a clear definition is a huge task (Wasley, 1991; Muijs & Harris, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Grant, 2005).

In pursuit of making sense of teacher leadership as a concept, I commence by looking at the overarching conceptions of teacher leadership, by stating that the ways of thinking about it have evolved over time. Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) describe this evolution in three ways. In the first wave teachers served in formal roles (for example departmental heads, union representatives), essentially managers whose main purpose was to further the efficiency of school operations. Wasley (1991) describes this use of teachers as an extension of administration “designed [not] to change practice but to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system” (p. 4). The second wave of teacher leadership was intended to fully capitalise on the instructional expertise of teachers by appointing teachers to roles such as curriculum leaders, staff developers, and mentors of new teachers (Silva et al., 2000). The third wave of teacher leadership, despite being viewed as currently emerging, reflects on an increased understanding that a redesign of schools requires distributed leadership as the engine and capacity for change (Grant & Singh, 2009). This wave of teacher leadership involves teachers as leaders, both within and outside the classroom and grounded on change that is undertaken collectively.

Since the reader has some knowledge of how teacher leadership has evolved over time, certainly I should go deeper into the definitions that align with the thinking of the third wave as per the idea of Silva et al. (2000). Harris (2003, p. 315) defines teacher leadership as “a form of agency that can be widely shared or distributed within and across an organisation, thus directly challenging more conventional forms of leadership practice”. In a similar fashion, Harris and Muijs (2003), strongly speak of teacher leadership as the agency that brings about valuable learning and teaching in schools. I believe that teacher leadership is concerned with teachers helping others so that they, in turn, can better help learners. In addition, teacher leadership is about helping teachers work together to initiate and achieve the goals and objectives of the school (Foster, 1997).

Similarly, teacher leadership entails mobilising and energising others with the goal of improving the schools’ performance through effective teaching and learning (Hamatwi, 2015). Finally, Harris and Lambert (2003) argue that teacher leadership is characterised by staff members who are actively and collectively participating in school leadership activities and who feel that their contributions are valued by colleagues. From the set of definitions given above on teacher leadership, one might wonder who could be a teacher leader or who a teacher leader is? The answer to these questions will be discovered in the discussion below.

### **2.6.2 Who is a teacher leader?**

Teacher leaders are both teachers and leaders since they are there to promote learning among their teaching peers (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In fact, they are considered teacher leaders because they encourage others, using technical knowledge to solve problems enthusiastically to learn new things (Murphy, 2005). Interestingly enough, Harris and Lambert (2003) point out that teacher leaders are those teachers with a high degree of competence who spend most of their time teaching, yet take on leadership roles to initiate ideas that bring development to their schools.

However, I tend to disagree with York-Barr and Duke (2004), who write that teachers become teacher leaders because of their significant teaching experience and due to being excellent, successful teachers in their classrooms. I would rather agree with Grant (2005), who takes a stance to say that all teachers are seen as potential sources of leadership irrespective of their years of experience or rank in the school, as long as the teachers demonstrate interest; all teachers have the right, capability and responsibility to be leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 2003).

Moreover, being a teacher leader is not solely about passion, commitment, professionalism and enthusiasm. However, it requires a person to take calculated risks and ultimately assumes collective responsibility for a change initiative that might seem difficult or threatening to colleagues (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988). To do this, teachers require support from the management both within and outside the school. Against this backdrop, the mechanisms enabling teacher leadership are explained next.

### **2.6.3 Conditions enabling teacher leadership development within the school**

For teacher leadership to take root at school level the management of the school has a crucial role to play. In support of this, management is in a better position to unleash the largely untapped resource of teacher leadership in support of school change (Lumpkin et al., 2014). In the same vein, teacher leaders cannot develop without consistent aid and encouragement from the management (Smylie, 1996). Thus how teachers perform their roles in school depends on their relationship with those informal leadership roles. Therefore, assistance from those persons in positions of power is of immeasurable value in bringing about change and developing future

leaders (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996). I now turn to discuss a supportive school structure and school culture as two factors enabling teachers to take up leadership roles in the school.

### ***2.6.3.1 Creating a supportive organisational structure***

Teacher leadership requires some clear restructuring of the workplace. For teacher leadership to thrive, traditional top-down leadership styles need to be substituted with a more shared decision-making approach. Consequently, the literature points towards top-down management structures in schools as a major impediment to the development of teacher leadership, as it hinders teachers from achieving independence and taking on leadership roles in the school (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Grant, 2017b). I believe principals have both the power and strategic positions to create internal structures and conditions that are favourable to teacher leadership. Therefore, principals must be aggressive in reshaping organisational structures and shifting resources to support the goal of nurturing a deeper pool of leadership (Murphy, 2005). This shift will hopefully lead to some teachers changing their mindset and becoming willing to take on leadership roles, as they no longer see themselves as classroom practitioners only (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Subsequently, leadership roles which are not clearly defined in the school must also be clearly designed to make it easier for teachers to take up leadership roles. This will prevent teachers from being blacklisted by their colleagues when they want to take on leadership roles (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Grant, 2017b).

### ***2.6.3.2 Developing a supportive school culture***

Empirical research is beginning to show that where teacher leadership has thrived or succeeded is where schools have decided to change the culture of the school (Muijs & Harris, 2007). In this situation, successful teacher leadership needs a fundamental cultural shift in the vision and values of the school. That is why even literature asserts that teachers can only become leaders within the school when school culture is clearly devoted to providing support for the learning of its members (Silva et al., 2000). Hence, teacher leadership needs to be deeply rooted in the culture of the school. Changing the culture of the school and consistently setting shared values and aims within the school, is one way of creating an enabling environment for teacher leadership to thrive (Muijs & Harris, 2005). Schools should set up a culture that empowers teachers. A ‘we are a team’ culture should be created as people work towards achieving a shared goal in the school, rather than disempowering them and creating a blame culture, where people look for others to blame when things go wrong (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Lumpkin et al.

(2014) affirm that when collaboration is deeply rooted in the school culture, teachers adopt an attitude of ‘all our learners’, rather than ‘just my learners’. Therefore removing all these hindrances to teacher leadership will see the notion being developed and enhanced in schools. Schools will then likely enjoy the benefits derived from the practice of teacher leadership. The discussion on the benefits of teacher leadership to a school will now follow.

#### **2.6.4 Benefits of teachers participating in the leadership of the school**

Evidently, the research done on teacher leadership indicates that there is a connection between teacher leadership and employee participation (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Employee (teacher) participation is vital to the school as an organisation since teachers’ perspectives can contribute to well-informed decisions. What is more, “teachers hold vital knowledge regarding daily operations and interactions with learners” (*ibid.*). If teachers are developed as leaders, hopefully, they will likely be involved in the decision-making processes of the school. These teachers may feel empowered, trusted and valued as they feel that they have greatly contributed to the progress of the school and to whatever changes are seen in the school. This resonates well with Muijs and Harris (2003), as well as Weiss, Cambone and Wyeth (1992), who feel that greater participation by teachers will lead to greater ownership and commitment to organisational goals. In this case, when teachers share in decision-making, they become committed to the decisions that emerge.

As a result, teachers will spend most of their time at school planning and designing programmes that best suit their school, looking at its history, context and leadership style. Moreover, due to greater satisfaction derived from work because of their active involvement in decision-making, schools will likely see a drop in teachers’ absenteeism which in turn can lead to school improvement (Muijs & Harris, 2007). This is because teachers who become leaders, experience personal and professional satisfaction, a reduction in isolation, a sense of instrumentality and new learning – all of which will spill over into their teachings (Barth, 2001). Moreover, Little (1988) points out that teachers who lead leave their mark on teaching through their presence, performance and conduct of their work with students. These teachers become professionals and investors, rather than tenants in their own schools (Barth, 2001).

Therefore, teacher leadership will bring about change and innovation that will bring with it a change in learners’ achievement and improvement in the effectiveness of teaching (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

### **2.6.5 Factors constraining teacher leadership development opportunities**

As alluded to in the previous section, teacher leadership has benefits to teachers partaking in the leadership of the school, however, schools should be aware of the inhibiting factors towards teachers taking those roles. The above view resonates well with Muijs and Harris (2003), who maintain that there are obstacles in the way of teacher leadership development that need to be cleared, otherwise teacher leadership functions will not succeed. It is against this background I present some of the constraining factors hereunder.

#### ***2.6.5.1 Policies and regulations as barriers to teacher leadership development***

National and school policies are very critical in promoting or constraining the development of leadership in schools. At this stage, the common disapproval is that these policies have contributed much less towards the development of teacher leadership. In agreement with this position, Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy and Wirt (2004) assert that, some constraining mechanisms can be from internal policies and procedures, work rules and standards set for teachers within the confinement of the school. This means the set rules may make it difficult for those in a formally titled position to create conditions enabling teachers to step forward and lead beyond the classroom environment.

Moreover, after independence in 1990, Namibia, through the educational policy *Towards Education for All* (Namibia, 1993) and other various policies called for a democratic education system. They clearly advocate that teachers should be active and participate broadly in school decision-making. However, the fact remains that these policies do not pronounce themselves clearly on the notion of teacher leadership, as information provided is hidden and inadequate. Instead, teachers rely only on a few statements or clauses from which to extract general information about the duties of a subject or class head. One manifestation of these documents is that there is inadequate information regarding teacher leadership.

#### ***2.6.5.2 School leadership structure***

Up until today, the management system inherited during the colonial era is still embedded within the school setting. Generally, during that time, authority and responsibility were centralised and teachers were excluded from the decision-making process. Hence, teachers are still attached to a form of leadership that gives power to a person in a formal management



position and this can be a major constraint for teachers taking up leadership roles. This resonates well with Muijs and Harris (2005), who emphasise the belief that people in a formal administration position will be the ones to take up leadership roles. In the same vein, Grant (2006) also affirms that teachers are prepared to assume leadership roles but feel constrained by the top-down leadership structures.

Moreover, while noting that traditional leadership structures pose a serious threat to developing leadership in schools, Muijs and Harris (2003) also maintain that top-down management structures in schools is “a major impediment to the development of teacher leadership, as they militate against teachers attaining autonomy and taking on leadership roles” (p. 443) within the school. Meanwhile Blasé and Blasé (2001) also affirm that “the bureaucratic structure of traditional schools creates difficulties for the development of democratic governance” (p. 146).

#### ***2.6.5.3 Lack of interest and negative attitudes of teachers as barriers***

Literature reveals that teachers themselves impede the development of leadership in schools. Based on the evidence provided by Harris (2007, p. 120), who affirms that “one of the barriers was the unwillingness of teachers to take on leadership roles”, it can be seen that teachers may lack understanding or may be influenced by others which influences their decision not to take up leadership roles. In some cases, teachers do not want to lead because they still believe that the principal is the only leader in the school, hence he/she should lead. According to the study conducted by Grant (2006), generally, teachers in schools believe that the principal’s role is to lead, while they must just follow. Additionally, Muijs and Harris (2006) observe that teachers think that taking leadership roles is a burden added on top of their classroom activities that need to be fulfilled, one that does not even earn any remuneration for the extra work to be done. All of the above translates into teachers’ reluctance to lead, hence leadership roles suffer.

#### ***2.6.5.4 Lack of time and too much workload***

Some teachers cannot take up leadership roles because of lack of time. Many works of literature have also affirmed that time is the main hindrance to teachers taking up leadership roles. To demonstrate this, Muijs and Harris (2006) discovered that there was a lack of time for teachers to engage in activities outside the classroom because administration and teaching consumed too much time. Moreover, Lieberman and Miller (2004) point out that for teachers to carry out leadership responsibilities seems to be impossible, as most of the time teachers have to mark

learners' books, set up question papers and participate in committees. In other words as Grant (2008) puts it, teachers are trying to manage their time effectively, yet it seems that there is just not enough time for teachers to perform other tasks apart from classroom roles.

#### ***2.6.5.5 Limited continuous professional development initiatives***

Limited leadership capacity building in schools has visibly been noted as another hindrance to the development of teacher leadership. In most cases, teachers' training focuses on the teachers attaining curriculum knowledge, neglecting leadership capacity building. However, taking it from Muijs and Harris' (2003) view, "development of teachers should also focus on aspects specific to leadership roles" (p. 444) in order to equip teachers with necessary leadership skills. Moreover, limited leadership capacity building initiatives may result in a lack of information which can manifest in the absence of continuous professional development committees at schools. According to Coleman and Earley, (2005) continuous professional development (CPD) "is any professional development activities engaged in by teachers which enhances their knowledge and skills to enable them to consider their attitudes and approaches to education" (p. 229). With the above understanding, I believe CPD is necessary to provide formal and informal learning geared towards teachers' self-improvement of practice (*ibid.*, 2005). In line with this thinking, Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) affirm that "information flow cannot be separated from the decision-making process, thus management should ensure that access to appropriate information is facilitated" (p. 28).

As it has been noticed in literature, continuous professional development is the key to any change effort (Coleman & Earley, 2005, p. 228). Additionally, teachers from CPD environments are likely to be motivated and turn into a productive workforce with high morale, hence taking up leadership roles.

#### **2.6.6 Teacher leadership model in practice**

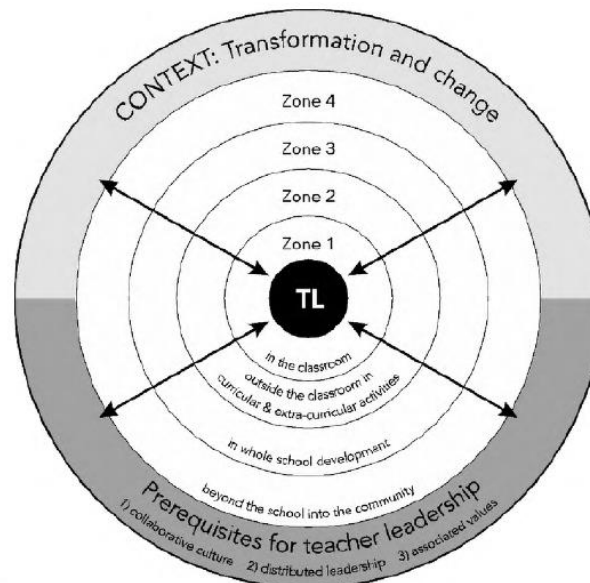
Aligning my ideas with many authors on teacher leadership as a concept, I particularly focused my interest in the practice of teacher leadership. Some writers indicate that many strategic efforts have been developed aimed at increasing the practice of teacher leadership in schools (York-Barr & Duke, 2004), hence the interest to develop teacher leadership in a school. But I think teacher leadership development is a complex issue that goes "beyond the design of new roles and efforts to develop individuals' skills to perform them" (Smylie & Denny, 1990,

p. 238). Despite, the biggest concern of how leadership can be practiced and distributed, the fact of the matter is, teacher leadership cannot be imposed but will emerge as teachers embrace new initiatives and innovate in a climate of trust and mutual learning (Grant, 2006).

Moreover, Muijs and Harris (2003, p. 443) clarify that for teacher leadership practice to be enhanced and bring notable improvement in the school, “time needs to be set aside for teachers to meet to plan and discuss issues such as curriculum matters, developing school-wide plans, leading study groups, organising visits to other schools, and collaborating with colleagues”. I believe that teacher leadership practice is enhanced when time and space is availed for teachers to exert their expertise within their schedule of load and beyond (Iyambo, 2018).

My above discussion will make sense if I link it to Grant’s (2017) Model of Teacher Leadership. In the model, the roles of teacher leaders are described in relation to “four semi-distinctive areas or zones” (Grant, 2008, p. 93). This is because the model gives a clear outlook of different indicators to see how teachers are involved in leadership activities across the school. Moreover, this model further reveals a distributed viewpoint of leadership which calls for a variety of possibilities for teachers to lead in different areas, at different times and with different purposes (Grant, 2008). For this reason, Grant’s (2017) model will be used as both an analytical and conceptual tool to clarify how teachers perform leadership roles through their interactions with one another and the whole school community across the four zones. As Harris and Muijs (2005) explain, leadership from a distributed perspective concentrates on engaging expertise where it exists in the organisation, rather than seeking this only through formal positions or roles. Therefore, through the lens of distributed leadership, I will use the teacher leadership model to view and analyse how multiple leaders share leadership tasks through collective actions.

The diagram that follows illustrates how the levels of zones and roles work in enacting teacher leadership within a school context.



FIRST LEVEL OF ANALYSIS FOUR ZONES							
<b>Zone 1</b> In the classroom	<b>Zone 2</b> Working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities			<b>Zone 3</b> Outside the classroom in whole school development		<b>Zone 4</b> Beyond the school into the community	
SECOND LEVEL OF ANALYSIS SIX ROLES							
<b>One:</b> Continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching	<b>Two:</b> Providing curriculum development knowledge	<b>Three:</b> Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers	<b>Four:</b> Participating in performance evaluation of teachers	<b>Five:</b> Organising and leading peer reviews of school practice	<b>Six:</b> participating in school level decision-making	<b>Two:</b> Providing curriculum development knowledge	<b>Three:</b> Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers
THIRD LEVEL OF ANALYSIS INDICATORS							
1. centrality of expert practice (including appropriate teaching & assessment strategies & expert knowledge) 2. keep abreast of new developments (attendance at workshops & further study) for own professional development 3. design of learning activities & improvisation/appropriate use of resources 4. processes of record keeping & reflective practice 5. engagement in classroom action research 6. maintain effective classroom discipline & meaningful relationship with learners (evidence of pastoral care role) 7. take initiative & engage in autonomous decision-making to make change happen in classroom to benefit of learners	1. joint curriculum development (core & extra/co curricula) 2. team teaching 3. take initiative in subject committee meetings 4. work to contextualise curriculum for own particular school 5. attend DOE curriculum workshops & take new learning with critique back to school staff 6. extra/co curricular coordination (e.g. sports, cultural activities etc.)	1. forge close relationships & build rapport with individual teachers through which mutual learning takes place 2. staff development initiatives 3. peer coaching 4. mentoring role of teacher leaders (including induction) 5. building skills & confidence in others 6. work with integrity, trust & transparency	1. engage in IQMS activities such as peer assessment, e.g. involvement in development support groups 2. informal peer assessment activities 3. moderation of assessment tasks 4. reflections on core & co/extra curricular activities 5. school practice including fundraising, policy development, staff development, professional development initiatives etc.	1. organisational diagnosis (Audit – SWOT) & dealing with the change process (School Development Planning) 2. whole school evaluation processes 3. school-based action research 4. mediating role (informal mediation as well as union representation) 5. school practices including fundraising, policy development, staff development, professional development initiatives etc.	1. awareness of & non-partisan to micro-politics of school (work with integrity, trust & transparency) 2. participative leadership where all teachers feel part of the change or development & have a sense of ownership 3. problem identification & resolution 4. conflict resolution & communication skills 5. school-based planning & decision-making	1. joint curriculum development (core & extra/co curricula) 2. liaise with & empower parents about curriculum issues (parent meetings, visits, communication – written or verbal) 3. liaise with & empower the SGB about curriculum issues (SGB meetings, workshops, training – influencing of agendas) 4. networking at circuit/district/regional/provincial level through committee or cluster meeting involvement	1. forge close relationships & build rapport with individual teachers through which mutual learning takes place 2. staff development initiatives 3. peer coaching 4. mentoring role of teacher leaders (including induction) 5. building skills & confidence in others 6. work with integrity, trust & transparency

Model of Teacher Leadership (Grant, 2006; Grant, 2009; Grant, 2010)

**Figure 2.2: Model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2017)**

Zone one is at the level of teacher leadership that can emanate within the classroom, as teachers lead and manage the teaching and learning process (Grant, 2012). Within this zone of the classroom, the teacher concentrates mainly on role one which aims at improving one's own teaching continuously by carrying out a number of duties such as, initiating appropriate teaching strategies, record keeping, attendance of workshops and further study and designing

of learning activities. The take-up of teacher leadership will be the largest in the first zone because teacher leaders should first and foremost be expert teachers who spend the most of their time in the classroom as they interact with and lead their learners during the teaching and learning process (Harris & Lambert, 2003).

In zone two, teachers lead beyond their classroom by working with other teachers and learners in curricular and extracurricular activities within the school. Within this second zone, three roles are significant as teachers operate. Role two is about providing curriculum development knowledge within one's own school, perhaps joint teaching or attending joint curriculum meetings to help meet specific needs of one's learners (Grant, 2012). In the same zone, Grant (2012) suggests role three, concerned with leading in-service and assisting other teachers within one's own school. In this role, teachers may be seen forging close relationships and building rapport with individual teachers for mutual learning to take place. Role four represents participating in performance evaluation of teachers by conducting peer assessment, moderation of assessment tasks and reflections on co-curricular activities (Grant, 2012). Furthermore, the existence of teacher leadership in zone two Grant (2012) says, is an indication of some devolution of power and shared decision-making in the school, particularly in the provision of curricula and co/extra-curricular development and innovation. It stands to reason then, that if power which resides in the principal of the school is distributed, then teachers can smoothly operate as leaders as they strive towards a more equitable society.

In zone three, teachers can become more involved in whole school development issues such as, vision building and policy development (Grant, 2012). In this zone, role five and six are mainly considered by teachers in the school. In this zone, teachers may take part in school-level decision-making (role six) or organising fundraising activities and professional development activities for learners and the school as a whole (role five).

Lastly, in zone four, teachers lead beyond the school into the community. According to Grant (2012), in this zone, role two and three are still significant but their indicators do not relate to in-school activities, rather to *cross*-school activities. In the context of *cross*-school activities, teacher leadership between schools, within the cluster, at a circuit and regional level take place, as well as developing and fostering community partnerships.

In conclusion to this section, I would like to echo the following sentiments about teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is centrally concerned with the idea that all teachers in a school

can lead simply because leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed or shared. Thus for transformation to take place, which is at the heart of the teacher leadership activity, teachers in the school need to be provided with equal opportunity to lead, regardless of their race or gender or any other perceived differences. Teacher leadership calls for teachers to be transformed in order for them to realise the need to challenge inequity by addressing the effects of systematic discrimination (Shields, 2009). The idea behind developing leadership in teachers is for the principals to bring followers to change and transform them to begin to realise the importance of meaningful contribution to the schools. In the end, distributed leadership should be felt in the organisation, especially when justice prevails in making sure that every teacher is transformed and given a chance to take part in decision making.

## **2.7 CHAT as a theoretical framework of my study**

In this section, I bring attention to cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), the main theoretical framework used in this study. After tracking down its beginning from the work of Vygotsky in the 1920s, I describe CHAT's "potential to engage researcher-interventionists in real practical transformation efforts" (Sannino, Engeström, & Lemos, 2016, p. 3). The activity theory which serves as the foundation of Engeström's idea of expansive learning is explained in detail in this section, as I introduce the learning interactions between teachers (subject) and SMT (community members) of the teacher leadership activity system.

### **2.7.1 Theoretical development of CHAT: Brief overview**

As already alluded to, the study is framed by cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT). CHAT is a learning and development theory, as well as a theoretical tool in the study. CHAT originally came from the work of a Russian scholar, Lev Vygotsky, in the 1920s (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) and was later expanded further by post Vygotskian scholars Leont'ev and Engeström. CHAT came into existence as the Russian government wanted psychologists to formulate psychology incorporating Marxist philosophical principles (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010), in order to ensure social justice and social transformations (Mukute, 2005).

Further discussion of CHAT stems around Engeström's (1999) idea of analysing the activity system, which gradually developed into three generations. The ideas Engeström developed were built on Vygotsky's theory of mediation and mediated action, which was prompted by an interest to understand how an individual learns in his/her social context (Yamagata-Lynch,

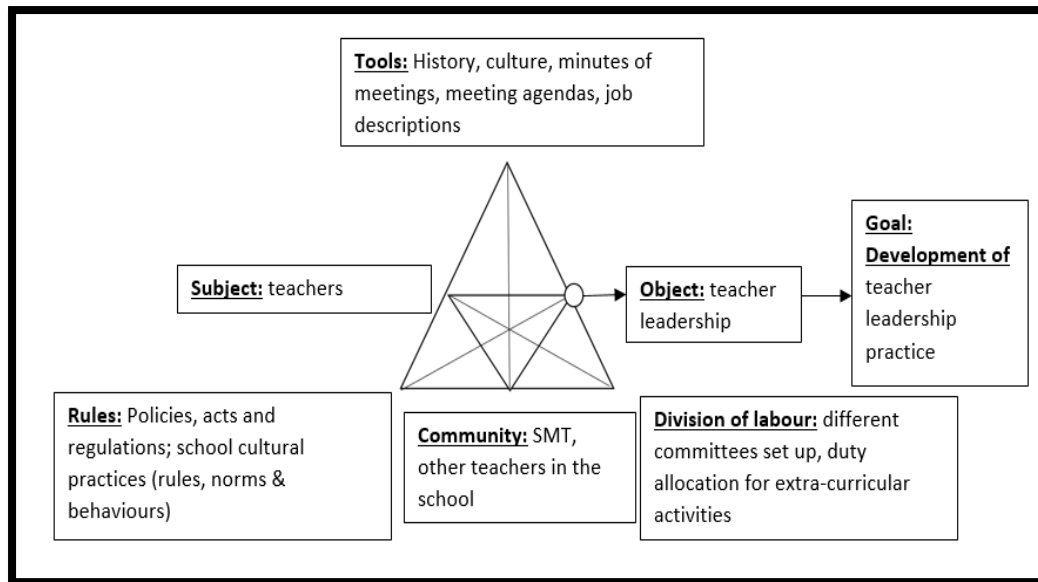
2010). This was the first idea of the generation of CHAT. He further expanded his ideas to the second generation as a unit of analysis which was advanced by Leont'ev, whose prime objective was concerned with object-oriented collective activity and secondly, division of labour (Engeström, 2010). Here Engeström's idea was that people learn through interaction with others when engaging in activities directed at achieving a goal – therefore, making it possible to scrutinise the activity systems at the level of the shared efforts by adding the elements of community, rules, and division of labour (Sannino, 2011). Engeström further developed a third-generation unit of analysis as an analytical framework. This came about to provide conceptual tools for understanding dialogue, multiple perspectives and networks of interacting systems. His suggestion is that the unit of analysis expands to two or more interacting activity systems that share the same objective (Engeström, 1999).

It is against this background that my study adopts CHAT's second generation, as it will enable me to analyse complexities within the teachers' leadership development activity system. I also plan to concentrate on the second generation CHAT, since I do not have enough time given the time constraints of the MEd degree to engage in multiple activity systems, the third generation. Thus my attention now turns to the discussion of the second generation of CHAT.

### **2.7.2 CHAT second generation as the unit of analysis**

The second generation activity theory is central to my study because as conceived by Leont'ev, it is shaped by the idea of object-oriented collective activity as the unit of analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Thus, according to Foot (2014), the significance of the second generation is that it focuses on interrelations between the individual subject and his/her community. This is because CHAT as an activist and interventionist theory is interested in the meaning-making process that points towards social revolution. I certainly opted for the second generation because it goes beyond Vygotsky's first generation, with its unit of analysis which remains individually focused and moves to a shared model of an activity system to describe human actions (Engeström, 1999). My study, therefore, looks at the development of leadership in teachers as a collective activity, and besides teachers, SMT members are also part of the community who share the same objective. Thus, CHAT enabled me to analyse complications within the activity system in fully getting the meanings from what people did or how they acted, as the teachers in my study together tried to engage in a search for leadership development. I therefore planned to concentrate on the second generation CHAT.

The model of an activity system as expanded by Engeström and built on Vygotsky's original ideas, and how it applies to my situation of the teacher leadership activity system, is represented in Figure 2.3 below.



*Figure 2.3: Model of an Activity System (Engeström, 1987, p. 78)*

The activity system has six core components each of which consists of cultural and historical pieces. These are the subject, rules, division of labour, community, object and mediating artefacts or tools (Engeström, 1987).

Here is a brief discussion of how the six components of the CHAT model relate to the development of teacher leadership in my study. According to Engeström (2010), the **subject** refers to individuals or groups of individuals who need to be empowered and whose agency need to be enhanced, thus teachers are the subject in my study. The **object** of the activity system refers to something which drives the activity and which gives it meaning and significance (Ploettner & Tresseras, 2016). In this case, the object is teacher leadership with the aim of developing teacher leadership practice within the case study school. **Tools** can be described as either conceptual or material which include symbols and language used for changing the object (Foot, 2014). This study looks at how culture and history mediate the object and how language influences the activity. Engeström and Sannino (2010) describe the **community** as a community of significant others which consists of people who share the subject interest in and



involvement with the same object. In this study, the community consists of the school management team (SMT) and other teachers. **Rules** as per Engeström and Sannino (2010), is the way actions are structured and which are often historically located, mediating the interaction between the subject and the community and between the subject and the object. These are the rules that regulate the teacher's actions towards developing their leadership capacity and in relation with other participants in the activity which include policies and staff rules. Finally, **division of labour**, which is understood as what is being done by who towards the object, including both the relatively horizontal and vertical sharing of responsibility. In my study, the division of labour refers to the expected roles of teachers and the school management team. Hereunder, I now turn to the discussion of the principles of CHAT.

### 2.7.3 The Principles of CHAT

Engeström's most important ideas on CHAT include the guiding principles to the activity systems. Thus, I found a discussion on them necessary because they give a real and comprehensive lens for analysing and understanding teacher leadership as the phenomenon under study. The principles under discussion here are very well articulated by Engeström (2001) as follows: The first principle is the **prime unit of analysis** which is described as the collective, artefact-mediated and object-oriented activity system. Relating it to my study, teacher leadership was analysed as a collective activity system. The prime focus of my study was to analyse the actions and interactions of teachers (subject) and the school management team as members of the community, in trying to expand the current leadership practice. Concentrating on the prime unit of analysis helped me to understand the nature and complexity of the current leadership practices in the case study school.

The second principle is the one of **multi-voicedness** of the activity system. The activity system consists of multiple leaders (teachers and SMT) who through interactions provide multiple views on the current leadership practice and possibly how to develop the teacher leadership in the case study school. The division of labour in the activity creates different positions for the participants to provide the views guided by their histories and cultures. The third principle is the **historicity** of the activity system. This implies that the activity system progresses over time; hence the history of how things happened the way they used to will be considered, to bring us to an understanding of the problem situations within the teacher leadership activity system. Therefore to understand the opportunities thereof or (otherwise) that enable or constrain teacher

leadership development of teachers, it is vital that I trace its history and culture of how the school has enacted teacher leadership practices over time.

The fourth principle is the **contradictions** emanating within the activity system. Contradictions are “historical accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). According to Foot (2014), contradictions “reveal opportunities for creative innovations and for new ways of structuring and enacting the activity” (p. 16), however, they are not the same as challenges or problems. This is why they are referred to as tensions, conflict or inconsistencies as they are in-built in all activity systems (Roth, 2009; Engeström & Sannino, 2010), and they are considered as the motive force of change and development within and between activity systems (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

I acknowledge that four types of contradictions (see Table 2.1 below) are identified in the literature: primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary contradictions (Engeström, 1987; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). However, for the purpose of this study only primary and secondary contradictions were further distinguished as they are part of the second generation CHAT. The rest only fit with the third generation of CHAT which is beyond the scope of this study. For this purpose, the primary contradictions were located within the elements of an activity system such as within tools, for example, the school culture and history might give different accounts as to why things happen within the leadership of the school; while secondary contradictions occur between the elements of an activity system such as between the rules and division of labour (Roth, 2009).

Teachers acted to resolve the system’s contradictions through the development of an activity system.

**Table 2.1: Levels of contradictions and corresponding learning actions (Foot & Groleau, 2011)**

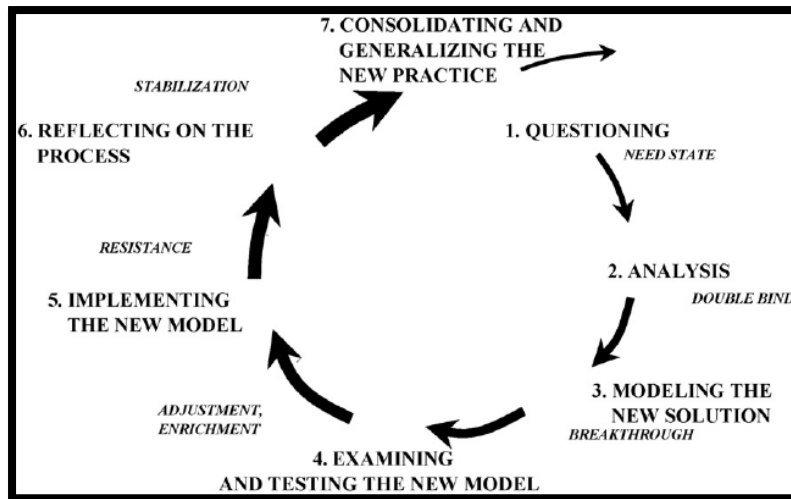
<b>Levels of contradiction</b>	<b>Characteristics of contradiction levels</b>	<b>Corresponding learning action (s)</b>
<b>Primary</b>	Occurs between the use value and exchange value of any corner of an activity system.	<b>Questioning</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	Develops between two corners of an activity system.	<b>Analysing</b> <b>Modelling</b>
<b>Tertiary</b>	Arises when an object of a more developed activity is introduced into the central activity system.	<b>Examining model</b> <b>Implementing model</b> <b>Evaluating process</b>
<b>Quaternary</b>	Occurs between central activity and neighbouring activity, triggered by tertiary contradiction.	<b>Consolidating new practice</b> <b>Questioning</b>

The fifth principle in the activity system is the possibility of **expansive** transformation in the activity system. The activity system moves through relatively long cycles of qualitative transformations (Engeström, 2001). As the contradictions of an activity system escalate, some individual participants begin to question how things happen to be the way they are and team up in an attempt to deliberate for a shared change effort (Engeström, 2001). Engeström and Sannino (2010) explain expansive learning as “a type of learning in which the learners are involved in constructing and implementing radically new, wider and more complex object and concept of their activity” (p. 2). It is used in a number of studies and interventions including my study, hence I now move on to discuss expansive learning.

## **2.8 Expansive Learning**

The expansive learning cycle is rooted in CHAT, which according to Engeström and Sannino (2010) is understood as “construction and resolution of successively evolving contradictions” (p. 7). Expansive learning offers the creative type of learning in which learners join forces to literally create something novel, essentially learning something that does not yet exist (Sannino et al., 2016). Expansive learning is a methodology that distinguishes itself by its focus on learning within and between activities in society at large and beyond the confinement of the school (Sannino et al., 2016). The transformation (expansive learning) process in which participants search for solutions to contradictions, begins with sharing the teacher leadership

knowledge both from teachers and the SMT and identifying the development of their leadership practices as an object. This might result in the expanded leadership practices of teachers in the school.



*Figure 2.4: Sequence of learning actions in an expansive learning cycle (Engeström, 2016, p. 49)*

Expansive learning is a cyclical process that ideally includes the collective learning actions to be explained using the model above. The first action in the model is that of **questioning**, which involves participants criticising or rejecting some aspects of the accepted practice and existing wisdom (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). The second action is that of **analysing** the situation (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). This involves the mental, discursive or practical transformation of the situation in order to find out causes or explanatory mechanisms. This action might seek to explain the cultural and historical roots of the problem situation (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). The third action is that of **modelling** the new solution. Here, a simplified model of the new idea is constructed that explains and offers a new solution to the problem situation. The fourth action is that of **examining and testing** the model, which involves running, operating, and experimenting on it in order to fully grasp its dynamics, potentials and limitations (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Action number five is the **implementation** of the new model, by means of practical applications, enrichments and conceptual extensions. Here actions such as dividing work among practitioners, developing rules which participants should follow and drawing on policies to help in implementing the new model are carried out (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

The sixth action is that of **reflecting** on the process of the new model in order to identify needs for further learning and development and to draw conclusions related to the method of learning. Finally, the seventh action is that of **consolidating** and generalising the outcomes of the learning process into a new stable form of practice (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

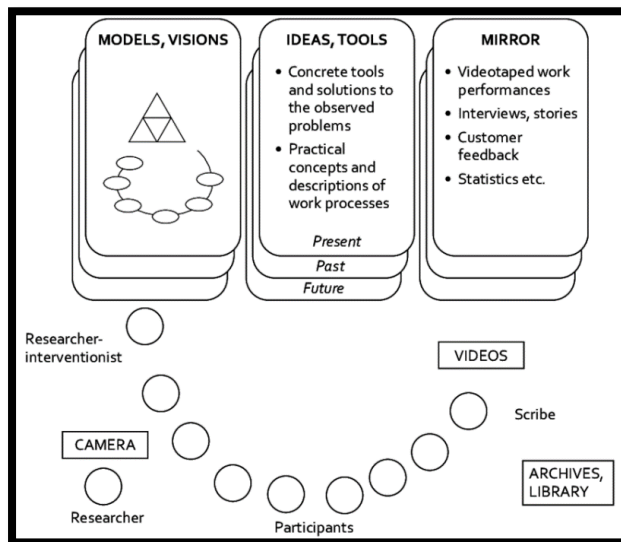
## **2.9 Developmental Work Research**

The developmental work activities were developed as a “new kind of collaboration between a group of practitioners and the researcher” (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 23). It also came up as “a way of critiquing the existing historical and individual-centred approaches and the construction of an alternative on the basis of the Cultural Historical Activity Theory” (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 23). Developmental work research is applied around a chain of sessions called ‘change laboratory workshops’ in which researchers together with participants interrogate tensions and contradictions within and between activity systems (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). The change laboratory workshops operate as formal structures where participants together with the researcher-interventionist gather to dig deeper for the deep-seated contradictions that manifest as challenges preventing teachers to participate in the leadership of the school. Through negotiations, participants identify developmental challenges with the assistance of the researcher and collectively sketch the vision for the envisioned future leadership in the school.

### **2.9.1 Change laboratory method**

The change laboratory “is a formative intervention method for developing work activities by the practitioners in collaboration with a researcher-interventionists” (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 15). The change laboratory method provides a space with necessary tools to participants and researchers to map the way forward in order to find possible solutions to problems. Therefore, the change laboratory provides an opportunity for expansive learning as a transformative agency, as outcomes in the learning process are not predetermined ahead of time (Foot, 2014). A change laboratory is “typically conducted in a unit of an activity that is in need of a major transformation” (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 15). To simplify this, it is during these workspaces that participants work out expansive solutions to developmental contradictions within the elements of the activity system (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). To do this, participants together with a researcher-interventionist in “five to twelve successive change laboratory sessions have to analyse and specify the challenges of developing the activity

and create a model for it” (*ibid.*). According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013, p. 15), “the collaborative analysis and design work in the change laboratory is supported by a 3x3 set of surfaces for representing the work activity that helps the group to share and together process their observations and ideas” (see Figure 2.5) below.



**Figure 2.5: The layout and instruments of the change laboratory space (Engeström et al., 1996, p. 11)**

The surfaces are divided into rows representing the past, present and future of the activity. According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013, pp. 15-16):

The mirror surfaces of the right-hand column are used to provide the practitioners with a mirror reflection of their activity by presenting specimens of the current practice and first-hand data of their activity to be jointly examined. The mirror /present surfaces used to represent and examine experiences from work practice, particularly problem situations and disturbances, but also novel innovative solutions. The mirror of the past comprises data and observations concerning historical changes in the activity. The mirror of the future is used to represent and discuss follow-up data concerning participant’s experiments with the new concept and tools, which they have created and in which they begin to form the future form of the activity. It can also be used to present data to anticipate changes in the object and structure of the activity. The model/ vision surfaces in the left-hand column are reserved for modelling the past, present and future structure of the activity and inner contradictions in it. The triangular model of the activity system issued to analyse and model the systemic structure of the activity and interconnectedness within it.

The change laboratory is guided by Vygotsky's (1978) tool of double stimulation (Sannino, 2011). Hereunder, I now turn to discuss the double stimulation principle underpinning the change laboratory.

### **2.9.2 Double stimulation**

The principle/concept of double stimulation is a driving force of the change laboratory method, and in its absence, the anticipated learning process might not take place. To strengthen my above argument, Gutiérrez, Engeström and Sannino (2016) reason that double stimulation underlies the procedures and analyses of formative interventions. Double stimulation refers to “the mechanism with which human beings can intentionally break out of a conflicting situation and change their circumstances or solve difficult problems” (Sannino, 2011, p. 584). Thus, during the intervention stage, double stimulation offers participants and researcher-interventionists mediating tools designed for jointly analysing disturbances and contradictions in their activities and for developing new solutions (Sannino et al., 2016). In this study, firstly, for the expansive learning to take place, a mirror of problematic aspects and situations in the current practice need to be presented to participants (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2003). The problematic situations of the current practice are presented to participants in a session as “mirror” material or first stimulus (Engeström, 2011) to trigger questioning and analysis by the participants. This is considered the right thing to do, as Engeström, (2016) suggests that the change laboratory method is “built on ethnographic data from the activity setting in which it is conducted” (p. 139).

As a second stimulus, the interventionist can provide the conceptual tools as instruments for analysing the mirrored data, which assists the participants to attain control and change the problematic situation (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). In my study, the expansive learning cycle and the triangular model of the activity system as analytical tools were used to surface contradictions during the change laboratory workshops.

Following the above, I now discuss the relevance of CHAT to my study.

### **2.10 The Relevance of CHAT to my Study**

This study took a position of activism and interventionism, stimulated by the cultural-historical activity theory, “a practical-based approach” (Foot, 2004, p. 2). Through its socio-cultural and socio-historical lens, CHAT enabled and guided me to analyse teacher leadership practices at

the case study school. Thus the theory attracted me because it “has the potential to engage in real practical transformations efforts” (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 3). Therefore, I found CHAT to be a useful theoretical framework, as it is grounded in the effort to change the existing circumstances (Ploettner & Tresseras, 2016). Moreover, CHAT has demonstrated its exclusivity of intervening in practical real work situations (Sannino et al., 2016) in order to bring about change to practice. In this study, activity theory guided me throughout the process of analysing leadership practices at the school. In an attempt to develop leadership in teachers, the second generation of CHAT enabled me to scrutinise how a group of teachers with different backgrounds, experiences and ideologies worked on the same object and together saw whether they could bring solutions to their problems (Engeström, 1999). As CHAT is a developmental theory, it seeks to influence qualitative transformations in human practices over time, by acknowledging the internal contradictions within the activity system (Masilela, 2017). Besides this, it offered me an intervention method or a toolkit in the form of the change laboratory (CL), (explained in 2.9.1), a space which the participants used to work out expansive solutions to their problems (Sannino et al., 2016).

Moreover, the CHAT combines/aligns well with leadership theories such as distributed and transformative leadership as main concepts in my study, in that both involve people operating jointly towards a shared goal through a collective and change effort. Besides, in CHAT, the idea of activity is centred on human collectives rather than individuals and so is the contemporary leadership theories framing my study. Thus, the second-generation of CHAT as an analytical framework used in this study as discussed earlier in Chapter Two (see Section 2.7.2) was used by participants to analyse the teacher leadership practices in their school (Foot, 2014).

## **2.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature related to the notion of teacher leadership development. Above all, the chapter gave a brief overview of the origins of leadership and management, as well as the distinction between the two concepts. The chapter went ahead to shed light on the traditional views on leadership theories that drove the leadership argument to a distributed leadership perspective, a contemporary leadership idea. Teacher leadership as the central concept in my study was also deliberated upon and led the reader to an understanding as to why the study was necessary. Moreover, I reviewed the literature on CHAT as the main theoretical framework of this study.



I now move on to Chapter Three, which sketches and describes the processes of research design and research methodology which guided me in collecting data for this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND 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 my research questions. I commence with a brief outline of my research objectives and questions, followed by an explanation of the research design set up. I then describe the research approach and orientation, the research design, research site, sampling procedures, research participants, as well as my position as a researcher.

In this chapter, my decisions regarding the data generation methods are also communicated to the reader. Interviews, document analysis, observations, WhatsApp messaging and change laboratory workshops as methods are elaborated upon. Furthermore, I also describe how the data gathered was analysed inductively and abductively. Finally, the chapter concludes with issues of reliability and ethical considerations. My attention now turns to remind the reader of my research objectives and questions guiding this study.

#### **3.2 Research Objectives and Questions**

The overarching goal of this study was to explore the development of teacher leadership at a semi-urban secondary school. To achieve this the study had four main specific objectives.

- To determine how the concept of teacher leadership is understood by teachers and SMT.
- To determine the extent to which teachers are involved in enacting leadership within and beyond the school.
- To explore the opportunities that enhance teacher leadership in the school and to reveal constraining conditions to teacher leadership development.
- To find solutions as to how teacher leadership can be developed through change laboratory workshops.

To achieve these objectives, the study attempted to answer the following main research questions.

1. How is the concept of teacher leadership understood in the case study school?
2. What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?
3. What are the conditions that promote or constrain teacher leadership development in the case study school?
4. How can teacher leadership be developed through change laboratory workshops at the case study school?

### **3.3 Methodology**

#### **3.3.1 Research approach and orientation**

This study used a qualitative research orientation. Qualitative research orientation allowed me to explore the problem at hand by developing a detailed understanding of teacher leadership by providing rich data or information (Creswell, 2012). In this study, my focus was on teacher leadership development at a semi-urban secondary school. Thus my intention was to explore the current leadership practices and possibly identify opportunities that existed for teachers to develop as leaders and then transform the practice if necessary. For the purpose of this research, the qualitative research orientation utilised in this study was aimed at acquiring detailed information on the teachers' viewpoints, observation of, and understanding on the concept of teacher leadership in their natural setting (Yin, 2014).

The study took a critical stance to educational research, combined with a formative intervention. I adopted a critical stance to my research as it is based on the ideology of structuralism which focuses on the structures and power relations within a society (Maree, 2014). The use of a critical approach to research is that it is concerned with critically assessing the status quo and changing society as a whole. Undeniably, a critical approach to research was suited best for this study as it accounts for the whole society. Therefore, from the structuralist point of view, the aim was to reveal these power relations through critiquing the system (Maree, 2014). Certainly, the critical approach to research requires one to adequately explain what is happening by being practical and trying to make a change in society. My key interest in the approach was that it not only seeks to understand or explain what is happening in the case-study school with regards to teacher leadership, but digs beneath the observable and critically engages with issues at hand (Maree, 2014). A critical approach champions for social change through the renewal of the current practice by opening up opportunities and increasing pathways for teachers to lead (Popkewitz, 1984). In summary, this approach facilitates the

observation of conditions made by man that restrict teachers in taking a lead in the case study school and thus can be changed. However, I must acknowledge that the change intended in my study is not for society as a whole but rather intended for teachers in the case study school.

As my study took a position of activism and interventionism, as a critical researcher I needed to investigate the past and present conditions within the case study school in order to reveal the structural constraints and contradictions that exist in that particular school (Popkewitz, 1984). I believed that a formative intervention and a critical approach were likely to provide me with possible answers as they align together. Both aim towards critically analysing the social and cultural structures and disclose hidden ideological assumptions that constrain teachers in participating in leadership roles (*ibid.*). In doing so, the nature of the current practice is revealed and a quest for emancipation is pursued. This is why the whole idea of my study was not only to seek understanding and identify factors which prevented teachers from taking on leadership roles, but an attempt was made to address these challenges through change laboratories. As the study is framed by CHAT, CHAT aligns well with the critical approach as it digs deeper through its formative intervention methods, to surface the possible contradictions that pose as challenges for the envisaged change in the leadership of teachers. Next, my attention turns to the research design used in this study.

### **3.3.2 The Research Design**

This study took the form of a single case study design. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., teacher leadership activity in this case) based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2012). In my study, I looked into one case which was Kongolo High School (pseudonym), where I particularly focused on teacher leadership activity with the aim of understanding the current practice and then transforming the leadership of teachers in the case study school. I decided on the case study design, to strive towards understanding holistically how research participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of the phenomenon under study (Maree, 2007). Further, Yin (1984), defines case study research method as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). In formative intervention studies (in which my study falls) the aim is to bring forth generative solutions in that particular case. Therefore, my study has a generative potential of transforming the practice and further continues to develop the solutions created in the site

of the intervention (Sannino et al., 2016). Hence my study “was not necessarily aimed to find out what is generally true of the many and/or generalise the findings” (Merriam, 2009, p. 224), but to guide the next person in the process at the site to continue and maintain the developmental solutions to problems. Below I discuss how the decision with regard to the site where the study took place was considered.

### **3.3.3 Research Site**

The identified research school, Kongolo High School (pseudonym) is situated on the outskirts of Windhoek in the informal settlement. This school, is a public school started as a project school of Mount Etjo Primary School (pseudonym), which later became a fully-fledged institution. The school has a small laboratory, eight blocks of classrooms each with four classrooms, a small library, an administration block and an ablution block with clean water. Electricity and telephone communication lines with access to the Internet are also available. The school is fenced off, has a netball court but has no soccer field. The school can be described as being moderately resourced.

The school had about 825 learners from Grade 8-12 and 40 teachers of whom seven are unqualified, a principal, five heads of department, three institutional workers and two secretaries. The school also has a functional School Board which is represented by teachers, parents, and learners from the school community. In other words, it is a fairly large school.

As I have indicated earlier, the school is situated in the informal settlement of Katutura, where most parents’ income levels are categorised as low to middle. In this case, the poverty incidence is very high according to the Namibia Statistics Agency census report (2011). People live in makeshift houses made out of corrugated zinc-iron sheets and have no access to proper sanitation. People in the area engage in informal trading such as selling Kapana (meat roasted) and street vendors sell vegetables alongside the road in order to make a living. Most families and their children in this community solely depend on the social grant (250 Namibian dollars per month) from the government. As a result of all these challenges, learners at the school receive a meal from the school feeding programme that was made possible by donors. However, despite hardships, this school performs well.

I chose Kongolo High School (pseudonym) due to the close proximity of the school to my residence, thus enabling convenient access to the school. I saved on travelling time and

expenses. I could therefore spend more time at the research site. Again, due to a lack of intervention studies on teacher leadership done in the Khomas region, I decided to conduct my study in the region in order to add to the body of knowledge by providing insight into another context.

### **3.3.4 Sampling procedures and research participants**

According to Kumar (2011) sampling is “the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information or the situation regarding the bigger group” (p. 193). Thus, the idea here was to “pick a few to stand in for the many” (Neuman, 2014, p. 247). To do this, the non-probability sampling method was used in this study to sample the research participants. I therefore specifically used a purposive sampling technique as a non-probability sampling method because of my knowledge of the population. Purposive sampling is about hand-picking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of the researcher’s judgement (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). For this purpose, I used my judgement to select participants according to their “close connectedness to the research topic” (Neuman, 2014, p. 276).

The purposive sampling technique was used to reach teachers who were able to provide information about the phenomenon of the study. Thus, participants were purposively sampled using the following criteria: five to 17 years of experience serving at that specific school. For the school management team members, the criteria were seniority in the position they currently serve in and having worked at the school for a minimum of five years and a maximum of 10 years. Surprisingly, out of 40 teachers at the school, there were 23 teachers who met the criteria, however, only 16 teachers who met the criteria, including the three SMT members, responded positively by filling in the consent letter in writing as an agreement to participate in my study. In summary, at the time the sample size consisted of 16 teachers plus three SMT members [principal and two heads of department].

Literature clearly reveals that the process of research sometimes “is recursive and iterative, and sampling does not proceed in a linear fashion” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 309). For that reason, sampling “is not decided in advance of the research process but may be decided, amended, added to, increased and extended as the research progresses” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 309). This is exactly what happened in the process when I initially proposed to work with six teachers [three inexperienced and three experienced] and three SMT members, a total

of nine participants; however, the number of participants increased from the initial nine to 16 participants. Even if the response from the school was overwhelming in terms of participation, afterwards, four teachers withdrew from the study due to other commitments, bringing the total number of participants to 12.

Specifically, the primary participants (subjects) in this study were the nine teachers, while the three SMT members became part of the community. The nine teachers I believe had the potential to enrich my data as they had worked longer in the school and their knowledge could contribute to understanding the history and culture of the school as it related to the leadership of teachers in that specific school, hence their selection. The principal and two heads of department were selected as they were part of management in the school and were in the position to deepen the understandings by providing valuable information. Teachers were in the majority because they were the focal point of my study, with the reason being to develop leadership in them and with the hope that the end results would likely have a positive impact on leadership practices at the case study school. Therefore, in the end, 12 people became the total number of research participants in my study. I decided to work with that number because as one of the key concerns of critical research is social justice and emancipation, I could not reduce the number but had to involve a bigger number as the study had a transformative agenda. The idea was also to provide a fair opportunity/chance for people to participate in the study and not to confine it to a relatively small number of teachers. However, I decided on this number, as my primary concern was to acquire an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of the study.

### **3.4 Data Generation Procedures**

The process started with the contextual profiling/ethnographic data gathering which was part of phase one. Before this phase began I worked on the strategies of gaining access to the research site; I explained to the staff members the purpose of the study and how it was structured in terms of selecting participants. I followed with the idea of introducing the change laboratory workshops which formed part of phase two. Then the process of collecting data through document analysis, observations, focus groups and individual interviews began. Using more than one method of data collection was to “strengthen the trustworthiness of the data” (Maree, 2007, p. 80) through triangulation of findings. Neuman (2014, p. 274) also supports the use of more than one method by saying that “triangulation is the idea of looking at something from multiple points of view to improve accuracy”.

The document analysis and the observation were first to be carried out in order to gather the information that would be used to probe in the interviews. Then the focus group and individual interviews were conducted. The idea behind phase one of the data gathering was to gain information that could provide a deeper understanding of the current practice of teacher leadership by answering the first three research questions. WhatsApp messaging was then utilised to probe further on questions which had received inadequate information from participants during the interviews. Data collected was immediately inductively analysed to generate themes and categories. Through analysing data, problems or conditions that restricted teachers were also discovered and this was used to surface contradictions that were used in the change laboratory workshops during the second phase of data collection.

The change laboratory intervention process then took place in the second term, where more data was gathered through the interactions with teachers and the SMT members. The idea behind the change laboratories was to discover the systemic causes that hindered teacher leadership to develop (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Change laboratories are to follow in the discussion after the data generation methods, now a discussion on the tools used to generate data will be presented.

### **3.5 Data Generation Methods**

The data generating methods such as document analysis, observation, WhatsApp messaging and focus group and individual interviews were used in the first phase of gathering data. I now have a brief look at each tool.

#### **3.5.1 Document analysis**

According to Bowen (2009), document analysis “is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents, both printed and electronic material” (p. 27). The study used artefacts in the form of written and visual documents (Creswell, 2012). The documents used in this study gathered data aimed at understanding how the culture and history of the school played a role in the development (or otherwise) of teacher leadership. Evidently, McMillan and Schumacher (2014) maintain that “these informal documents provide an internal perspective of the organisation, show the official chain of command and provide clues about leadership styles” (p. 387). Moreover, according to Bowen (2009) they provide an understanding of the historical



roots of specific issues, as well as indicate at some points the conditions that constrain or promote the development of teacher leadership in a school.

Firstly, the *Education Act (Act 16 of 2001)*, *Set of Job Descriptions*, *Code of conduct for teachers in Namibia* and *National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia* were reviewed to establish whether the provision was made for the development of teacher leadership in schools. Secondly, I analysed the duty allocation sheets for extracurricular activities and departmental and meeting agendas to uncover past information on how duties were apportioned to staff members in the quest of enhancing my understanding on the level of teacher leadership development and practices at the case study school. The information obtained in documents promoted the development of additional and specific questions needed to be asked during the interview process.

Unfortunately, not all envisaged documents were available, as Kumar (2011) and Creswell (2012) also write that document analysis as a tool has an issue of irretrievability and sometimes maybe are intentionally withheld. Thus I could not obtain all necessary documents needed as it took me almost three weeks to get hold of the few documents in my possession. This was attributed to the weak filing system at the school and a change in the language department head, as the person who used to take minutes is no longer at the school. However, as Creswell (2012) clearly puts it, documents are stable and never change and can cover a long span of time and many events. Further, the documents obtained pacified me as they provided empirical knowledge on past information on how teacher leadership was practised in the case study school. In the same vein, I managed to get a slight indication of how far the school has come and what level the school is at now when it comes to teacher leadership practice.

### **3.5.2 Observation**

“Observation is about watching what people do; listening to what they say and sometimes asking them clarifying questions” (Gillham, 2000, p. 45). Its validity is that it is the most direct way of obtaining primary data, which is not what people say or write about teacher leadership but what they actually do. I decided to use observation as its unique strength enabled me to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen et al., 2007). In this way, I looked at typical examples of teacher leadership as they emerged within and outside of the classroom. At this stage of data collection, I was a non-participant observer where I passively observed the activities to see how leaders emerged within a group of teachers in the case study

school and then made conclusions on the observed activities. I observed the morning briefing once, three classroom observations, as well as an informal activity which was the commemoration of the ‘Day of the African Child’.

Throughout my observation, I used an observation checklist that was adapted from Grant’s (2012) Teacher Leadership Model. The Teacher Leadership Model was used as a guiding tool that helped me follow up on how teachers in the school were leading in their classrooms, how they worked with other teachers and learners outside the classrooms and how they were involved in whole school development. In fact, the model guided me through to seeing how teachers took up leadership roles across the four zones in the school (refer to Appendix H). I also used an observation checklist as I wanted to get answers that could not be obtained by questioning, as participants were unaware of the concept as it was new to many of them.



***Figure 3.1: Observation of the African Child Day***

By observing, critical information obtained can be compared to the other information obtained through interviews and document analysis (Gay, Mills, & Araisian, 2009). Even though I generated valuable data, I was aware that sometimes the observer might be highly selective and that as the researcher, I might infer meanings that were not those of the observed (Jacobs & Walker, 2014). Individuals also change their behaviour when they become aware that they are observed, hence sometimes what was observed was not their normal behaviour. Therefore, my decision of disclosing the purpose of the study was helpful in putting participants at ease. It also took up a lot of time as I had to spend long hours (7:20-13:50) observing how teachers enacted leadership. However, throughout my observation, I began to build a relationship with my participants (Maree, 2007), as mingling with them created trust and reduced the power relations between the participants and myself.

### **3.5.3 Interviews**

Initially, I planned a focus group interview for both teachers and SMT members. The focus group interview with teachers was carried out as planned, however, I could not go ahead with the focus group interview of the SMT as originally planned in my proposal. Upon careful reflection, I changed from a focus group to individual semi-structured interviews because of positionality issues between the principal and the heads of department. I felt that the two heads of department would not be free to give their responses in the presence of the principal, hence the need to switch to individual semi-structured interviews. All the interviews took place in the afternoons, after school hours in different classrooms. Moreover, voices of participants were recorded to help to differentiate participants during the transcription stage, as it was difficult to take notes because so much was happening during the interview session (Jacobs & Walker, 2014).

A focus group interview is a process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people typically between four to six (Creswell, 2012). In a focus group interview, participants are expected to interact with each other on the topic given by the researcher, in expectation of yielding a collective rather than an individual view (Cohen et al., 2018). “It is from this interaction that the data emerges, hence the group dynamics are necessary to consider” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 534).

I decided to use focus group interviews for the teachers because they “are structured and very focused on a particular issue” (*ibid.*), therefore producing understandings that I would not have

otherwise gained from individual interviews. At first, I planned to use focus group interviews to collect the shared understanding and views on teacher leadership from nine participants, however, some participants were unable to attend due to other commitments. While it was noted that teacher leadership is a new emerging concept and participants might have a problem interpreting it to the extent of giving meaningful information, interview schedules were piloted with my colleagues at Advisory Services in an attempt to simplify the questions. This was a helpful exercise because it aided me in detecting some questions that were not contributing to answering my research questions and therefore I added some more useful ones.

An advantage of using a focus group was that interaction among interviewees would likely yield in-depth information to answer questions on the teachers' understanding of the concept teacher leadership, the leadership roles teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond, as well as the factors constraining and promoting teacher leadership development in the school. I was fully aware of the setbacks in the focus group interviews as it can be challenging to have control over the interview discussion, which is time-consuming and makes it difficult to take notes (Creswell, 2012). For this reason, the interview took approximately 49 minutes to gain clarity on all questions and share an understanding of the phenomenon of the study.

#### **3.5.4 WhatsApp messaging**

WhatsApp messenger is a cross-platform messaging application, which allows users to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS' (WhatsApp.com, 2019). The application is compatible with iPhone, Blackberry, Android, Nokia, and other Windows smartphones and computers (Shambare, 2014). WhatsApp features include one-on-one chat, group chat, push notifications and sending and receiving video and audio files. For the purpose of my study, I opted on using a group chat, where the group members communicated by sending and receiving text, video and audio files.

Given the fact that all respondents were full-time day teachers, reaching them seemed almost impossible as they had tight schedules. I decided to use WhatsApp messaging as a method of collecting data. This method was used in the first phase of data collection mainly to probe more on questions which had received inadequate information. WhatsApp messaging was one way of engaging in constructive discussions after normal working hours with teachers without disturbances. The aim was to reflect on teacher leadership practices by analysing and describing what really worked and what did not for teachers. This method aligned well with

the activity theoretical framing of my study because at the heart of activity theory are the social interactions among participants that shift the learning forward (Sannino, 2011). Eight teachers and two SMT members formed part of this chat group. These were the participants who took part in the CL workshops. The participants filled out a consent agreement letter (see Appendix G) in which ethical issues were clearly specified to protect participants and the name of the school.

I, however, acknowledged the fact that WhatsApp messenger has access and affordability issues (Stork, Calandro, & Gillwald, 2013) in terms of Wi-fi network availability, however as city residents, the technological infrastructure was not likely to be a major problem. Besides that, most teachers own smartphones to keep abreast with the latest news on social media. Thus, the idea of creating the chat group was embraced by all members. The advantage that attracted me to using the WhatsApp application as a data-gathering tool, was that respondents could easily engage in discussions in a group, after work in the comfort of their own homes. Participants who were not available at the time of the discussion, easily followed-up on the discussion at a later time and still made suggestions upon receiving the chat messages, while at the same time learning from the group discussions.

### **3.5.5 Change laboratory method**

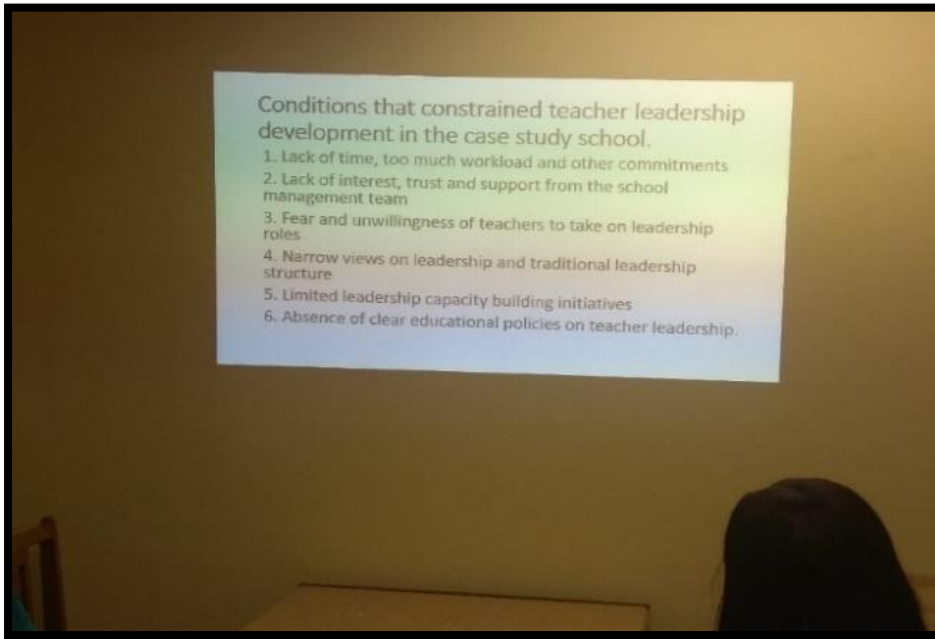
Change laboratory is a method of formative intervention, where participants come together and engage deeply in questioning and analysing a problematic situation (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Additionally, the method provided a space for participants and researchers to come together to map the way forward in order to find possible solutions to problems. In this study, the change laboratory method was driven by my third and fourth research questions respectively. The third question surfaced the challenges that constrained teacher leadership development, hence a need for participants to intervene in the practice through change laboratory workshops as the practice needed a major revolution (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Moreover, in an attempt to answer the fourth research question, participants through change laboratory workshops dug deeper and found the root causes of the discovered challenges that constrained teacher leadership development in the case study school.

### **3.5.5.1 Change laboratory workshops**

Change laboratory workshops were carried out in the second phase of data collection from the first week of July 2019. The study aimed to employ six change laboratory workshops to respond to the fourth research question in the study which is: *How can teacher leadership be developed through change laboratory workshops at a case study school?* However, only four change laboratory workshops were conducted due to limited time. During these workshops, participants worked out expansive solutions to developmental contradictions within the elements of the activity system (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). According to Engeström (2001, p. 137) contradictions are “historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems”. Contradictions have the power to transform activities and bring remarkable change to an organisation.

Before the beginning of the change laboratory workshops, I disclosed the purpose and the benefits of the study to the participants and the school and proceeded cautiously and carefully during the first three CL workshops. This was because I was very well aware that change laboratories generate rich sets of data, allow collective solutions to problems and develop in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study when well facilitated. However, I proceeded cautiously as there was a potential for the change laboratory method to create tension since it can expose people’s failures (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). I was sensitive to this possibility.

The first workshop took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2019 in one of the classrooms and lasted for about 2 hours 15 minutes. Nine participants including an HOD attended the first workshop. Despite inviting all interviewed and not-interviewed staff members, only some of the interviewed staff members turned up. Others could not make it to the workshop because of other commitments. Even securing a venue where the change laboratories could take place was not easy, as all the classes were occupied by different class groups with different activities. Arranging the workshop set up as described by Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) was impossible as time was not on my side, and the classroom I was given was preoccupied with the learners who only finished with their last period 10 minutes before the workshop was to start.



***Figure 3.2(a): Introducing the mirror data to participants, the first workshop***



***Figure 3.2(b): Teachers listening attentively to the introduction of the change laboratory workshops***

During this first workshop of the change laboratory, participants were introduced to the concept of change laboratory workshops; I highlighted its importance, its definition, and its desired outcome. Thereafter, analysed data collected through observation, interviews and document analysis was ‘mirrored’ to participants (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013).



The second workshop was conducted on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2019 in a different venue from the first workshop. This was because the first classroom we had used during our first workshop was occupied by the NAMCOL learners who were writing their August mock examination. In this workshop, nine participants attended. Moreover, three participants could not join the workshop as they had busy schedules on the day. The questioning of the mirror data which was presented during the first workshop took place in this workshop, whereby participants carefully examined gathered information from phase one which was provided to them as challenges, with regard to the current teacher leadership practice within their school. At this stage, participants were required to criticise and critically reflect on the empirical data that surfaced as challenges or problems to teacher leadership development.



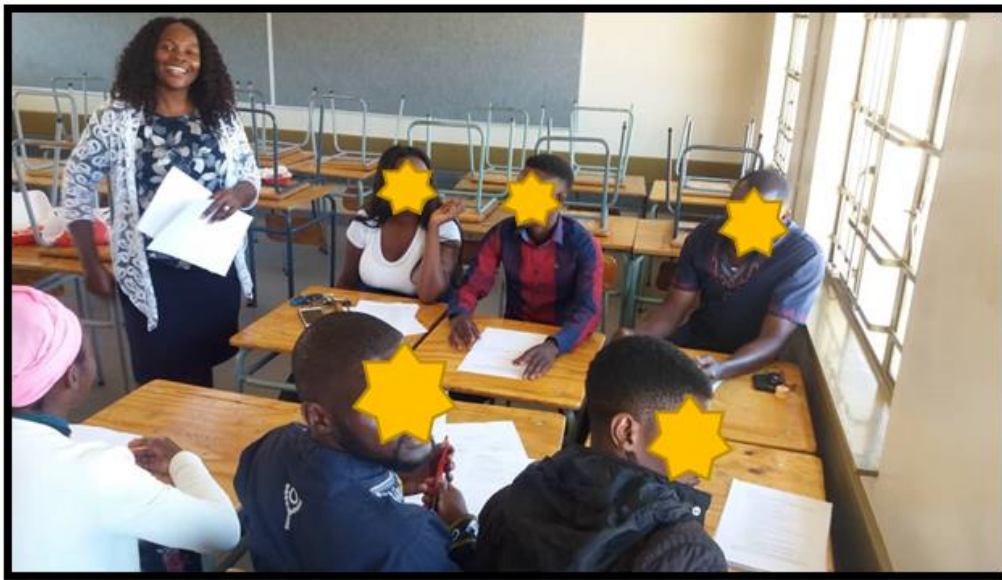
***Figure 3.3: Teachers questioning the current practice***

The third change laboratory workshop took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2019. Here six participants attended the workshop. At this stage, the transformation aspect of the study kicked in, as participants interrogated the mirrored data. This is what Engeström (2016) calls expansive learning, where individuals start to question the current direction and logic of their activity by remodelling the activity with new tools and signs. Therefore, in this workshop, a process of jointly interrogating tensions and contradictions within and between different dimensions of the activity system (Sannino, 2011) commenced. The participants worked on the contradictions in their school to analyse what happened before which might have hindered the development of teacher leadership practices. The discussions created a desire in them to change the traditional way of carrying out leadership roles. As the researcher-interventionist, I assisted participants to present their developmental challenges and place their problems in a historical perspective using a theoretical tool, the model of activity theory (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Participants then drew up a priority list that needed immediate attention and from which



the preparation to solve contradictions began. The flip charts were used as a tool to capture the discussion in the process. Based on these analyses the participants came up with a model of new solutions.

In the process, I was assisted by a non-research staff member who volunteered to video record the workshop, as well as take pictures throughout the proceedings while facilitating the workshop. This person completed a confidentiality agreement before the process began. I also voice recorded throughout the whole process, as I asked unstructured questions to hear participants' experiences at the end of each session as I could not take proper notes. Below in the picture are participants busy creating the new model of future activity.



***Figure 3.4: Participants creating a new model***

In the fourth change laboratory workshop, which took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019, participants continued with a plan for examining the new model. In this workshop, nine participants attended, and among them were two HODs. During this stage of intervention, participants could not test the model because of time, however, as Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) suggest, they decided to examine it first in the form of thought experiments before implementing it.

In the end, though participants had indicated their willingness to resolve the contradictions, they decided that implementation should be done early next year. This was because it was a

very busy and demanding time of the year. Teachers were obliged to finish off the syllabus before the final examinations began. I will follow up on this next year.

In concluding this section, I found it necessary to briefly summarise the discussion on data generation with the aid of a table as represented below:

**Table 3.1: Summary of data generation tools**

Research Question number	Research Question	Data collection tools	Participants
1	How is the concept of teacher leadership understood in the case study school?	Interviews	Teachers, SMT
2	What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?	Interviews, document analysis & observation	Teachers SMT
3	What are the conditions that promote or constrain teacher leadership development in the case study school?	Document analysis, interviews, observation, WhatsApp messaging	Teachers, SMT
4	How can teacher leadership be developed through CLWs at the case study school?	Change Laboratory Workshops	Teacher, SMT

In the next section, I now turn to discuss the process of analysing data.

### 3.6 Process of Data Analysis

According to Jacobs and Walker (2014), data analysis is the act of giving meaning to data. In the same vein, Merriam (1998, p. 178) asserts that data analysis is a “process of making sense out of data which involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said”. The idea here was to bring a little order to the chaos of data (Reichertz, 2013) by reducing a bunch of raw textual data into a shorter summary format. Further, the researcher needs to redefine and rearrange the empirical data to come up with new ideas that they might not previously have thought about. Data analysis is also about explaining and making clear the observable facts, yet “clearing the doubts of the old beliefs” (*ibid.*) and makes what was not clear, clear and understood. To clarify my views above, data analysis is a means through which we advance our knowledge when we start to build a clear link between research objectives and the summary findings derived from raw data (Patton, 2002). In the next section, I present

inductive and abductive logical reasoning or forms of thinking which form part of linking and producing ideas.

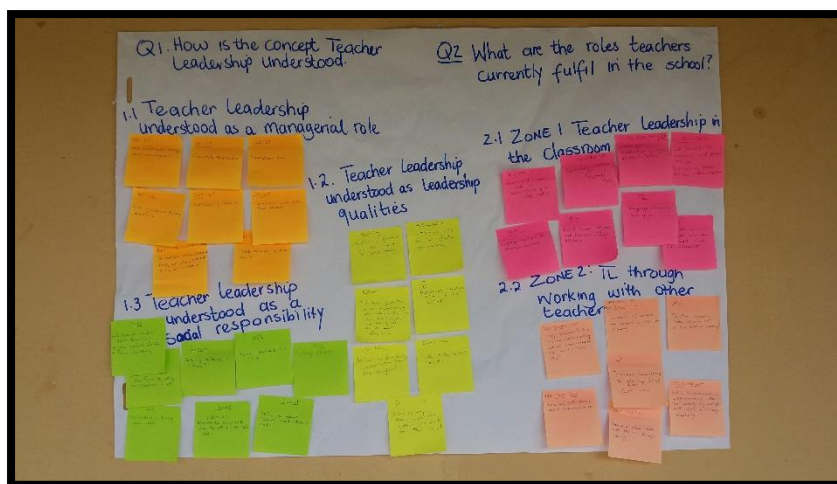
### **3.6.1 Data organisation and preparation**

As Neuman (2014) asserts, in qualitative approaches analysing data runs concurrently with data collection, so as to continue directing the researcher through data collection. Firstly, data were organised in such a manner that audiotapes of focus groups and individual interviews were transcribed. I then went ahead to write memos of documents for easy retrieval (Jacobs & Walker, 2014). I also made copies of the field notes from observations, scanned them and transferred them to the computer. The videotapes and audiotapes recorded from interviews and change laboratory workshops, as well as photographs taken were transferred from the phone to the computers for back-up purposes.

### **3.6.2 Inductive analysis**

Firstly, data were analysed qualitatively using an inductive approach with a touch of thematic or framework analysis. Inductive analysis suited this study as it illustrates the process of working back and forth between themes, until the researcher has established a complete set of themes, patterns and categories (Creswell, 2014) in the data. The process of analysing data started with the description of raw data which first started with the thought of what would be included and what needed to be left out from all the raw textual data collected. This meant that not all gathered data was relevant for the research questions, therefore I tried to compress data and link it together in writing to carry out the meaning I derived from studying the phenomenon. I worked with empirical data obtained from studying the phenomenon and made conclusions drawn from observed occurrences (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). At this stage, I let the data speak for themselves without imposing the theory on them.

After organising the data, I went through the data, reading and re-reading them aloud and becoming familiar with the content covered in the text. The idea was to break data down into bits of information (units of data) looking for similarities and differences and assign these bits to categories which bring these bits together (Merriam, 1998). All units of data referring to text with multiple same meanings were given a code. Coding means a “process of organising materials into chunks or segment of text before bringing meaning to information” (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). Below, the picture depicts how data were analysed inductively.



**Figure 3.5: Inductive analysis process**

Data from each tool, that is to say field notes, document analysis, focus group transcriptions and interview transcriptions, were coded. The coding of text allowed themes to emerge. The next step was to minimise a large number of individual codes into a manageable set of categories. A category is a grouping of ideas or concepts, combining data into themes (Merriam, 1998). Then I identified text segments that contained meaningful units that created a label for a new category in the form of a short phrase or word. I used sticky notes of different colours to group the units of data that spoke to one category and placed them under labels of categories on the flipcharts. Using colour coding made it easy for me to group data according to categories under the main research question, interpret findings and attach meaning to them.

In order to find meanings in data, I move on to the next form of logical thinking to explain the process of how I moved from basic description to the next level of analysis which is abduction.

### **3.6.3 Abductive analysis**

Abduction is “a movement from a conception of something to a different, possibly more developed or deeper conception of it” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 91). The abductive analysis is the kind of thinking or the kind of reasoning that brings new socially created beliefs into the world, and changes doubts that a researcher has into an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Reichertz, 2013). Through its process, one can “find ways to reason, think and argue in a wider sense” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 89). In this way, this type of analysis gave me a way to interpret and connect my data from the surroundings of a new context, as I introduced new

ideas into the context of teacher leadership. To simplify the above, abductive analysis involves the linking of theory to data.

For example, at this stage of analysis, the Grant (2017) model of teacher leadership was linked to the data that spoke to the roles which teachers currently fulfilled in the school and beyond. Data pieces were coded into thematic categories as per the analytical model of Grant's (2017) zones, roles and indicators of teacher leadership; this was done according to prior concepts such as teachers leading in the classroom, teachers working with other teachers, teachers outside the classroom and so on. Then behaviours that related to more than one category were coded into similar categories and formed patterns.

While the CHAT triangular model was linked to the data generated from the change laboratory workshops, in this case, the theory was used to analyse the teacher leadership activity system of rules, tools, object, subject, and community. To simplify, data mirrored in the change laboratory workshops were used to look for systemic causes of tensions and contradictions within the teacher leadership practice. The contradictions identified in the session were evaluated to determine what type of contradictions (primary, secondary) they were. The explanation as to which components of the activity system were involved in each contradiction of the findings was discovered through the CHAT lens and the process of expansive learning (stages of the cycle) across the data sets. It is the historicity and its cultural aspects as elements of CHAT, that were used to analyse how the activity system of rules, tools, object and subject and community interact with each other to influence the development of teacher leadership in the case study school.

Distributed leadership theory was also used to help me unpack and make conclusions across all findings on how teacher leadership was distributed in the case study school.

Then the question of the trustworthiness of the analysed data during the process needs clarity; below is a detailed discussion.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the finding by employing certain procedures (Gay et al., 2009). Herewith are a number of strategies that guided me to assess the trustworthiness of my findings.

### **3.7.1 Piloting**

To ensure trustworthiness, firstly I tested the data generating tools. Prior to conducting research, the research instruments were piloted to ascertain their appropriateness and whether they were able to produce the necessary results once employed. Therefore, I piloted the interview schedules with my colleagues at Advisory Services, while the interview for the principal was piloted with a principal from another school. The reason is to check the clarity of the questions and to gain feedback on the accuracy of the questions (Cohen et al., 2011).

### **3.7.2 Member checking**

I also conducted member checking where the transcribed interview recordings were taken back to participants during the process of the change laboratory workshops. This was done at the stage where data collected in phase one was presented to participants for verification.

### **3.7.3 Reflexivity and positioning**

Reflexivity generally can be understood as being aware of your influence as a researcher on the participants or on the topic under study and purposefully trying to reduce the likely bias emanating from your position as a researcher (Cohen et al., 2018). I was working from the position of an insider as at the time of the study, I was serving in the position of Senior Education Officer. Because of my position I had to think ahead of time and guard against possible identity issues which could pose as challenges of various sorts, threatening transparency and trustworthiness in the research (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Therefore, I accepted and disclosed to the participants my biography and background that might influence the research in order to establish a good rapport with them (Cohen et al., 2018). I also tried to level myself to their position when I informed them that I was at that point a learner, relying on them for information needed in the study. Therefore, I tried to do what Merriam (2009) suggests, “to critically self-reflect” as a researcher (p. 229) and look into my own personal characteristics with regard to issues of power and status (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

Getting to know my position as a researcher helped me to be neutral and not take sides when dealing with respondents’ answers. It also helped to avoid immature claims and maintain honesty and transparency, rather than going against participants’ answers. I made use of memos

and a journal book to reflect and that helped me not to forget and misreport information that I collected at the advanced stage of the study.

Lastly, I kept on coming back to my raw data, reading and re-reading them through in order to stay loyal to the data and not misinterpret it. This will now be explained under the sub-heading crystallisation.

### **3.7.4 Crystallisation**

Crystallisation is a strategy that naturally looks at multiple realities of the data rather than seeing reality as a fixed point (Nieuwenhuis, 2014). Equally important, Borkan (1999) explains crystallisation as a strategy that involves a process of examining or reading the data (immersion), so as to reflect on the analysis experience and attempt to identify and communicate patterns/themes noticed during immersion. I immersed myself in this complex process and continued with the process until all the data had been examined, and patterns which were meaningful and trustworthy emerged from the data. The idea was to foster a deeper and meaningful understanding of teacher leadership as the phenomenon under study. Therefore, in this qualitative study, the emerging reality came from describing and analysing findings rather than from measurable findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2014). Using this process, findings were those crystallised from data given the emerging patterns and themes and this added to the trustworthiness of the research.

My attention now turns to the ethical considerations in my study.

### **3.8 Research Ethics**

Inevitably, qualitative research involves contact with human subjects in the field, therefore, ethical problems sometimes cannot be avoided but can be prevented (Silverman, 2013). Before any data could be collected, ethical clearance from the university was obtained (see appendix A). I started with the negotiation of my access to the case study school by writing letters seeking permission from the Khomas Regional Director of Education, as well as from the principal of the site school (see appendix B & D). The permission granted by the Regional Director is also clearly attached (see Appendix C). Moreover, I prepared the consent letters to all participants who showed their eagerness to participate, not only in this study but also to share their views on the WhatsApp group chat platform. In this section, I shed more light on

what I did in terms of actions taken when conducting this research study. Among the many issues that literature describes with regard to ethics, I considered and discussed the following.

### **3.8.1 Respect and dignity**

As a researcher, I made sure that I conformed to the standards of conduct of Rhodes University. Therefore, I carried out my study with “respect and concern for the dignity and welfare of the people” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996, p. 38) that formed part of my study. I respected the teachers’ right to privacy which meant I explicitly explained to the participants that they had the “right not to take part in the research, not to answer questions and not to be interviewed” if they so wished (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 91); therefore, the right of refusal or withdrawal from the project was entirely up to them.

### **3.8.2 Transparency and honesty**

I tried to honour all promises and commitments included in the agreement and informed all participants of all aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to participate. This was done by disclosing the risks and benefits that could be derived from the study (Cohen et al., 2011). The idea was for participants to make informed decisions before they signed consent forms. To ensure anonymity, the information provided in no way revealed their identity nor the name of the school. In the case of the interviewees, I ensured their confidentiality, as well as non-traceability (Cohen et al., 2011), as letters were given to all participants as identifiers. I also informed the participants not to link data to a particular individual (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

### **3.8.3 Accountability and responsibility**

I established a clear and fair agreement with research participants, and prior to their participation clarified the commitment and responsibilities of each (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). Participants were assured that the research would not harm or hurt them in any manner (non-maleficence); in fact, benefits may be derived from the study, both for participants and the school. After the study, participants might have an in-depth understanding of the concept of teacher leadership and the school might see improvement as teachers would likely take up leadership roles across all zones. I tried to be accountable for the rights, dignity and confidentiality of the participants in this study. I also tried to be very sensitive to people



regarding their socio-economic status. The participants were informed of how data were to be collected and how files and audio data would be stored and destroyed after use (Gay et al., 2009). I took the responsibility of not jeopardising the reputation of Rhodes University nor the school community or the school researched. In so doing I made sure that I used sufficient data instruments, as well as the best design methods (Cohen et al., 2011).

### **3.8.4 Integrity and academic professionalism**

I abided by the ethical rules and procedures as required by the study, as well as by the school and ministerial policies. This meant that under no circumstances did my study interfere with the teaching and learning activities of the school, hence I made sure I respected the site by minimising the disruption (Creswell, 2014). Where I have used other peoples' ideas I have acknowledged that the ideas were not my own by adhering to the relevant referencing style of the university guidelines.

### **3.8.5 Data storage and security**

Data security is of paramount importance in handling data. Creswell (2012) suggests that data should be kept at least for about five to 10 years securely stored, so as not to fall into another researcher's hands who might misuse them. I will uphold this suggestion. Moreover, Gay et al. (2009) suggest that "access to data should be limited to people directly involved in conducting the research" (p. 21). The files for storing hard copy evidence of data were prepared specifically for keeping data obtained from interviews and documents, as well as journals from change laboratory workshops. The data gathered were packed in bundles and tied with a rope and then securely locked up in a safe in my office. The records of information were scanned and saved both on discs and Google drive with the protected passwords kept a secret and only known by me.

## **3.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented and explained the methodological processes chosen in order to generate and analyse data that enabled me to answer my research questions. I commenced with a brief outline of my research objectives and questions followed by an explanation of the research design set up. I described the research approach, orientation and research design. The research site, sampling procedures, research participants, as well as my position as a researcher were expounded in this chapter.

Additionally, my decisions regarding the data generation methods were also communicated to the reader. Interviews, document analysis, observations, WhatsApp messaging and change laboratory workshops as methods were elaborated upon. Furthermore, I described how the data gathered were analysed inductively and abductively. Finally, the chapter concluded with issues of reliability and ethical considerations.

In Chapter Four, I provided the data to the reader and discuss the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EXPLORING THE FINDINGS TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AT THE CASE STUDY SCHOOL

#### 4.1 Introduction

This is the first of the presentation and discussion of findings chapters. In this chapter, I present the data and discuss the findings generated from phase one. In Chapter Five, my attention will turn to the presentation and discussion of findings from phase two of my study. The data presented in this chapter were collected through interviews, document analysis, observation and WhatsApp messaging. In upholding ethical considerations and ensuring anonymity in these findings chapters, I have used the following codes as illustrated in the table below:

*Table 4.1: Names of data sources*

Data sources	Code given
Principal	P
Head of Departments	SMT1-2
Teachers	TA-TH
Individual Interviews	IVI
Observation	OB1-2
Document Analysis	DA (e. g DA3: SJD)
Focus Group Interviews	FGI
WhatsApp Messaging	WM

This chapter attempts to address the following research questions:

1. How is the concept of teacher leadership understood in the case study school?
2. What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?
3. What are the conditions that promote or constrain teacher leadership development in the case study school?

Firstly the chapter presents and discusses the findings on how the concept of teacher leadership is perceived by the teachers and SMT in this study. Their understanding of the concept was solicited through interviews. Secondly, the chapter presents the leadership role teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond. The interviews, document analysis and observations helped unpack the leadership roles enacted through teachers' involvement in the leadership of the school. In addition, Grant's (2017) Model of Teacher Leadership was also used to identify what teacher leadership might look like in the case study school in the Namibian context. Lastly, the constraining and enabling conditions to the development of teacher leadership are described in the chapter. The interviews, document analysis, WhatsApp messages and observations made the discovery of the constraints and enablers in the case study school possible.

At this point, I now discuss the findings of how the concept of teacher leadership is perceived by teachers and SMT.

## **4.2 Towards an Understanding of Teacher Leadership**

The data revealed that there were different understandings of teacher leadership in the Namibian context, in this case study school. A possible reason for this could be because the concept is fairly new in the Namibian context with limited research and exposure to it. As a result, teachers did not provide similar understandings of the phenomenon. This is also evidenced by the literature on teacher leadership, as many authors affirm that there are "vast overlapping and competing definitions of the term teacher leadership" (Wasley, 1991; Harris & Muijs, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Grant, 2005).

Furthermore, teacher leadership is described as being understood as the possession of certain qualities, as participation in decision-making, a managerial role and as a form of social responsibility. At this juncture, it seems fitting to start presenting the teachers' and SMT's understanding of teacher leadership as the possession of certain leadership qualities.

### **4.2.1 Teacher leadership understood as the possession of certain leadership qualities**

In this category the data was replete with examples, however, I provided a few to illustrate the points which participants made during the interviews. Therefore, in seeking a clear understanding of teacher leadership, I discovered that the participants viewed the concept in light of leadership qualities. Based on the findings from interviews it came out strongly that

participants viewed teacher leadership *“as the ability to lead, motivate and influence other teachers, as well as learners in the school”* (SMT2, P, TF, SMT1). The participants’ answers alluded to the notion that a person should possess certain qualities that make him/her stand out of the group and lead others. For example when interviewed, one head of the department said that teacher leadership is *“about a teacher being punctual and committed which then lead to other teachers and learners to follow suit to become hardworking and committed members of the community”* (SMT1). Furthermore, a group of participants expressed that teacher leadership *“is the ability to inspire, motivate and influence learners and other teachers by setting a good example”* (TF, SMT1, SMT2) in the school. The participants’ views were influenced by the recent studies on leadership that found that leadership is a process of influencing and inspiring others to reach the intended goals or purpose (see Spillane, 2005; Christie, 2010). In line with these views, the principal (P) expressed that *“teacher leadership is when teachers themselves lead others in terms of charting a vision and inspiring others to reach the desired goal”* (IVI).

In practice, the above views indicated that the participants’ understanding was inspired by a set of behaviours and actions of the person in a leadership position (Penn, 2015). This possibly highlights that participants viewed teacher leadership, from a narrow leaning to a traditional perspective, as opposed to contemporary leadership. As Penn (2015) argues, leadership traits give a one-dimensional approach to leadership, as uniformity in leading cannot be found. This translates to the struggle of clearly identifying the skills or qualities that someone should possess when leading and should transmit across all levels in the school (Coleman, 2005). Therefore, I align with the literature that contends that traditional leadership traits, that is to say in the context of school leadership, individually would not be sufficient because the emphasis should be on the practice of leadership (Vaino, 2018). Holding on to my position, the distributed leadership perspective argues that leadership ought to be conceptualised as a collective and shared effort and should emanate between and across people in the organisations, thereby focusing on the practice (Spillane, 2006).

Furthermore, the literature demonstrates that the limitations of individual leadership have become increasingly evident in recent studies (Christie, 2010) and the idea of teacher leadership is now widely accepted. For Harris, teacher leadership should be defined *“as a form of agency that can be widely shared or distributed within and across an organisation thus directly posing a challenge to the existing forms of leadership practice”* (2003, p. 315). I now

turn to present teachers' and the SMT's understanding of teacher leadership viewed as teachers' participation in decision-making.

#### **4.2.2 Teacher leadership viewed as teachers' participation in decision-making**

A few participants viewed teacher leadership as exercising leadership through decision-making. From the interviews I had with teachers, a teacher intuitively pointed out that in his view, teacher leadership *"is when a teacher makes effective decisions that can benefit the school and the learners at large"* (TC), while another teacher mentioned that teacher leadership *"is getting involved in making decisions that are towards learners' learning activities on a daily basis"* (TB). I could sense a form of participative leadership as "teachers share in decision-making within the school, thus leadership is distributed amongst the group and the organisation becomes more democratic" (Coleman, 2005, p. 18).

The heads of department also affirmed that, *"teacher leadership is getting involved in the decision-making process of the school"* (SMT1, SMT2). In fact, they revealed further that *"they plan departmental activities and decide on due dates together with their teachers"* (SMT1, SMT2). I saw a link between the respondents' views and that of Day and Harris (2003) who reveal that teacher leaders contribute an important voice in the decision-making processes. From the teachers' opinions, it seemed that a form of leadership where others are given responsibility to release their potential and make their decisions count existed (Blasé & Blasé, 2001). These opinions featured in the findings, as one teacher mentioned that, *"I believe for a school to function and to reach its intended goals, it needs all individuals that are involved to make decisions"* (TD). The above understanding resonates well with Shields (2009), who affirms that all staff members in the school need to be provided with an equal chance to partake in decisions, regardless of their race or gender. Not only that, teachers interviewed gave the impression that they realised that active participation in decisions has transformation power to bring changes needed to defy unfair societal forces through reflective actions (Blasé & Blasé, 2001). Next, I present teacher leadership viewed as a social responsibility.

#### **4.2.3 Teacher leadership viewed as a social responsibility**

Teachers join the profession because of a deep moral purpose, to make a difference in the lives of their learners. In support of this claim, a number of responses gathered through interviews pointed towards social responsibility. One of the heads of department who was interviewed

suggested that teacher leadership is when “*someone initiates change, by bringing new ideas, new productive ideas that will also bring harmony and better results in your subject and to your school*” (SMT2). This understanding relates to a transformative leadership perspective where leadership requires people to take calculated risks and eventually undertake joint responsibility for a change initiative that might seem challenging (Lieberman et al., 1988). Another teacher also confidently brought an idea forward to say that, “*teacher leadership is not only about guiding learners on the topic, but also guiding them towards enhancing their social skills*” (TB). Evaluating the participants’ ideas, it seemed they were speaking to the issue of empowering teachers to assume joint responsibility and emphasising the importance of owning their practice.

Additionally, a teacher interviewed during the focus group said, “*as a teacher you are not only responsible for your class, but you should also have a social responsibility in the society*” (TC). In the same vein, another teacher proudly went ahead to say, “*a teacher has to engage the community and the church services around the school in matters concerning the school*” (TE). These findings provide support for previous research by Duignan (2012), who felt that teacher leaders should also carry the moral purpose and passion for professional work, so in the end to act justly, rightly and promote the common good – bringing equity and democracy to the school system (Astin & Astin, 2001).

In concluding this sub-theme, I support the position of Duignan (2012) who wrote, “that educational leaders need clearly articulated moral principles and ethical standards for action that will help schools move away from deep selfish behaviours towards more honest and ethical communication processes and action” (p. 9).

#### **4.2.4 Teacher leadership as a managerial role**

The notion of teacher leadership was narrowly understood, thus participants conceptualised it as leading from the managerial point of view. One head of department (SMT1) and a teacher (TH) understood teacher leadership “*as teachers carrying out management tasks of controlling, organising, monitoring and supervising*” (FGI/IVI). The head of department understood teacher leadership as “*the action of monitoring learners and ensuring that discipline is well implemented*” (SMT1). On the other hand, two of the teachers viewed teacher leadership in line with “*a teacher who is a leader taking part in disciplining learners at school in general and only for their classes*” (TH, TB). From the above views, I identified a conflation of ideas

between management and leadership. In a sense, the descriptions participants provided are in line with Kotter (2011) who suggests that management has to do with effective and efficient execution of duties by working on pre-determined procedures in place to keep the organisation going. It seems the respondents gave their answers from the management point of view, and not from the leadership perspective as was the question. Management focuses “on efficiency at the cost of more humanistic values, because structures and procedures tend to be more important” (Coleman, 2005, p. 19).

However, conflating these two concepts by the participants did not surprise me in the Namibian context, because the notion of leadership is seen from the perspective of a person who is in a formal position. To explain this, for many teachers, a principal might be a leader and a manager at the same time. Sometimes, distinguishing the two terms might not be easy for them. Even in the international context, this conflation of terms also exists. For example, Coleman and Early mention that despite the differences of these concepts, the words leadership and management are often used interchangeably in everyday use (2005). For them, management has to do with preserving the status quo, while leadership has to do with changing the status quo in order to bring change. Taking this definition of leadership further, I concur with Harris (2003) who “defines teacher leadership as a form of agency that can be widely shared or spread within and across an organisation, thus openly challenging more outdated forms of leadership practice” (p. 315).

#### **4.3 Teacher Leadership in Practice: Roles teachers carry out in school**

Usually, the role of a teacher is strictly viewed as to teach the learners, as opposed to new ways of thinking in terms of teacher leadership roles. In modern days, the role of teachers pose a challenge to traditional structures in schools, because teachers have a need to spread responsibility (Silva et al., 2000).

For the purpose of this section, I presented findings aimed at answering my second research question in this study. Interviews, document analysis and observations were used to provide answers to the second research question which is: *What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?* By focusing on the roles, it enables one to see how responsibility is spread among and across the organisational structure. Grant’s (2017) Teacher Leadership Model presented in the literature chapter (see Figure. 2.2) was used as an analytical tool to interpret the findings. This model was particularly useful as it indicated the zones in



which teachers were most active, as well as helped to identify the functions (roles) they were mostly taking part in by looking at the indicators. For Harris and Lambert (2003), teacher leaders are those with a high set of abilities that spend most of their time in the class teaching, but still continue outside the class to take on leadership roles. Evidence from the data set showed that teachers in the case study school led in all four zones, even though they were not active in all the roles. Thus, my attention at this point turns to a discussion of the roles in each zone that teachers were involved in.

#### **4.3.1 Zone one: Teachers leading within the classroom**

The data obtained from all data sets revealed that teachers led within the zone of their classrooms. When interviewed, participants revealed that they lead from their classrooms *“when they teach their subjects, set class rules, keep classroom discipline, motivate learners and foster good relationships, keep records of learners’ work and manage the class as a home class teacher”* (TB, TC, TA). To remind the reader, zone 1 makes reference that “teachers lead in the classroom” (see Grant, 2017b, p. 9). This is because as professionals, teachers are “first of all experts in the classroom through the facilitation of students learning” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 6). In this regard, Harris and Lambert (2003, p. 44), identified teacher leaders “as those expert teachers who spend most of their time in class teaching”, while as professionals, continually improve their own teaching and learning. I align with this view and suggest that the information and expertise teachers bring to their classrooms should be recognised and teachers should be afforded a platform to create the knowledge rather than applying it only.

In the next section, I present areas teachers were most active in and how they applied leadership roles, using the roles and indicators as per the model.

##### ***4.3.1.1 Teacher leaders keep abreast with new developments***

It was evident from the data presented that teachers were engaged in activities that promoted teaching in their classrooms (indicator 2). For example, the data obtained from one head of department interviewed, revealed that teachers received a lot of support from the Regional Office (IVI). In her own words, the head of department said;

*Particularly for this year, we have been attending workshops on the new curriculum implementation. Our teachers received training in all subjects. Not only that, teachers*

*in my department were trained in subjects such as Accounting, senior Entrepreneurship and Business Studies. On top of that, I received an induction training on how to run a department as I was just newly appointed in this position (SMT1).*

She then continued to reveal that she also trains her teachers in the Commerce Department through mini-workshops to address certain issues relating to subject content (SMT1).

The above view is supported in literature by Lieberman and Miller (2004) who concludes that “teacher leaders need to be reflective of their own practice to become logical about teaching and learning” (p. 91). Another head of department confirmed this by saying, “*Teachers in my department were trained, clear policies and guidelines were developed that could lead to teachers having clear information on how to perform their tasks in class*” (SMT2). Moreover, three teachers interviewed revealed that they “*are busy upgrading their skills through post-graduate studies in line with the subjects they teach*” (TC, TB, TF). In line with the above, I worked on the idea that training whether formal or informal “is a tool for translating improvement into action” (Mosoge, 2012, p. 180). Therefore, I strongly believe, irrespective of one’s experience in classroom teaching, that regular workshops/training are of paramount significance for teachers to advance their knowledge.

Moreover, one of the educators interviewed confidently emphasised the importance of training when she said, “*After I received training I feel comfortable now when teaching in my subjects; my knowledge has been updated and upgraded I can comfortably stand in front of the learners*” (TF), while other teachers in the interview nodded in agreement. This gave me an understanding that teachers seemed to value the contribution workshops bring to their professionalism, in terms of upgrading and advancing their knowledge. Another teacher then quickly said: “*There is big improvement before and after training I can feel the difference, I am full of confidence now. I enjoy every minute of teaching as every day I invent new ways of teaching*” (TB). In line with the thinking above, I base my belief on Mosoge (2012) argument that a “workshop is effective if it’s relevant to teaching and can immediately be applied to the classroom” (p. 180). The document in my possession revealed that a fairly large number of teachers have attended regional workshops particularly during 2019 in various subjects (DA18-RW).

#### **4.3.1.2 Teacher leaders as administrators**

The data revealed that teachers were active in their respective classroom as administrators. From my observation, *“teachers were busy recording marks during their free periods, filing test papers in the examination files and also updating information in the administration files, in their respective classes”* (OB1). Although indicator 4 was evident in the classes observed, none of the interviewed teachers mentioned this role. Perhaps this is because these administrative tasks are part of their daily routine and what they do every day, and to them this is a normal practice. Moreover, on the second day of my observation, I also witnessed teachers completing their class attendance registers and handing them over to the respective HOD for proper control (OB2). This was in line with the Set of Job Descriptions which compels *“teachers to keep personal records, administration files, complete attendance registers and other administration tasks”* (DA3: SJD).

#### **4.3.1.3 Teacher leaders maintain classroom discipline and fulfil pastoral care roles**

The data revealed that teachers were setting classroom rules and maintaining discipline (indicator 6). One of the respondents, during an interview mentioned that, *“as teachers, they are not only responsible to teach but to maintain discipline within the class”* (TH). Moreover, another teacher revealed, *“I like the idea of classroom rules, rules help learners identify acceptable behavioural practices”* (TB). These views were echoed by one HOD who said, *“As a leader in the class, the first thing is to set up clear rules or classroom rules and also set up the consequences in case of breach of rules and have a clear aim of your class ”* (SMT2). Furthermore, there was strong evidence by observing three subject teachers. Maintaining classroom discipline was the key in all three lessons observed. Clear rules were in place and displayed on the wall of the classroom for all learners to see (OB1). In line with the above, the document ‘Guidelines to Teachers’, clearly stipulates that *“teachers should have a classroom policy and manage classes accordingly to curb behavioural or disciplinary problems”* (DA2: GT). Among the teachers observed, there was one teacher with chairs and desks arranged using a semi-circle technique, which facilitates discussion among learners and limits the chances of learners irritating each other while in the lesson (OB1). The teacher’s conduct showed responsiveness to the document ‘Guidelines to Teachers’, which stipulates clearly that teachers must make sure that chairs and desks in the classrooms are arranged in such a way that it facilitates good discipline and order (DA2: GT).

On a different note but speaking to the same category, one head of department when interviewed described a teacher's role in class as, *“to come up with initiatives for your class; if there is a needy learner in your class, then find a way to help this learner; identify learners who might be psychologically affected by their situation and do referrals”* (SMT2). It was evident in one of the classes observed, that the teachers took this role quite seriously. One of the teachers observed, noticed that one of the learners was sleeping in class. Upon enquiry, the learner disclosed that she did not have a meal the night before. The teacher referred the child to the Life Skills teacher (OB1). According to my observation, teachers also maintained good interpersonal relationships with the learners and continuously motivated them to work hard (OB1). The teacher for social studies used me (the researcher) as an example, as I was sitting observing his lesson to motivate learners saying, *“One never grows old to study, you are young, look at Ms Shilongo studying at her age, so emulate good examples”* (OB1). The findings also became evident in Hamatwi's (2015) studies, as he indicated that teachers were leading by example, being good examples to fellow teachers and that this was extended to the learners as well.

#### **4.3.2 Zone two: Leadership of teacher colleagues in curricular and extracurricular activities**

Teacher leadership is about taking up roles inside and outside the classroom. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) argue, that a teacher leader is the one who is actively involved in promoting change inside and outside the classroom. There seems to be a tendency for teachers' leadership practice in curricular and extracurricular activities beyond the confines of the classroom to go unnoticed. Murphy (2005) also notes that the leadership of teachers in curricular and extra-curricular activities is rarely acknowledged outside the realm of the classroom. Against this backdrop, the data to be presented now in this zone will unveil the position of teacher leadership outside the classroom. In this zone, the teacher leaders move out of the confines of the classroom, where according to Grant, (2017b) teachers' work with other teachers and learners in curricular and extracurricular activities. In this zone, teacher leadership is likely to be involved in the provision of curriculum development knowledge (role 2) and leading in in-service education and assisting other teachers (role 3).

#### **4.3.2.1 Teacher leaders as coordinators in various committees**

The data collected revealed that teachers were very active in this zone, as measured by indicator 3. During the group interview discussions the majority of participants revealed that they serve as coordinators on different committees as illustrated in the excerpt below:

*I control textbooks in the school and also coordinate fundraising-related matters. I serve in the sports committee and disciplinary committee. I am involved as a textbook control officer for junior grades plus I am also part of the fundraising committee. I am a member of the duplication committee, I am the one who is duplicating, making copies for the question papers, tests and all sort of things (TE, TF, TF, TH, TC).*

The document ‘Set of Job Descriptions’ guidelines I have reviewed, requires teachers to participate and serve in different committees (DA3: SJD) and it seemed that teachers were meeting the objectives set out. Furthermore, one head of department confirmed this, by positing that, “*teachers are given a chance to select their own committees depending on their interests so, in the end, no teachers will complain that they are placed in wrong committees*” (SMT2). A piece of verified evidence that teachers were given responsibilities or led through various committees, existed in the document ‘Teachers Duty List’ which revealed that various committees were set up for the academic year (DA11: TDL 2019). This meant, that in the case study school, teachers were given an opportunity to select their committees of choice and among those committees were, fundraising committees, prize-giving ceremony committee, admission committee, and a disciplinary committee, just to mention a few. Committees are formal structures of a school which are likely to contribute to the rise of distributed leadership (Hamatwi, 2015). From the data, I got a sense that teachers were given a variety of opportunities to lead and seemingly spread their wings in making decisions in these committees. This aligns to Harris (2005), who found that teacher leadership manifests through various structures such as committees set up in the school.

#### **4.3.2.2 Teacher leaders involved as coordinators in subject committees**

The data revealed that teachers were also observed taking initiative in subject committee meetings (indicator 3). During an observation, the teacher for Entrepreneurship was explaining new ways of conducting an Entrepreneurship day for the Grade 8-9 Entrepreneurship learners (OB2). Equally important, from the interviews, the heads of department revealed that they [HoDs] perform their roles such as guiding teachers, coaching them in various aspects, as well

as providing in-service training for their teachers in their respective departments. The statement from an SMT member affirmed this: *“I conducted a workshop for my department ... raised some issues in the department and then we were training each other”* (SMT1). *“Also teachers need to be coached, guided now and then, they needed to be monitored on how to do things”* (SMT1). From the above views, it seemed teachers in the school realised the need for transformation by directing others towards a change process.

#### **4.3.2.3 Teacher leaders involved as extramural coordinators**

Another indicator which came out strongly is indicator 6. Teachers were involved in extramural activities in the school. During the interviews, a teacher said: *“I am the athletics head coach”* and proudly added: *“I run a sports department in the school, organising athletics, renting fields and so forth”* (TA). In the same line, one of the educators said: *“I am a football coach for boys under 15”* (TC), while another teacher revealed, *“I coach boys under 18”* (TF). Additionally, another educator said: *“I am the scripture union conduct teacher”* (TE). Organising of extramural activities came out strongly in zone two, as supported by the ‘Set of Job Description’ document (DA3: SJD).

One of the new teachers in the school proudly gave his experience as the head of the debating society in the school. This was revealed in the excerpt below.

*I am involved in coaching learners for public speaking ... last time I took my learners to Pretoria, South Africa for the Africa debate Championships. It was fun; one of my learners reached the final and is going to participate in the Heart of Europe championships in Czechoslovakia early next year. Learners enjoy debates, it gives them the freedom to speak and develop their thinking ability and research skills* (TB).

The principal also echoed a similar sentiment by indicating that, *“as part of the extramural activities, the sports people would also take the boys for competitions; I regard this as leadership”* (P). To strengthen my findings, the teachers were fulfilling their role in relation to the guiding rule from the ‘Code of Conduct for Teachers’, which compels teachers to equally participate in extra murals such as sport, fundraising, clubs and other group activities (CCT-DA4). Furthermore, the ‘Guidelines for Teachers’ stipulates clearly that all teachers should participate in extramural activities (DA2; GT).

#### **4.3.2.4 Teachers leaders involved in team teaching**

The data obtained in this category came strongly from observation and supported by documents revealed that teachers practiced co-teaching. Manifestly, I observed two teachers who practiced co-teaching in a topic in the subject of Accounting. During observations, I captured a teacher saying to the Accounting class: *“As I have taught you profit and loss account before, my evaluation gave me an indication that you have not mastered this topic yet, thus I brought with me an accounting teacher to help you achieve this specific objective”*(OB1). Harris and Lambert’s (2003) work speaks to this idea that teacher leadership promotes teamwork resulting in a collective team effort. This was a very good move and was welcomed by management and teachers alike, as teachers were helping each other in subject-related content. Guided by the document ‘Set of Job Descriptions’ the Accounting teacher played the role of the subject head. In the document, it is clearly articulated that a subject head must initiate projects, give guidance to new teachers, as well as motivate teachers (DA3: SJD). In relation to the above, Glickman (2002) suggests co-teaching as one of the methods to improve direct teaching and learning in the classroom. To direct the reader, co-teaching is when two teachers are planning and giving instruction together in the same class and on the same topic and to the same group of learners.

Apart from that, another teacher confidently indicated that, *“in the social science field we have a routine of preparing assessments together. For example, sharing on how to set common quality tests and activities together”* (TC). From the above response, I got a sense that teachers were opening up to issues outside their classroom, which is a good way to share their knowledge and experiences with the new teachers or any other teachers in the school (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). The data also put forward the idea that communication among teachers in the case study school was likely taking place. The above views also resonate well with that of Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), who believe that teachers should serve as guides, advisors, instructors and role models not only to learners, but to other teachers as well.

#### **4.3.3 Zone three: Leading outside the classroom in whole school development**

This third zone of the model includes two roles of a teacher leader; the one involving the teacher in organising and leading reviews of the school practice (role 5) and the other involving teacher participation in school decision-making (role 6). In this zone, teachers showed strong involvement in role six, where most of them indicated their active involvement in decision-

making at the school. Muijs and Harris (2003) mention that the involvement of teachers in decision-making of the school, serves as a good start to the development of teacher leadership.

#### ***4.3.3.1 Teacher involvement in organising and leading reviews of school practice***

Data revealed that teacher leadership in the school with regard to this aspect was quite minimal, but not totally absent. I did observe teachers organising a cultural event that was due to take place at school (OB2). The culture day was being organised by two teachers in collaboration with learners to celebrate the day of the African Child on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019. This meant that during the preparation of such events, teacher leaders networked with learners as followers in different instructional activities, as suggested by Spillane (2006). Furthermore, another noticeable school practice the school adopted was a culture of Morning Prayer (OB1) at every morning briefing or meetings, which provided opportunities for the teachers to pray and offer words of encouragement before they started their day.

However, overall organising and leading reviews of school practice (role 5) in whole-school development was practiced very minimally in the case-study school. This seemed to be the domain of the SMT, particularly the principal at the top of the organisational hierarchy as suggested by scholars (e.g. Grant, 2010).

#### ***4.3.3.2 Teacher leader participation in school-based planning and decision making***

The data revealed very different views on teachers' participation in school-based planning and decision-making. The SMT responses suggested that they created opportunities for teachers to participate in school-based planning decision-making processes. For example, the principal mentioned: *"Like for myself, I keep telling them, don't just come with problems to my office, come with solutions also"* (P). This statement indicated that there was an element of encouragement and empowerment from the management in the school. Blasé and Blasé (2001) argue that encouragement and empowerment lead to increased competence as teachers take up responsibility in the decision-making process. As a result, teachers become stronger and vocal in deciding what is good for them and the society or the community in which the school is operating (*ibid.*). This supports the ideals of transformation.



The data is replete with examples from SMT members, highlighting their support in this regard. For example, during the individual interview with one head of department, she confidently spoke of the following:

*Yes, we do involve teachers in decision-making because we always have meetings, every term; that is just the staff meetings where teachers are allowed to give in the views and opinions regarding issues. And then on a daily basis, before we start with any teaching or learning for the day, we always have morning briefings where we discuss. If there is an issue that needs to be ironed out, we listen to one another. Teachers bringing their opinion. So I would say, they are involved in the decision-making process (SMT1).*

However, on the contrary, the teachers had a very different take on this. One teacher mentioned: *“I believe for an institution like a school to function and to reach its intended goals, you need all individuals that are involved to be engaged and make the decision, you need people to listen to one another and I don’t see that”* (TB). Documentary evidence in the form of a ‘Teachers Duty List’ revealed that committees were set in the school which could lay the foundation for teachers to share responsibilities and engage in decision-making (DA11: TDL 2019). I also observed one teacher from the disciplinary committee involved in decision-making regarding the school uniform mention: *“As part of the disciplinary effort from us (committee) we have decided that all the girls wearing short skirts be identified, and parents invited to come in tomorrow to discuss the way forward. The rule of the school when it comes to the length of skirts is four fingers below the knee”* (OB1). From the above, it seems teachers have a chance to identify problem areas and initiate solutions as found by other scholars (e.g. Grant, 2017b). From this expression above, it can be seen that the school created opportunities for teachers to take part in decisions through their various committees.

#### **4.3.4 Zone four: Beyond the school into the community**

Roles in this fourth zone are associated with, firstly (role 2), which is providing curriculum development knowledge across schools and secondly (role 3), leading in in-service education and assisting other teachers across schools. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009, p. 7) describe leading beyond the classroom as “offering an opportunity for teachers to network with other adults in other schools” cultivating into collective and collaborative communities”.

#### **4.3.4.1 Teacher leaders as joint curriculum developers**

It was evident across the data sets that the involvement with teachers from other schools in providing curriculum development knowledge was prioritised. While the exercise of setting of question papers is counted as one of the useful strategies to upgrade teachers' assessment skills it also gave them an opportunity to meet and mingle with teachers from other schools and create a strong working bond. As one participant shared,

*I gained a lot of experience when I go for setting national question papers, not only that, I got a chance to meet with some of the best performers in the subject, but being together helps us to share the best practices in delivering the content (TC).*

Another teacher added that *"my role in school goes beyond classroom teaching I am a national setter I also set regional examinations and moderate question papers, and go for marking at the national level in various subjects"* (TB). Grant (2008, p. 186) also found that teacher leadership is a "form of leadership beyond headship or formal position" and it decentres teaching and centres learning.

When I interviewed the two heads of department, this is what they had to say:

*Question papers are mostly set at either a cluster level or regional level. Therefore we allocate specific papers to be set by quite a specific number of teachers. Teachers from different schools in the cluster meet in one venue and set question papers together. Then the other teachers can do moderation in order to assure quality papers (SMT1, SMT2).*

Another participant confirmed by saying, *"in this cluster, we set question papers together and meet together as teachers from different schools"* (TD). Mosoge (2012) strengthens the above views to say, "clustered schools can also arrange for educators teaching the same subjects to come together at one school and set one or two examination question papers" (p. 189). On a different note, another teacher revealed that he is a Mathematics facilitator at the cluster and regional level. In his own words, he affirmed: *"I do help with facilitating workshops and train other teachers in the region or at cluster level. Being a facilitator sharpens my skills in the subject content and keeps me updated"* (TE). Another teacher also revealed: *"I am also quite involved in reviewing textbooks and advice the National Institute of Educational Development (NIED) on the textbooks which are in line with the curriculum"* (TB). The above denoted the idea of moving away from working in seclusion, encouraging teachers to work together with other teachers from other schools and share expertise and experiences together (Mosoge, 2012).

#### **4.3.4.2 Teacher leaders in cluster sport activities**

The data revealed that teachers in the case study school were actively involved in cluster sport activities. One of the participants during the interview mentioned: *“There are cluster sports activities that are happening and the aim is to bring all the teachers in the same cluster together”* (TC). Another teacher said: *“Our relationship with other schools is good. For example, when it comes to sport, we organise events together and make decisions as to when and where the schools have to come and meet for a tournament”* (TD). One of the heads of department also said that, *“we have a very good social relationship with other schools through sport. Every beginning of the term we come to battle it out with neighbouring schools and show our capability in sport”* (SMT2). Another teacher added, *“We do sports competition between teachers and learners from different schools with the aim of raising funds for our school”* (TF). This study data demonstrates what Lambert (2003) affirms, that participatory leadership focuses on leadership practice that is shared among informal and designated formal leadership roles.

#### **4.3.4.3 Teacher leaders liaising with parents through meetings**

The data revealed that the school has a very good clear channel of communication with parents facilitated through meetings. One of the heads of department said: *“Whenever we have important issues, usually we send letters to parents to come to parents’ meetings or evenings and share information with them and also to hear their views about the school”* (SMT2). In the minutes I reviewed, it evidently indicated that teachers from various committees were very active in disseminating information to parents in the parents’ meetings (DA16: PM2019).

With excitement in his answer, a teacher said: *“When it comes to parents-school relationship, the school has an open-door policy”* (TA). Another teacher quickly added to say: *“Look, **parents** are the driving force of the school; if there is a parents’ meeting the majority come to discuss issues related to their children’s education* (TE). Additionally, another teacher during the interviews said:

*The school got support from the parents in the community, for example, there was once a situation where people were stealing the fencing of the school, so community members saw this and then they came to report to the office; so you can already see that they’re looking out for the school* (TH).

In terms of communication to parents, letters are the most common means and if it is urgent, the telephone or cell phone is used to reach them. *“It depends on the matter that requires attention”* (SMT1) one of the heads of department mentioned: *“Let’s say we are promoting a bazaar or any sort of fundraising activity happening at the school; instead of sending out letters, sometimes we go to the radio, then we inform the community members and the parents of the school”* (SMT1). From the above views, it seemed that the school valued the contribution that parents made to the development of the school.

#### ***4.3.4.4 Leading through in-service education and assisting other teachers***

The data revealed that teachers in the case study school lead through in-service education and assisting other teachers. One of the teachers interviewed proudly revealed that they shared expertise with the neighbouring schools. In the excerpt below she revealed this by saying:

*We share expertise with other schools where learners come and are being taught here at our school and sometimes we share facilities like Laboratories. For instance, Etale S.S. (pseudonym) learners usually use our laboratory to write their Physical Science examinations. Recently, Epata High school (pseudonym) also came to receive English classes (TE).*

Apart from what the teacher said, one head of department cemented the teacher’s view by revealing the following in the excerpt below:

*We partner up with a few neighbouring schools, then choose a specific day or days, especially during the weekend whereby everybody’s free. We then all meet in a school hall and deliberate on examination issues that need attention. Then later we inform our learners on how to answer specific questions within our respective subjects, and it works very well (SMT2).*

The revelation from the teachers and SMT member above is also supported by what Mosoge (2012) suggests when he writes that “educators teaching the same subject come together to mark examination scripts and others serve as moderators of the marked scripts” (p. 189). On several occasions, I observed teachers who came together to mark regional and cluster examination scripts, which normally takes place under the supervision of regional officials (personal observation). Moreover, the document ‘Guideline to Teachers’, which I reviewed, compels teachers to liaise with other schools and/or the Regional Office to update themselves regarding activities of the various codes and programmes (DA2; GT).

Additionally, Harris (2005) suggests that collaborating with other teachers such as engaging in trials of new teaching approaches, has been identified in helping to develop teachers' confidence and reflections on their practice. The above findings indicate a "transformative shift in the school, from individualism to professional community when teachers view their work as taking place both in and from outside of the classroom" (Lieberman & Miller, 2004, p. 11). Another teacher said: *"With other schools, they are all on the good foot. If we need help like for example from Etale S.S (pseudonym), we just phone and request what we need"* (TD). Additionally, another educator gave an example: *"The last time Mountain S.S. (pseudonym) they were having problems when their Afrikaans teacher resigned, they asked me to go and mark their scripts, then I agreed to help my colleagues from another school"* (TA). Furthermore, another teacher quickly pointed out that, *"our relationship with schools like Etale S.S. and Greenwell S.S. (pseudonym) and other neighbouring schools is very good, not only academically but also socially"* (TF). Moreover, another teacher said: *"I remember during the holiday we had a colleague that was involved in an accident and we cared to come together and raise funds for the colleague, but we are from different environments"* (TD). From the above views it seemed that teachers leading from this zone do it through colleagueship and humility, and "work[ed] to expand their circle of friends" (Blasé & Blasé, 2001, p. 90). The above is also supported in literature when Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) assert that teacher leaders should be able to work collaboratively with fellow teachers, observing one another's lessons and discussing education-related matters.

In summary, it is evident that teacher leadership roles manifested in different zones in the case study school, as indicated through various indicators. My attention now turns to present the conditions prevalent in the school context that promoted teacher leadership.

#### **4.4 Conditions that Promote Teacher Leadership Development within the School**

According to Gronn, (2000), leadership must be shared or distributed among a group of people as leadership is concerned with interactions and not actions of individuals. Moreover, Harris, (2003) is concerned at how the organisation provides support to teachers to make changes or be innovative. In this section, I tried to understand how the case study school created an opportunity for teachers to lead. In answering my third research question, the findings indicated that there were conditions that promoted teacher leadership in the case study school such as through a culture of mutual care and love, as well as through various committees that were set up. My attention now turns to a discussion of these enabling conditions.

#### 4.4.1 Teacher leadership through a culture of mutual care and love

It emerged from the data there were varying levels of ideas that showed that the case study school had established a culture of mutual care and love for one another. One head of department who was interviewed described the context as follows:

*I can see a spirit of love and care at our school ... that promotes leadership ... if you feel that you are loved you always feel good and then you feel happy to be at work, do well, because you are working not only with colleagues but friends too (SMT1).*

Furthermore, I also observed that in the school there was a culture of friendliness and caring. I observed teachers that willingly contributed in monetary terms for a colleague who was getting married. One of the teachers said, “*Colleagues I can offer my driving skills, meaning I can be your driver to Epukiro and coming back*” (TA-OB1). The spirit of volunteerism exposed by this veteran teacher, to drive individual colleagues to the wedding venue, was a sign of collegiality and if passed on to the new teachers, will promote interconnectedness among teachers even for generations to come. The spirit of care and love among teachers was also confirmed by the participants in the interviews, as they described this positive culture of care and love. “*At our school one will never feel lost in the crowd; even though teachers have their individual differences one can tell that teachers here have strong relationship and that they show the spirit of collegueship. We tried to apply uniformity and compassion to all cases*” (TC, TB, SMT 2). It can be seen in their responses that participants felt that their school culture was driven by trust, as well as consistency and empathy among colleagues (Bipath, 2012).

On a similar note, the principal affirmed the above views when he said; “*As a principal, I have to build a strong relationship with my teachers. I have to apply fairness to them, being helpful, and sincere. Once I have created those ones, then I know I have created harmony*” (P). With the above view in mind, Smylie (1992) also recommends that the school management team should create a culture of trust, cooperation and respect between teacher leaders, for people to work in harmony. My observations also indicated that a friendly environment existed in this school context. Moreover, from the above views, it seemed ‘we are a team’ culture to empower teachers existed, so that teachers worked towards achieving shared goals and avoiding blaming each other when things went wrong (Muijs & Harris, 2007). These study findings demonstrate what Muijs and Harris (2005) recommend, that schools should consistently set shared values and norms in order for teacher leadership to find roots to survive.

#### 4.4.2 Teacher leadership through various committees and meetings

Findings revealed earlier, indicated that the school management team created opportunities for teachers through various committees and through discussions in meetings. When interviewed, one head of department had this to say: *“In our school, we have various committees set up, where we make sure teachers are allocated/given task(s) to carry them out. This is done taking into consideration their interests”* (SMT1, SMT2). The principal of the school affirmed the above view by mentioning that, *“committees are established at the school and all teachers are allocated in one of those committees, but they are placed according to their position and skills at the school”*(P). Similar sentiments are shared by Harrison and Lembeck (1996), who mention that teachers need to be supported by those in a position of power in order to show their greatest potential to the organisation. This means that the school management is in the position to discover their teachers’ capabilities through various roles. From these descriptions above, it seemed the school had created a platform where teachers were given a chance to lead. The document ‘Set of Job Descriptions’ compels school management to “deploy and develop the staff to make the most effective use of their skills and expertise” (DA3: SJD, p. 2) and this is shown by the actions above. One of the participants added, saying that *“all teachers belong to a committee or two”* (TF), while others present in the interview nodded in agreement (TA, TC, TB, TD, TF).

On a different note but speaking to the same category, one of the heads of department explained that, *“they always have staff meetings every term, as well as morning briefings every day before actual classes start at 7:20”* (SMT1). Teachers are given this platform to make decisions and contribute to ideas. In my view, leadership for teachers may be distributed but from the authorised point of view (see Grant, 2017a). In this regard I am of the opinion that teachers did not come forward and show their agency to take up leadership roles; these roles were initiated by the school following the top-down leadership structure in the school. Therefore, I work from the premise of Harris (2007), who emphasises that in order for teacher leadership to thrive in the school, a conducive environment which invites teachers to come forward must be created.

I now move on to present what hindered teachers to participate in school leadership.

## **4.5 Constraining Conditions to Teacher Leadership Development**

While recent research mentions that teacher leadership is centrally important to both school, individual and classroom improvement, there are also obstacles that need to be overcome to ensure teacher leadership functions successfully (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Although there is clear evidence of enablers to teacher leadership development, challenges did exist in the case study school. Upon careful enquiry in response to my third research question, I discovered that some factors hindered leadership development amongst teachers.

Some of these challenges surfaced included the following: lack of time, demanding workloads and other commitments; lack of interest in extramurals and SMT support for initiatives; fear and unwillingness of teachers to take on leadership roles. Additionally, the narrow views on leadership and traditional leadership structures; limited leadership capacity building initiatives; and the absence of clear educational policies on teacher leadership were also discovered. In the next section, I now turn to present the first challenge that hampered/constrained teacher leadership development at the case study school.

### **4.5.1 Lack of time, demanding workloads and other commitments**

It was evident from the findings that the majority of participants pointed towards lack of time, demanding workloads and other commitments as barriers to teacher leadership in the case study school. When interviewed, the school principal explained: *“The fact is, the issue of overcrowded classrooms at our school results in increased workload, hence teachers spend most of their time doing classroom activities, leaving them with little or no time for other activities”* (P). He further explained: *“Instead of teachers carrying out leadership tasks outside the classroom, you might find them busy on the computers planning for their lesson at the last minute or marking learners work”* (P). The principal’s views resonate well with that of Lieberman and Miller (2004), who point out that leadership responsibility on top of what teachers have to do in terms of marking papers and setting of tests, is another burden to teachers who have limited time due to heavy workloads. This argument is widely offered in the literature, as there is just not enough time for teachers to engage in activities outside of classroom teaching, despite trying to manage their time effectively (see Grant, 2008; Muijs & Harris, 2006). Additionally, the majority of teachers concurred with the principal’s views when they revealed: *“The issue of full timetables leads to too much work, which in turn leaves us with less administrative periods”* (TE, TC, TD, TB).



Furthermore, based on the evidence gathered from my observation (OB2), in all classes, I observed the teacher-learner ratio was 1:50. It seemed this situation made it difficult for teachers to pay attention to leadership roles, as teachers at the school were also involved in after-school remedial teaching. I also found that teachers were loaded with work, their timetables full of lessons, leaving teachers with less administrative periods (OB1). Similarly, one of the heads of department explained that because of the workload, teachers might not get enough time to take on leadership roles. This was clearly evident in the excerpt below:

*In our school, teachers want to lead but they don't have time. Even we in management or in formal positions don't have time to lead the tasks. Teachers are overloaded because of full classes and larger class size groups. Sometimes teachers feel that what's more valuable is to teach rather than to carry out other roles outside the class (SMT2).*

The above sentiment is shared by Zinn (1997) who felt that teachers have too much to do and too little time to do it, which he considers the greatest barrier to teacher leadership. This study data demonstrated that teachers feel they do not have time to perform tasks outside classes because of too much work. This implies that if teachers are to take up leadership roles, they have to devote their personal time, otherwise time will remain a constraint and teacher leadership roles will be compromised in the process.

Moreover, probing further via WhatsApp, one of the respondents (TF) said, *"Sometimes it's not a matter of the demanding workload as alluded to earlier in the interviews but because of other commitments; we do not have time to carry out leadership roles"* (WM). Then on the same platform, another teacher (TA) agreed by saying, *"I am supporting the comrade, after school, I have other commitments i.e. picking up my children from school or coming for a part-time job, so I don't have time for other activities apart from teaching"* (WM). This aligns with the views of Zinn (1997), who describes the difficulty that exists for the teachers to balance between their commitment to work and their responsibility to families. The stance above implies that the amount of physical and emotional energy available for leadership activities at work, is prescribed on the needs of their families at any given time (*ibid.*).

#### **4.5.2 Lack of interest in extramurals and support of initiatives from the SMT**

In this category, the key finding was that some participants noticed a lack of interest and support for extramural and other activities by management, apart from academic-related activities. I would like to make it clear at the onset that while the data revealed that the school

context displayed love and care which served as an enabler to teacher leadership development as discussed earlier, this finding also existed across the data sets. It emerged from the findings that a lack of interest from management in some activities became a discouraging factor to teachers. Some of the teachers mentioned that, *“management lacks interest in extramural activities and only provides support to some academic-related activities”* (TE, TH, TD, TB). Furthermore, the findings revealed, *“that management concentrated more on academic performance, are more results-oriented, and less focused on other activities”* (TF, TB). From the teachers interviewed, one of them explained by saying: *“When I started with textbook control I was supported because textbooks have to do with academic issues, but other extramural activities like sport are not supported or when it’s fundraising you will see a wind of support here because it’s bringing funds in the school”* (TH). Seemingly, the participants felt that management gave more attention to accountability and performativity, working on targets with little consideration of people (Coleman, 2005).

Equally important to these findings, is that it also emerged from the data that teachers who were not engaged in the activities were demoralised because they did not receive support when they initiated ideas by management; hence, they stopped taking leadership roles. When asked in the interviews why some teachers were not participating in leadership roles, some of the teachers responded as follows:

*At the school, teachers have no management back-up... when you suggest your idea it’s not accepted or it’s disregarded by management, therefore teachers are discouraged because they don’t have that stand to say – I know that my supervisor can back me up when something happens. Management chooses what idea to support; if the idea is from a certain teacher and they have personality clashes with the management they turn it down. If management doesn’t like a certain activity they will not back it up* (TD, TH, TE).

Along with teachers, I concurred that this behaviour could pose a serious challenge to leadership being distributed in the school, making it difficult for teacher leadership to emerge. Therefore, the situation needed to be reversed, otherwise as Muijs and Harris (2003) suggest, “unrestricted opportunities among teachers may oppose against any teacher presenting themselves as leaders and this may result in these teachers being isolated from others” (p. 442).

#### **4.5.3 Fear and unwillingness to take on leadership roles**

The majority of respondents revealed that some teachers have a fear to take on leadership roles, while others are not willing to take up leadership roles. In line with the thinking above, the

school principal revealed that, *“teachers are unwilling to take on leadership roles because sometimes they are afraid of the action itself; mostly because they are not confident themselves, put losing at the forefront ... maybe it will not work out”* (P). This I align with the literature that discloses that “one of the barriers to teacher leadership is the unwillingness of teachers to take on leadership roles” (Harris, 2007, p. 20). The data obtained from one head of department also revealed that, *“people have fear and because of that they resist to lead and this might result in those who are not confident enough to become jealous of those who are taking part in leadership roles”* (SMT1). This points to the notion of the possibility of a conflict that could exist. This is in keeping with Harris who posits that “conflicts between groups of teachers such as those that do and do not take on leadership roles which lead to estrangement among teachers” (2005, p. 211).

The data further revealed that, *“in most cases, teachers develop a fear of failing because sometimes they find themselves in a situation where they don’t have support from management”* (TC, TB, TD, TE). On a different viewpoint, but still focusing on the challenges, the principal said that, *“sometimes teachers resist tasks especially if the task is highly complex; you either end up breaking it up and explaining it to them, otherwise they will not accept it”* (P).

Therefore, I argue that teachers need to overcome the fear in themselves and realise the importance of taking up leadership roles for themselves and for their school. This aligns well with Bush (2011), who believes that leadership cannot be forced on people as leadership is all about agency and a will to step forward in a change effort.

#### **4.5.4 Narrow views on leadership and ingrained traditional leadership structures**

In this category, the key finding was the existence of ingrained traditional leadership structures and teachers’ narrow views on leadership as the barriers to teacher leadership development. Although the data revealed that the school context showed love and care which served as an enabler to teacher leadership development as discussed earlier, this finding also existed across the data sets.

It emerged from the data that teachers who were not engaged in the activities, viewed leadership as vesting in position. Some of the participants indicated that *“We don’t think as non-management members it is our responsibility to engage in leadership roles; what matters here*

*is to teach the Namibian child, thus the feeling is mutual that the principal and heads of department should perform those tasks*” (TF, TB, TC). The above view resonates well with Muijs and Harris (2005), who emphasise that teachers who occupy a formal management position will be the ones to exercise leadership. Moreover, another teacher interviewed abruptly put it that, *“I can’t perform a job for those who are highly paid ... what do I get in return?”* (TD). This evidence clearly shows that schools as “traditional hierarchies with the demarcation of position and pay-scale are not going to be instantly responsive to a more fluid and distributed approach to leadership” (Muijs & Harris, 2005, p. 33). Therefore, just like Harris and Muijs (2005), I take a stance to say that for teacher leadership to flourish, traditional top-down leadership styles need to be replaced and schools need to start centering shared decision-making processes.

Furthermore, most participants interviewed seemed to have the standpoint that management, especially the principal, made it difficult for them to take on leadership roles. When asked in the interviews, a group of teachers were of the same view and stated:

*Sometimes in the staff room teachers come up with good initiatives but management many times they are not taking up those ideas. I don’t know whether they are not interested or they are jealous that a certain teacher is the one who proposed the idea and not them* (TA, TB, TC, TF).

The above data is indicative of Grant (2006), who wrote that some teachers are willing and ready to take up leadership roles but feel restricted by the top-down leadership. Furthermore, two of the respondents said: *“Management choses carefully who and what idea to support, the action taken as favouritism bestowed upon some when their ideas are accepted and others rejected”* (TE, TB). The stance above indicates that principals sometimes may feel insecure and threatened by their colleagues’ innovative ideas, hence the rejection of teachers’ ideas. One of the veteran teachers highlighted that, *“there is no change in management at all since I came to this school, it has been the same thing. I noticed a bit of autocratic behaviour and arrogance which causes division among teachers”* (TC). The above findings can be visibly seen in literature, with Grant (2006) revealing that in many schools which function with rigidly top-down leadership structures, you find autocratic principals who demonstrate negativity toward teachers who make efforts to take up leadership roles outside the classroom. In summary, the principal’s rejection of ideas from teachers leads to teachers being frustrated and withdrawing from participation in leadership activities. In the case study school, I suspect that teachers may want to lead, but that management is to a certain extent making this difficult.

Moreover, a teacher interviewed showed his dismay by saying: *“Why can't they give us an activity that is planned and exercised deliberately by the teacher ... they always delegate roles that they don't want to perform themselves and of less value”* (TC). Linked to the above views, Grant (2006) reveals that policy documents emphasise accountability as a reason why school principals are afraid to delegate authority. Thus, the above stance may be fuelled by management understanding that they are the accountable officers, therefore they may not give teachers the opportunity to execute some of the highly complex tasks, fearing to be blamed by those at the top should anything go wrong. A thought backed by Blasé and Blasé (2001) states that sometimes, the reaction by the principal is triggered by the fact that “bureaucratic structures consistently demand evaluation accountability and conformity to regulations” (p. 146). Thus “the bureaucratic and conservative culture of traditional schools creates difficulties for the development of democratic governance” (*ibid.*, p. 146). Overall, the findings hold true what the literature points out, that the top-down leadership structures in schools are the major obstacle to the development of teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

#### **4.5.5 Limited leadership capacity building initiatives**

It appeared from the findings that nothing much in terms of capacity building initiatives was taking place in the case study school. The findings received through WhatsApp messaging revealed that teachers in the case-study school, *“attributed lack of information to the absence of a continuous professional development (CPD) committee and lack of leadership initiatives at school”* (TA, TB, TC, SMT1). According to Coleman and Earley (2005), continuous professional development is “any professional development activities engaged in by teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills enabling them to consider their attitudes and approaches to education” (p. 229). Harris (2005) strongly feels that there is “a need for a rich and diverse opportunity for professional development for teacher leadership to flourish” (p. 212).

Probing further via WhatsApp, one of the educators pointed out that, *“there is no functioning CPD committee at school which is supposed to provide teachers and staff with formal or informal training”* (WM). Another teacher interviewed added by saying, *“the CPD committee was established some years ago but died a natural death, hence there is no committee at school to look into our plight when it comes to leadership training”* (TB). Another teacher who echoed the same sentiment said: *“The committee was there in my first years of teaching, only that it has not been functional, depriving us of opportunities with regards to various training”* (TC-WM). From the above views, it seemed teacher leadership development was not a priority by

those in strategic positions in the school. Another teacher quickly said: *“Look, because of that, now a person has to beg even for a simple team-building exercise, what is that?”* (TA). In contrast, in the context of professional development, there is a clear guideline on the implementation of a school-based CPD coordinating committee, however, nothing is happening on school grounds (see Implementation guide: site/school-based, 2014).

While in the Namibian context principals and HODs receive leadership training each year, one of the teachers made it clear in her response, by saying: *“We usually receive training but mostly focusing on areas of curriculum development in which leadership aspects were not considered”* (WM). From the position I am currently serving, I can attest that in most cases, the programme of training set up mostly focuses on subject content and teaching methodology and not on leadership development (personal observation). In this regard, this observation resounds with Murphy’s (2005) evidence, who claims that in-service programmes have not prepared teachers for leadership roles outside the classroom.

Continuous professional development is central to any change effort, as one teacher (TB) said: *“The absence of a CPD committee at school hampers our chances of getting training other than the curriculum development training”* (WM). This is in keeping with Harris’s (2005) views that “professional development of teacher leadership needs to focus on the development of teachers’ skills and knowledge but, also on aspects specific to their leadership role” (p. 212). Another teacher said its presence, *“could have enforced and provided opportunities for leadership training”* (TA). The above opinions from teachers aligned with the findings from documents; in all the minutes and agendas of meetings I reviewed, not once did they mention CPD committees or involvement of teachers therein. This also holds true for the Duty List I reviewed – there was no continuous professional development committee on the list (DL: 11).

#### **4.5.6 The absence of clear educational policies on teacher leadership**

The data revealed that the majority of teachers indicated that there were no clear guiding documents on teacher leadership which could serve as a guide to teachers in leadership roles. These opinions were reflected in the following quotes: *“There is really no document that is guiding us to become leaders, apart from the roles that one needs to carry out in your classroom”* (TH, TA, TC, TD, TF). Moreover, another teacher said: *“What we do here is out of love for the job we do, plus we are self-motivated and not to say we are guided on leadership”* (TC). The same view manifests itself in the literature, when Sergiovanni et al.

(2004) assert that some constraining mechanisms can be from internal policies and procedures, and work rules and standards set for teachers within the confinement of the school. Furthermore, another teacher said, *“I came across some documents like code of conduct for teachers, simply pointing towards the behaviours of how teachers should conduct themselves ... but they don’t really tell about how teachers should lead in the school”* (TF). Even one of the veteran teachers at the school also admitted that in all the years he spent teaching at the school he did not see any document guiding them on teacher leadership, *“All I can say is, the only representative of teachers is NANTU at school level”* (TA). Additionally, another teacher said: *“There is no guiding document on teacher leadership at the school; if there is, I will put the blame on management for not informing us on crucial aspects such as these”* (TD). The argument is widely offered in literature, that policies in place lack guidelines on how to introduce teacher leadership into schools (see Grant, 2010).

The position above implied that there was a shortage of clear documentation on teacher leadership at the case study school, and that this might be the major challenge to teacher leadership development – I am convinced that this also applies to all schools in Namibia. In this case, the school presumably adheres to authorised distributed leadership, as no clear documents are available to aid those in formal positions to disperse leadership (see Grant, 2010). This was strengthened by the head of a department who said: *“We don’t have clear documents in place that we as managers can use to guide teachers, this made it difficult to sensitise them on leadership roles”* (SMT1). Similarly, another head of a department expressed her views via WhatsApp to say, *“It is my responsibility as a member of management to provide information and guide teachers on the role as leaders, however, the absence of clear documents made it impossible”* (SMT2-WM). The above speaks well to Davidoff and Lazarus (2002), who affirm that “information flow cannot be separated from the decision-making process, thus the management should ensure that access to appropriate information is facilitated” (p. 28).

Although national and school policies were in place in the school, when reviewed, they did not provide sufficient information on teacher leadership. In some of the documents I reviewed, for example, ‘Set of Job Descriptions’ (SJD:3), a piece of evidence was provided which stipulates clearly the management functions of principals and heads of department, however, it is not clear on teachers roles as leaders. Equally significant for this section, is that not one of the school rules I reviewed advocates for teacher leadership; in fact, they are more about controlling learners’ behaviour (SR1, 2) of 2004, and 2018. Although this applies to the South

African context, where policy documents in place put more emphasis on the work of managers at the expense of teacher leadership roles (Grant, 2010), I am convinced after these findings that the same may apply in Namibian schools.

With the absence of clear policies on teacher leadership, a teacher felt that this could be the reason: *“Some colleagues don’t understand that their roles go beyond the classroom and think their responsibility ends with teaching; they don’t understand they are part and parcel and parcel of whole school activities”* (TB). This resonates with Shields ideology (2009) that some educators may not think that they are leaders and may not understand or accept the need and responsibility for transforming the current system in their schools. The stance above implies that the absence of clear documentation and policies in schools hinders the development of teacher leadership.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the data generated through interviews, document analysis, observation and WhatsApp messaging in response to my first, second and third research questions. The views of participants on the understanding of teacher leadership as a concept were presented and the roles teachers fulfil in the school analysed and presented in this chapter. Moreover, the enablers to teacher leadership within the case study school were highlighted, and the conditions constraining teacher leadership development were presented as well.

In the next chapter, I present the findings in relation to my fourth research question, generated through change laboratory workshops.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SURFACING THE CONTRADICTIONS, AIMING TOWARDS TEACHER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this second presentation and discussion of findings chapter, I present the data generated through change laboratory workshops to respond to my last research question in this study. The question guiding this chapter is: *How can teacher leadership be developed through change laboratory workshops at the case study school?*

To guide the reader, the conditions constraining teacher leadership in the case study school were inductively analysed and presented in Chapter Four. These conditions were then used in chapter five to surface contradictions in the change laboratory workshops. As such the constraining conditions which I discussed in the previous chapter were a manifestation of contradictions within the teacher leadership activity system. Contradictions are the main motives of the state of affairs in the current practice, hence a need to resolve them exists. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the CLWs in reaction to the surfaced contradictions, thereafter the mirrored data to participants are presented. Then the learning actions of the expansive learning cycle as unfolded in the change laboratory workshops will be elaborated upon. In ensuring issues of anonymity are not compromised, the following codes were utilised:

***Table 5.1 Names of data sources***

<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Code given</b>
Video recording Transcription	VRT
Journal	J
Audio Transcripts	AT
Observation	O

My attention now turns to introduce the change laboratory a method used to generate data to my fourth question.

## 5.2 Change Laboratory as a space for learning and development

In Chapter Two and Three respectively, I explained how the change laboratory was used as a platform where practitioners aided by the researcher-interventionist work together to change their current practice (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013).

As alluded to in Chapter Three Section 3.5.5, four change laboratory workshops were conducted due to limited time. All participants [primary and secondary participants] were invited to join the change laboratory workshops. Before the workshops began, the ground rules were set up to guide the discussions. I also explained the research main objective, which was to explore the development of teacher leadership practices in the case study school. I provided a brief aim of the change laboratory workshops to the participants which was to surface the contradictions which constrained the development of teacher leadership within the school. This was done to allow participants to work towards resolving those contradictions and then possibly see if a chance of transforming the current leadership practice among teachers to take up leadership roles existed. The workshops were guided by the expansive learning theory which is characterised by the expansive learning cycle as discussed in Chapter Two. In this study, due to limited time, participants only carried out four of the learning actions as part of the expansive learning process. These included questioning, analysis, creating and examining the new model (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

Below is a summary of the change laboratory workshops and the number of participants that attended these workshops.

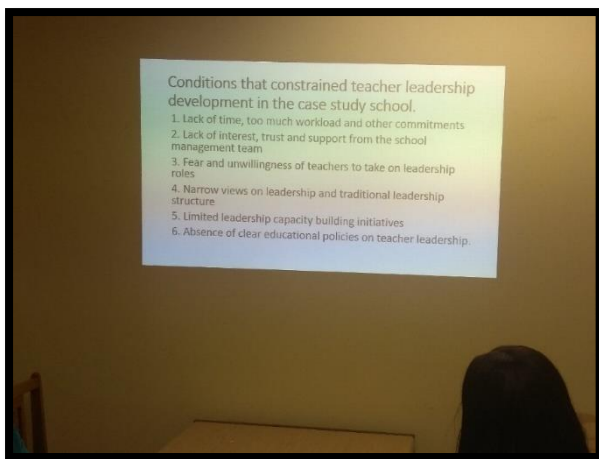
*Table 5.2 Summary of the change laboratory sessions and their participants*

Date	Purpose of the session	Participants		Total
		Primary	Secondary	
03/07/2019	Introducing CL to participants and mirror the data	8	1	9
09/ 07/ 2019	Questioning and analysing the mirrored data	8	1	9
11/ 07/ 2019	Creating a new model	5	1	6
11/09/ 2019	Examining a new model	7	2	9

Having presented the overview of the CLWs, I now turn to discuss how data was mirrored to the participants in the first change laboratory workshop.

### 5.2.1 Mirroring the data

To begin the process, data collected from the contextual profiling phase was analysed and the challenges which served as constraints to teacher leadership development in the case study school were identified. This process was done before the start of the change laboratory workshops. Thereafter, I presented the analysed data in the form of challenges or problems constraining teacher leadership development to participants in the first change laboratory workshop (CLW1) using a power point presentation (see Figure 5.1).



***Figure 5.1: Mirror data***

Presenting the data was in line with Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) who suggest that the change laboratory process starts with discussions of the mirror data that reveals challenging and problematic aspects of the current practice. These challenges were used in the sessions as “mirror” material or first stimulus (Engeström, 2011) to trigger questioning and analysis of the current practice. On the next page in the picture, participants are paying attention as they observe the mirror data.



*Figure 5.2: Participants observing the mirror data*

The challenges presented in the activity of the school gave rise to change laboratory workshops which provided an opportunity for expansive learning and transformative agency.

There is a distinct set of connections between the learning actions that constitute an expansive cycle and the contradictions through which activity systems advance (Foot, 2014). As a result, it is worth noting that in my presentation of findings to my fourth question, I did not follow the sequence of the change laboratory workshops but used the learning actions of the expansive cycle to explain what transpired in the change laboratory workshops. Hereunder, I begin with the presentation and discussion of the learning actions as they unfolded in the change laboratory workshops.

### **5.2.2 Learning action 1 and 2: Questioning and analysing the existing practice**

During this stage of the intervention (CLW2), the learning actions of **questioning and analysis** of the current practice were captured. At first, the participants cross-examined and interrogated the current practice using the mirror data which was presented to them as described in Section 5.2.1. In the process, the participants were guided by questions to help them understand what was happening at their school, as well as making a priority list of what mattered most to them. Following the discussion, I could sense a conflict of motives among participants. Some wanted to reject some challenges, while others started defending the challenges opposed by others (as

seen in Box 1.1 on the next page). The participants observed the mirror data and related the presented data to their own experiences and views (**surface: 1 mirror/present**). Then at the end of the workshop, they started to see the challenges from a different perspective (O). Below, the participants are busy observing and questioning the mirror data (see Figure 5.3).



*Figure 5.3: Participants questioning the practice*

The extract in Box 1.1 below shows how participants responded to the mirror data.

***Box 1.1: Participants discussing mirror data***

**Audio transcript extract**

**Researcher:** *Do you all agree that these are real problems within your school?*

**TE:** *I would disagree with lack of time and too much workload because in most cases teachers don't want to take their leadership roles seriously as they are ignorant and sometimes they do things to annoy management...*

**TB:** *I don't support that (referring to TE) why some teachers don't attend briefings for example or turn up for extramural activities? It is not because of time?*

**TD:** *Okay guys, I think these are real problems, you can even see that they are backed up by many primary sources (verifying with interview transcript). These are concrete evidence of what is currently happening in our school as many participants spoke about it.*

**Researcher:** *Ok do we all agree that these are real problems if so let us think of what can be done to solve these problems. Do you think all can be solved?*

**TE:** *I personally think and do believe that all those problems/ challenges presented before us came as a result of lack of information. We are not informed of who is a teacher leader, no guidance from management that is why we are experiencing all these problems.*

**Researcher:** *Lack of information, do you all agree to what she said?*

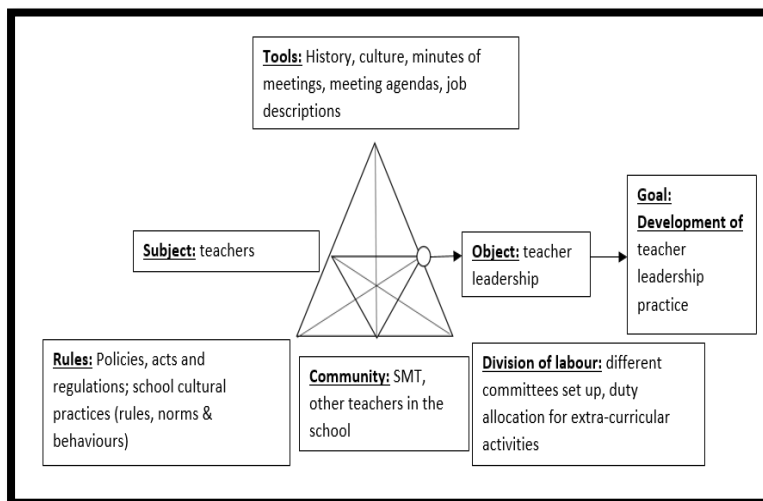
**TA:** *In my case, yes*

From the discussions as shown in Box 1.1 above, it seemed participants reached a common understanding that there are indeed contradictions that manifest as challenges and this hindered the development of teacher leadership. After participants analysed the presented challenges, I then asked them whether all those challenges could be solved given the timeframe I had at the case study school, or if any of those challenges could be solved. They acknowledged that all presented challenges were real problems however, not all were within their power to resolve. The actions transpired at this stage were captured through the journal (J). Participants however needed to continue with the process in order to reach the surface (**surface 2: ideas/tools/present**) where they could identify a challenge which was the most problematic

area that needed further exploration. Therefore, as the change laboratory workshop progressed, participants moved to the next learning action, that of analysing the current practice.

### Analysing the current practice

As alluded to, two learning actions were captured in the same change laboratory workshop (CLW2), thus the contradictions presented at the beginning of this change laboratory workshop were interrogated further by participants. Using a CHAT lens in the form of the triangular model, I then guided the participants in analysing the activity system. Thereafter, participants engaged in deep discussion reflecting and debating on the challenges presented to them. The intention was for them to try and understand why things happened the way they were, from the historical and cultural perspective of the current practice. Below is the CHAT triangular model that was used as an analytical tool.



**Figure 5.4: Model of activity System (Engeström, 1987, p. 78)**

The participants engaged with the challenges in order to surface contradictions within and between the elements of the activity systems (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013), as they discovered the usefulness of the triangle in the learning process. To remind the reader, contradictions are “culturally accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). I acknowledge that there are four types of contradictions, however, since my study used a single activity system the contradictions surfaced were based on the primary and secondary contradictions only. Primary contradictions are within the single

elements (e.g. subject-teachers) and secondary contradictions between the elements (e.g. community; SMT and rules; policies) of the activity system which prevent the participants (subjects) attaining its objectives (teacher leadership development). Below, I present the challenges as discussed in the previous chapter (Section 4.5). Participants attempted to surface contradictions within and between the elements of the activity system.

Through a historical analysis of changes in the structure of the activity (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013), participants discovered inner contradictions.



*Figure 5.5: Participants analysing the challenges*

The discussions started with the first surface (**surface 3: Mirror/Past**) where participants collected data and observations concerning changes that had taken place in the systemic structure of their activity and identified unusual practices in the development of teacher leadership. They recorded them in order to understand how the problems have emerged. The contradictions I present below are evident in the video transcription (VRT) and at times the journal (J) was used to reflect on key points raised by the participants.

### **Challenge one: Lack of time, demanding workloads and other commitments**

The participants surfaced the inner contradiction linking it to **time management**. From this challenge, they discovered a **secondary contradiction** emanating between the **subject** (teachers) and **artefacts** (e.g. time). The whole tension revolved around the issue of time as a



limiting factor preventing teachers from being developed as leaders. A participant indicated that “*issues such as large class groups and a timetable full of lessons use up a lot of time, thus less administrative time is left for teachers to participate in leadership roles*” (J). Moreover, teachers are influenced by **culture** (norms and behaviours), meaning there are **social responsibilities** teachers cannot neglect. Therefore, participants surfaced another inner contradiction which could result between the **subject** (teachers) and **division of labour** (roles). This contradiction manifested as **social responsibility** which was regarded as a norm/behaviour in the school community, for teachers to attend to family matters. In this case, commitment to their families limits their chances of being developed as leaders.

### **Challenge two: Lack of interest in extramurals and support of initiatives from the SMT**

The participants surfaced a **secondary contradiction** emanating between the **subjects** (teachers) and **community** (SMT). In this case, the management was confined by the system which placed value on promotional subjects and disregarded the non-promotional subjects. Thus there was a lack of interest from the SMT:

*The current management has adopted an old tradition or a norm observed during the time when they were not part of management. The norm is that the previous management did not render any assistance regarding the extramural activities. Thus they regard it as a normal practice (VRT).*

This prevents teachers from achieving the **object** (teacher leadership), as teachers do not get support from management. The majority of participants pointed towards the **norms and behaviours**, and noted that historically, the SMT does not support teachers in extramural activities.

### **Challenge three: Fear and unwillingness to take on leadership roles**

The participants surfaced a **primary contradiction** emanating from the **subjects** (teachers) themselves. The inner contradiction discovered was that of the **English language as a barrier to communication** which brought along **insecurity or anxiety about oneself**, thus affecting teachers’ self-confidence and hindering their take up of leadership roles. Some participants revealed that the anxiety or insecurity may be caused by their inability to express themselves in the English language: “*Some colleagues would really like to take the lead, it could be at the assembly point or in meetings, however expressing themselves in the official language becomes*

*a barrier*” (J). Hence, before they say something the fear within overwhelms them, preventing them from taking a lead or being developed as leaders.

Another inner contradiction exposed by teachers was that of the **school culture that exists in the school**. Usually, the principal does everything, and teachers are not given opportunities by those in formal leadership positions to take up leadership roles. This has resulted in teachers developing the fear of taking charge in leadership roles, thereby preventing them from achieving their **object** (teacher leadership).

#### **Challenge four: Narrow views on leadership and ingrained traditional leadership structures**

The participants surfaced another contradiction in this category linking it to **bureaucracy restrictions**. They suggested that a tension may emanate between the **subjects** (teachers) and **rules** (apartheid history of bureaucratic leadership) a **secondary contradiction**. This manifestation of **bureaucracy** compelled teachers to work and view themselves as subordinates, as opposed to teachers taking part in school leadership; a narrow understanding of leadership which is carried by teachers even today (J).

The participants also surfaced an inner contradiction linking it to **top-down leadership structure limitations**. This resulted in tension between **community** (SMT) and administrative policies (**rules**) which is a **secondary contradiction**. Historically, school managers practiced hierarchical leadership which implied that during that time, school leadership was vested in position, with all the authority and power entrusted in the principal. This is considered normal in schools lately. The rigid rule of that time caused principals to conform to regulations because of the accountability emphasised by those rules or policies. This made it difficult to distribute leadership to those in informal leadership positions like teachers, thus preventing teachers from attaining the **object** or to be developed as leaders in schools.

#### **Challenge five: Limited leadership capacity building initiatives**

Participants surfaced a **secondary contradiction** which was likely to emerge between the **subject (teachers)** and **the rules** (policies emanating from hierarchical leadership structure). Participants indicated that the cause of this inner contradiction was due to **limited training on leadership aspects**. Participants revealed that policies resulting from the traditional leadership

structures only recognised people in formal leadership structures, such as principals and HODs to be trained in leadership related aspects and did not value the importance of leadership training for teachers. One of the participants in the workshop revealed that: *“Every year our principal and HODs attend leadership training, while teachers are disregarded in this aspect”* (VRT). For example, in the Namibian context, principals and HODs receive formal training on leadership organised by the African leadership institute, in collaboration with sponsors from the corporate world (J). This mediates the action, as teachers do not receive the necessary leadership information, hence hampering the development of teacher leadership.

### **Challenge six: The absence of clear educational policies on teacher leadership.**

Under this category, participants discovered a **secondary contradiction** between the **object** (teacher leadership) and **artefacts/rules** (policies and regulations). This was because teachers might want to take on leadership roles but teachers **lacked clear information** on teacher leadership. In fact, teachers pointed out that there were no clear policies speaking to them on teacher leadership. *“It is worrisome, we are all here even school management team, don’t have sufficient information to help us (teachers)”* one of the teachers said (VRT). From the above description, it is apparent that policies at the national and school-level remain unclear on teacher leadership roles. Thus, the lack of information on teacher leadership roles prevents teachers from being developed as leaders. Participants clearly pointed out the issue of the **apartheid history of bureaucratic leadership** which restricted policy-makers to viewing teachers as followers and not leaders, thus leading to drafting policies that concentrated on those in formal management positions [principal and HOD], as the right people to exercise leadership (J).

When trying to analyse the nature of the current practice in the teacher leadership activity system (**surface 5: Model/vision/past**), participants in agreement showed that they both (teachers and SMT) lacked clear information on teacher leadership (J). With regards to surface six (**surface 6: Model/ Vision/ Present**), participants accepted their new understanding of the current teacher leadership practices and the contradictions identified. As a result, participants agreed to search for a new model concerning the activity. Toward the end of this intervention, I asked participants to think about how to solve the problems they thought constrained teacher leadership development. It was at this stage, among the above-mentioned challenges, that participants identified **limited leadership capacity building initiatives** as the most

problematic area that needed further exploration. This discussion was captured in my journal entry (J).

To understand how participants ended up with **limited leadership capacity building initiatives** as the most problematic area, participants were requested to identify historical changes in their activity system regarding the concerned challenge. The discussions unfolded during the identification of the deep-seated problems that contributed to the current practice and were captured through video transcription (VRT), which brought us to the next learning action discussed below. The extract below in Box 2.1 shows how participants engaged with the problematic area in their activity system.

***Box 2.1: Participants tracing the historical changes in their activity system regarding the challenge identified as the most problematic***

**Source:** Video recording transcription

**TA:** *With the previous management we use to receive a lot of information as the CPD committee was very active. Since the teacher responsible left for another school for a promotional post then things changed.*

**HOD1:** *I think we use to receive training in the past, but the problem started only when the government started to experience a cash flow problem that is where the whole thing started.*

**TA:** *The thing is the current young crop of leaders in a formal structure at our school also don't know these things or maybe they don't value the leadership of teachers. That's the reason the CPD committee was not revised at school.*

**HOD1:** *I still think lack of funds still has a hand in all this, no money to train people hence everything stops. Imagine some regions were not even trained.*

**TE:** *The former management used to generate funds through churches that were using our classes for Sunday service, why can't we generated money in that way or another then this money could be used to invite team-building exercises? I think because our top leaders don't see teachers as leaders at school.*

**TH:** *Another problem I see is that for example in the past we use to have a CPD committee were we review documents and make sure they source training information for us, lately I don't see that.*

**TD:** *No formal bodies to represent teachers at the school level, where do we start?*

**TB:** *I think so too, NANTU and TUN the only teachers' representative unions don't look into teacher leadership aspects per se, they are more on grievances and salary increment.*

The discussion on the previous page revolved around the last surface (**surface 7: model/vision/future**) which was visible in their actions because they had to develop a vision of the future form of the activity (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Thus participants used their new knowledge of teacher leadership acquired through the change laboratories to overcome the challenges in their daily practices. Participants came up with suggestions, while a colleague wrote their answers on the chalkboard (O). Among these solutions were: **teacher leadership training/workshop** and **revival of the CPD committee** in the school. These were to be discussed in detail in the modelling session. Toward the end of this intervention, I found it necessary to provide a summary of the contradictions surfaced.

*Table 5.3: Summary of the contradiction surfaced*

Contradictions	Zone of tensions	Associated problems
1. Lack of time, demanding workloads and other commitment	Between <b>subjects</b> and the <b>artefacts</b>  Between <b>subjects</b> and the <b>division of labour</b>	-A classroom full to capacity  -The clash between teacher leadership roles & family-related matters
2. Lack of interest and support from the SMT	Between <b>subjects</b> and the <b>community</b>	-extramural less important compared to curricular activities
3. Fear and unwillingness of teachers to take on leadership roles	Within the <b>subjects</b>	-Anxiety/insecurity  -limited expression in the official language
4. Narrow views on leadership and traditional leadership structures	Between the <b>community</b> and <b>rules</b>  Between <b>subjects</b> and <b>rules</b>	- lack of understanding of teacher leadership roles  -confine SMT to rigid rules of apartheid/ limit SMT to support teachers fully
5.*Limited leadership capacity building initiatives  <b>NB:</b> this was the focus	Between <b>subjects</b> and the <b>rules</b>	-No leadership training  -No CPD committee
6. Absence of clear educational policies on teacher leadership	Between <b>objects</b> and the <b>artefacts</b>	-No policy guidelines  -Lack of information

### **5.2.3 Learning action 3: Creating a new model**

During the third change laboratory workshop (**CLW3**) I witnessed a lengthy action – that of modelling a new solution. The participants started to sketch the idea of a new model which would offer the whole school new opportunities to receive information on the concept of teacher leadership (O). Box 3.1 shows how the discussions around the new plan of action was initiated to solve the problems.

### **Box 3.1: Creating a new model**

#### **Voice recording transcript**

**TE:** We are looking at the major condition constraining teachers to be leaders and not the practice, therefore teachers **lack information** is the main hindrance.

**TC:** I suggest we need training in leadership aspects. Training will bring change and make a big difference.

**TB:** Just to add being a participant in this type of workshop will open someone mind. I believe the workshop will bring a better understanding of the role that we supposed to take or play as a leader.

**TF:** I think when this is done the teachers will also be motivated so that they take up their roles.

**Researcher:** How that is possible?

**TE:** One way is what we are currently doing (referring to CLW) receiving a workshop on what leadership or teacher leadership is all about. Ms Shilongo (researcher) is the right person to come and give us training. **(Responding to the researcher's question)**

**TC:** No, she just started. This is just a study. Training on leadership or teacher leadership, I am of the opinion that it should be provided by people who are very competent.

**Researcher:** so you believe training should be provided by people who are competent?

**SMT1:** Yes

**TE:** Maybe we can organise a team-building exercise and invite the expert to come and train us on leadership. I think with the team building it will work.

**Researcher:** So team building is the one that you are suggesting? How are you going to do it? Is there a programme already?

**TD:** We propose that we want a workshop whereby an expert come and give us about all the information that we are lacking. May I suggest we set up an organising committee?

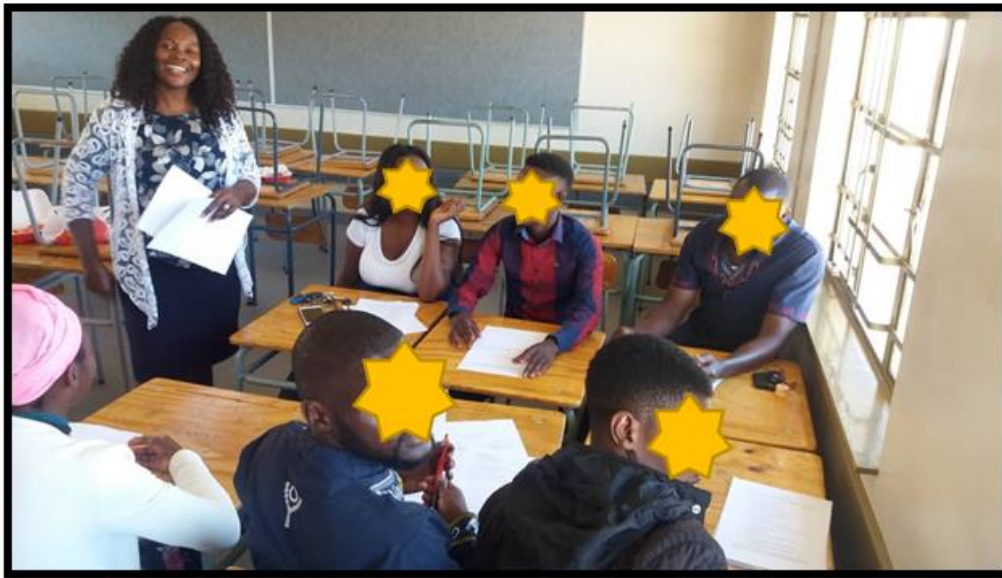
**TH:** Yes good idea but can't we also think of reviving the CPD committee in order for the members to head this type of training in the future.

**Researcher:** So you think professional development committee is still needed?

**TB:** Yes.

The concretisation of an idea was left to participants who focused on upgrading their knowledge in terms of the concept of teacher leadership. The participants had several ideas on

the design of the workshop which would include the entire staff (J). However, at this stage, the participants had mixed feelings about the envisaged workshop and wondered whether other colleagues would be interested; therefore, participants went further to examine the model and see if the possibility of implementation existed.



*Figure 5.6: Participants creating the model*

Discussions in Box 3.1 on the previous page represents the Model/vision/future surface. For this surface, participants identified **teacher leadership training and revival of the CPD committee**. According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013), “the new model was seen as the first step in overcoming the central inner contradictions in the activity system and creating a new form of activity” (p. 100). Therefore in order for this to happen, participants took a step further of taking responsibility for organising the implementation of the new model and finding the necessary support from management. The tools to help them realise their vision of improving the participation of teachers in leadership roles and its growth were identified and this is depicted in Table 5.4 on the next page.



**Table 5.4 Plan of action for the realisation of the implementation process**

<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Tasks/ functions</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Pending/ completed</b>
SMT2	Inform management of the outcome of Ms Shilongo's studies	07/08/2019	Completed
Teacher F	Find a suitable time for the workshop	Early next year- the first term	Completed
Teacher H	Find a suitable trainer	Early September	Still in progress
SMT1	Inviting the trainer	From September	In progress
SMT 2	Selection of CPD committee members	Done before end of 3 <sup>rd</sup> term	Completed

#### **5.2.4 Learning action 4: Examining the new model**

During this intervention stage (**CLW4**), **participants** could not test the model because of time, however, as Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) suggest, they decided to examine it first in the form of thought experiments before implementation (J). Therefore, participants clarified the implications of the new model and neutralised the possible risks involved in its implementation (*ibid.*). I acknowledged that examining the new model should not be only confined to those who took part in the change laboratory, however, participants examined the new model partly by negotiating the new solution with management, at this point excluding the other staff members. This is reflected in the audio transcription (AT). The data extracted is clearly shown in Box 4.1 on the next page:

#### ***Box 4.1: Examining the new model***

##### **Audio Transcript**

**Researcher:** *When do you think is the right time to have this training?*

**SMT 2:** *Normally we use to have team building on Saturdays.*

**TC:** *The question will be, Will our people show up for the training on Saturdays?*

**Researcher:** *It's a very good question.*

**TF:** *Lets us not forget we are about to start August exams maybe we can have it after the holidays. Immediately after the holidays will be fine.*

**Researcher:** *okay.... When and who is going to do it?*

**TF:** *We will invite an expert who will train us.*

**TE:** *I have a different opinion, what about people who are expert in teacher leadership discourse. Someone with experience in that.*

**TB:** *Ms Shilongo (the researcher) either bring the fellow students or get somebody who is going to teach us on teacher leadership.*

**SMT 1:** *I suggest we target the meeting at the beginning of the term. I think the majority of the staff members will be in that meeting. We just need to influence the agenda of the meeting. Have our guest speaker ready then we give him/her a slot to train and motivate us.*

**TF:** *I suggest Ms xxx (refer to HOD) to talk to the other management member. I feel she is very influential when she is speaking to the principal, he always listens.*

**SMT 1:** *okay I will do it*

Discussions presented above centred on the **Idea/Tools/Future (surface 8)**. Participants decided on a few new key forms of actions and the new tools with which they will begin to actualise the decisions, asking for permission from the school and management. The final decision from the workshop was that one of the heads of department will present their ideas to engage other management members on the plan of action. This data was captured in the journal (J).

In the end, though participants had indicated their willingness to resolve the contradictions, they decided that implementation should be done early next year. This is because it was a very

busy and demanding time of the year. Furthermore, the final examinations were shifted to an earlier date due to national elections that were taking place early November; it seemed like a sensible option. I will, however, follow up with the principal next year to source feedback as soon as training has taken place.

In conclusion, since my study was a formative intervention which aimed at generative solutions, I therefore conclude that this study has local continuity and the solutions found can be developed further in the site of intervention (Sannino et al., 2016). Besides that, my study dealt with only one activity system, surfacing primary and secondary contradictions, and the sixth, and the seventh stage of the expansive learning cycle did not form part of the discussion. Therefore surfacing the tertiary and quaternary contradictions through learning by expanding was beyond the scope of this study as it required “boundary-crossing change laboratory with representatives of two or more systems engaged in collaboration” (Engeström, 2016, p. 139).

To this end, I now conclude the chapter.

### 5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the data generated in response to my fourth research question. The challenges that constrained teacher leadership developed were analysed and contradictions surfaced from them in order to find solutions to problems. The change laboratory as a formative intervention method was used to provide space for participants to surface the tensions between and within the elements of the activity system. In the end, **limited leadership capacity building initiatives** was identified as a challenge preventing teachers to develop as leaders. There was a consensus amongst the participants and this challenge was further interrogated.

In the next chapter, I conclude my study by highlighting the main findings, evaluate the whole research journey, make recommendations for further research and provide possible limitations of this study.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This is it! The final chapter weaves in the main findings of the study. Significantly, it makes it easy for the reader to get the essence of the whole study. In this chapter, first, the reader is reminded of the research questions that guided this study. Secondly, the key findings emerging from the study are presented. Thirdly, the contributions of the study will be addressed. I will also reflect on the implications of the theoretical orientation of the study. Thereafter, some recommendations and limitations will be highlighted. Finally, my thoughts on the research journey are shared.

#### **Research objectives and questions**

To remind the reader, the overarching goal of this study was to explore the development of teacher leadership practices at a semi-urban secondary school. To achieve this, the study had four main specific objectives.

- To determine how the concept of teacher leadership is understood by teachers and SMT.
- To determine the extent to which teachers are involved in enacting leadership within and beyond the school.
- To explore the opportunities that enhance teacher leadership in the school, and to reveal the constraining conditions to teacher leadership development.
- To find solutions as to how teacher leadership can be developed through change laboratory workshops.

To achieve these objectives, the study tried to answer the following main research questions.

1. How is the concept of teacher leadership understood in the case study school?
2. What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?
3. What are the conditions that promote or constrain teacher leadership development in the case study school?

4. How can teacher leadership be developed through change laboratory workshops at the case study school?

The data was gathered from nine teachers and three school management team members. Observations, interviews, document analysis, WhatsApp messaging and change laboratories were the methods used to gather data. The table below shows the phases in data gathering and questions guiding this study.

**Table 6.1: Shows phase 1 and phase 2 of data gathering process**

	<b>Phase 1 (contextual profiling)</b>	<b>Phase 2 (formative Intervention)</b>
1	How is the concept of teacher leadership understood in the case study school?	
2	What leadership roles do teachers currently fulfil in the school and beyond?	
3	What are the conditions that promote/constrain teacher leadership development in the case study school?	
4		How can teacher leadership be developed through CLWS at the case study school?

Data gathered from **phase one** were analysed using inductive analysis. During this process, data were coded, and categories and themes were created in the process. Subsequently, abductive analysis was employed where Grant's Teacher Leadership Model (2017) was used linking leadership theory to data and assisting in analysing the roles teachers fulfil in the school and beyond, according to the zones and roles. Moreover, abductive analysis was also applied to data gathered in **phase two**, where the CHAT triangular model was used to analyse data and the findings were presented in Chapter Five.

## **6.2 Summary of Key Findings**

The key findings summarised from phase one emerged from four questions presented below (see Table 6.1).

### **6.2.1 Towards an understanding of teacher leadership**

The findings to this question indicated that participants' level of awareness on the notion of teacher leadership differs, as they provided varied responses. Participants' understanding revealed that teacher leadership was about nurturing leadership qualities in teachers in order to

lead others for the common good of the school in general. Therefore, participants' views were aligned with the notion that a person should possess certain qualities that make him or her stand out in a group and lead others (Christie, 2010). Their views emanated from the notion that, teachers should be part of decision-making processes in the school for them to be considered as leaders. Besides the above-mentioned reasons, some teachers viewed leadership as a managerial task, others were convinced that leadership has a deep moral purpose, making a difference in the learners' lives. As alluded to earlier, the concept to be used in education, was borrowed from the discipline of management sciences as explained in Chapter Two Section 2.2. This could have led to each individual having a different understanding of the leadership concept. It will, therefore, take a while for teachers to get used to the concept and apply it effectively. Consequently, the views from some participants' conflated leadership and management, as their common understanding was that teacher leadership is exercised through the directing, organising, supervising and controlling of learners in the school. My conclusion is that participants provided different understandings of the concept of teacher leadership, perhaps because the concept is fairly new in the Namibian context.

### **6.2.2 Teacher leadership: Roles teachers fulfil in school and beyond**

In response to my second research question, the findings were organised in line with the four zones of Grant's (2017) Teacher Leadership Model. Evidence from all the data sets revealed that teachers in the case study school led in all four zones; however, not all participants were active in a few roles within the zones.

#### ***Zone one: Teachers led in their classrooms***

The findings came out strongly that the teachers' participation was strongly visible in zone one, maybe because as professionals, teachers are first of all specialists in their classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). The data revealed that teachers led in their classrooms when they taught their subjects, set class rules and motivated learners. However, data also revealed that teachers were involved in managing their own classrooms, that is to say involved in organising, disciplining, monitoring and controlling learners' behaviours.

#### ***Zone two: The leadership of teacher colleagues in curricular and extracurricular activities.***

The findings revealed that teachers were actively participating in the provision of curriculum development (role 2) and leading in in-service education and assisting other teachers (role 3). Teachers revealed that they were most active serving in different committees. As Hamatwi (2015) revealed in his study, committees are formal structures of a school which are likely to give rise to distributing leadership. Therefore, there was strong evidence here that leadership practice was shared in the school where teachers were given opportunities to lead. Apart from formal committees of the school, it was revealed in the findings that teachers also led as coordinators in extra co/curricular and extramural activities. Teachers were involved in organising sports activities, serving as head coach for soccer and netball, heading the debate club and bible society in the school. Moreover, teachers were also involved in team teaching which speaks well to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), who believe that teachers should serve as guides, advisors, instructors and role models to other teachers as well.

#### ***Zone three: Leading teachers outside the classroom in whole school development.***

The findings showed teachers strong involvement in role six, where teachers revealed that they participate in the school decision-making processes and their involvement comes through various committees. However, the data revealed that teacher leadership was minimal in role five which is about organising and leading peer reviews of school practice. None of the participants could explain how teachers were involved in this role. As alluded to in the findings chapter, this may be the case because the roles which involve the school development plan (SDP), plan of action for academic improvement (PAAI) and the school self-evaluation (SSE) document, were considered a no-go area for the teachers and most of the decisions in this area were entirely made by the SMT, hence little involvement by the teachers. This could be because management sees this activity as a controlling mechanism. “They stress on working on targets” (Coleman, 2005, p. 19) and impose those targets on teachers in order for teachers to meet the standards set by management.

#### ***Zone four: Beyond the school into the community***

The findings revealed that teacher leaders were actively involved in zone four at the level of cluster, regional and national. It feels good to report that evidence across all data sets revealed that the involvement with teachers from other schools in providing curriculum development knowledge was strengthened. Their involvement as revealed by the data, went as far as setting cluster, regional and national examination question papers, moderating answer scripts, as well

as marking of answer scripts at the national level. The above is strengthened by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009, p. 7) who conclude that “leading beyond the classroom offers an opportunity for teachers to network with other adults in other schools”, cultivating collective and collaborative communities. Moreover, the participants revealed that the school has a very good channel in place to communicate and keeps a very strong relationship with the parents or the community through parents’ meetings.

### **6.2.3 Conditions that promoted or constrained teacher leadership development within the school**

The findings indicated that there were conditions that promoted teacher leadership in the case study school. Some teachers revealed that apart from the hindrances to teacher leadership practice visible in the school, there were still some conditions that supported teachers to lead. Hence the findings revealed that teacher leadership was developed through a culture of mutual care and love, as well as through various committees set up. The findings revealed that the school has adopted the spirit of brother/sisterhood as they tended to care and support each other during challenging times. Moreover, the school created a platform through various committees and meetings, enabling teacher participation in the decision-making processes of the school.

In contrast, the findings also revealed that there were barriers which prevented teachers from participating in the leadership of the school. These barriers were: lack of interest in extramurals and support of initiatives from the SMT; lack of time; demanding workloads and other commitments; narrow views on leadership; and the ingrained traditional leadership structure in the school. Additionally, lack of collaborative culture from the teachers’ side; limited leadership capacity building initiatives; and the absence of clear educational policies on teacher leadership, were also discovered as constraining conditions. These challenges were further interrogated in the change laboratory workshops and resolutions were found.

### **6.2.4 Change laboratory workshops**

The reasons why I used the cultural-historical activity theory was to surface the challenges that prevented teachers from being developed as leaders in the case study school. Therefore, the challenges manifested from phase one of the data collection as highlighted in Section 6.2.3 above, were interrogated in the change laboratory workshops. The participants, through



analysing the challenges, discovered the inner contradictions which caused disturbances in the development of teacher leadership development.

Among the challenges presented, one challenge was interrogated more deeply to develop solutions. This was the challenge of limited leadership capacity building initiatives which prevented teachers from participating in the leadership of the school. This manifested as an inner contradiction emanating from the colonial-era, which still continued to influence the school leadership practice even today. The ideologies that came with top-down hierarchical leadership structures still dominate in the school. This was evident from the findings that teachers were not regarded as leaders, as well as that leadership opportunities in place were only targeted at those in formal leadership positions such as principals and heads of department. Hence, the inherent traditional leadership structure became a major obstacle to teachers' development as leaders in the school. The findings further revealed that the narrow views on teacher leadership also contributed to the reasons why the continuous professional development committees in schools (CPD) is inactive today in many Namibian schools. The study, however, could not resolve the contradictions because of time, but by the time I left the school, the resolutions were that leadership training would be done at the beginning of each year and a revival of the CPD committee at school was necessary.

### **6.3 Potential value of the study**

In terms of my country, this study makes a great contribution as it adds to an under-researched body of knowledge in the field of ELM. Despite several interpretive studies on teacher leadership done in the Khomas region, I stand proud as my study in the only interventionist study conducted in the region so far, hence it helps to fill the gap identified in Chapter Two. It also helps diversify the findings obtained, as Iyambo (2018) and Ndakolonkoshi's (2018) interventionist studies using CHAT were conducted in other regions. Furthermore, the research used distributed leadership theory which is a leadership theory also rarely used in the Namibian context. After a detailed investigation of how leadership was distributed in the case study school, I discovered that to an extent the current situation did not fully support the manifestation of teacher leadership development, hence I recommend the following: the school to review the current national and school policies and extract the clauses that speak to the notion of teacher leadership. This exercise is recommended to take place at the beginning of each year to refresh teachers on the roles they need to carry out in the school. Moreover, the school should revive continuous professional development (CPD) and outsource the different types of

training that inform teachers on leadership issues. Equally important, the teacher leadership council (TLC) at school level also needs to be established and should keep abreast with leadership development, thereafter, informing other teachers of what is happening around leadership.

Drawing on this contemporary leadership theory will shift educators' perspectives from the singular view of positional leadership to leadership as a shared practice (Spillane, 2006). Therefore, I also recommend that the Namibian universities incorporate an educational leadership course that speaks to present-day issues in the leadership circle – unless they have already done so. Finally, the research findings could be used by policymakers and practitioners alike, to adopt ideas suggested for improvement in the understanding of the notion of teacher leadership in the region and beyond. As a teacher leadership activist, I stand by my recommendations above, in the hope that someday it will bring change in teacher leadership practices, resulting in the growth of this notion, particularly at the school level.

#### **6.4 CHAT as an analytical lens of my study**

As a reminder to the reader, in Chapter Two I provided a rationale for CHAT as a theoretical and analytical framework for the study. In this section, I reveal the positives and the challenges of my choice.

As alluded to, this study was framed by the second generation of CHAT. This ideology provided me with the second generation activity system which formed the basis of analysing the teacher leadership activity system. This is because the second generation of CHAT enabled me to scrutinise how a group of teachers with different backgrounds, experiences and ideologies worked on the same object and together saw whether they could find solutions to their problems (Engeström, 1999). Through its socio-cultural and socio-historical lens, CHAT enabled and guided me in analysing teacher leadership practices in the case study school. This is because CHAT offered me a practical methodology of expansive learning, which enabled the teachers to “get involved in constructing and implementing a radically new, wider and more complex object and concept for their activity” (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 2). It is through CHAT that I found the change laboratory method which guides change and transformation. During the change laboratory workshops, participants acted as transformers in their practical contexts, as they faced and solved the contradictions identified (Engeström, 2015). Through it, I learned how to surface the contradictions that manifested as constraints to the development

of teacher leadership practice. Furthermore, through expansive learning together with teachers, we transcend from actions currently performed by individuals to a new collective activity (Sannino, Daniels, & Gutierrez, 2009, p. xii) and literally learn something new in the process.

However, in using CHAT, I discovered that the theory requires someone who has ample time to intervene in practice. For example, in order to adequately face the challenges and surface the contradictions one needed sufficient time to follow the expansive learning actions. It was suggested that the expansive learning actions in the change laboratory process requires at least six months to complete, however, due to limited time and this being a part-time study, I only managed to complete four of the expansive learning actions. In addition, working within time constraints and surfacing contradictions which required critical thinking was a daunting task. Another major challenge was that CHAT is originally a theory from Europe, which was particularly developed in Finland. Using it in my study in an African context, and Namibia in particular, posed a challenge because of the following reason. The decision-making in African society is embedded in a culture which prevents fruitful dialogue between youngsters and elders. This is attributed to power relation issues in the community, where elders talk and the young listen and this has been inherited into the schools' leadership system today. The theory in question used and adopted in this study, does not raise questions of who is doing the questioning and who is silenced or prevented from participating (Masilela, 2016). Therefore CHAT does not consider who the participants are in terms of their positionality at the workplace (Engeström, 2015).

## **6.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Everything has a beginning and an end. My research journey ends here, however, I will leave you with the possibilities for future research as a lot still needs to be done in the field of ELM and in particular, the sub-field of teacher leadership. There were a number of issues that I could not investigate due to the delimitations of my study, hence the following recommendations:

Firstly, I acknowledge the limitations resulting from the theoretical framework used in this study. Using CHAT as a framework, this study was limited to the second generation activity system as a unit of analysis, which excluded parents, learners and the teachers' representative body (NANTU). The notable point here is, that should I have drawn on the multiple activity system (third generation of CHAT) such as those of parents and learners, my findings could have been enriched, as these might have had the potential to influence the teacher leadership

activity system. For this reason, I recommend the third generation activity system be used. Secondly, other researchers could also explore the possibility of developing teacher leadership through the teachers' leadership council (TLC) at the school level. This could be achieved through the establishment of the teacher leadership council, developing its constitution and endorsing their roles within, outside and beyond the school boundaries. Through this, one could also try to solve the issue of lack of information resulting from unclear educational policies on teacher leadership.

Finally, this interventionist study is thus far the only one conducted in the Khomas region in Namibia. I thus recommend that future researchers expand its scope by carrying out this exact study on teacher leadership in the same area, either using the same data collection methods or different data collection methods. In this way, the research might strengthen my study results or might produce different results compared to the findings of this study.

## **6.6 Final Reflections**

This master's journey has been a mystery – thought-provoking and fulfilling at the same time. My life is touched and will never be the same again. As the saying goes: “a journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step” (Lao Tzu). I never regretted a single step I took of this journey. Here is why: the journey shaped me into a person who can read widely and reflect deeply. It also improved my academic writing skills. This journey was worth embarking on because it elevated me to a stage where I can now reason and question other people's reasoning when engaged in discussions. Academically, I gained new insights into the teacher leadership concept and the field of ELM in general. Through this journey, I came along a living theory ... an activist and interventionist theory, the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Sannino, 2011). Although for the past two years I have been living a stressful life, I learned how important democratic/shared governance is whether in my family or in schools and what it means by equal participation in decision-making which has the power to transform schools.

Equally important, I sign off this project with mixed feelings. There is no doubt that teachers are working like bubbles in the air. Is it going to continue in this manner or are we going to condense these bubbles into a drop of water? The idea is to work as one ... working as a collective unit toward the common good of the whole school in general. This study, hopefully, will help eliminate the issues that hinder teachers' participation in school leadership. It is my wish for this study to open doors and for educators to recognise the problems facing the

leadership of teachers in schools. The focus should be on the effort that brings about agency and transformation in schools, so that teachers realise that the time for shared leadership practice is now and to put the past behind them. Positively, I hope that this study will play a role in this realisation.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

In the opening chapter, I highlighted my motivation to carry out this study, which was based on scholarly, professional and personal experiences. This really helped me formulate my main research questions into the ones which guided this case study.

Using a semi-remote secondary school in my region, helped me to explore the development of teacher leadership practice. The concept of teacher leadership was explored, and the findings revealed that there were varying degrees of answers from teachers and the school management team. Participants viewed teacher leadership as a possession of certain qualities, a managerial role, as participation in decision-making and as a social responsibility. Equally significant to this study is the finding that, due to unclear educational policies on teacher leadership and lack of leadership training and lack of interest and negative attitude amongst teachers in the case-study school, the development of teacher leadership was restricted to those who have zeal and are self-motivated to take part in the leadership of the school. These challenges were presented to teachers and the SMT and solutions were recommended during the change laboratory workshops. Among these resolutions were that leadership training needs to be provided to teachers and support staff at the beginning of each year and that the CPD committee at the school needs to be revived.

As I am concluding this study, my motivation is heightened by the following quote, “this is not the end, it is just the beginning of a new chapter” (unknown) in my research journey, more is yet to come.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Ethical Clearance



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

Grahamstown • 6110 • South Africa

EDUCATION FACULTY • PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140  
Tel: (046) 603 8385 / (046) 603 8393 • Fax: (046) 622 8028 • e-mail: [d.wilmot@ru.ac.za](mailto:d.wilmot@ru.ac.za)

#### PROPOSAL AND ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL

Ethical clearance number 2018.6.04.01

The minute of the EHDC meeting of 25 October 2018 reflect the following:

**2018.6.04 CLASS B RESTRICTED MATTERS  
MASTERS DEGREE RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

*To consider the following research proposal for the degree of Master of Education in the Faculty of Education:*

**Justina Shilongo (1157100)**

*Topic: Exploring teacher leadership development through a formative intervention: A Namibian case study*

*Supervisor: Dr F Kajee  
Co-Supervisor: Professor C Grant*

*Decision: Approved*

This letter confirms the approval of the above proposal at a meeting of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee on the 25 October 2018.

The proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes. The approval of the proposal by the committee thus constitutes ethical clearance.

Sincerely

Professor K Ngcoza  
Acting Chair of the EHDC, Rhodes University  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2018



## **Appendix B: Letter seeking permission from the Regional Director for authorisation**

Enq: Justina Shilongo

Gough Island Road

Cell: 0814155161

Rocky crest

Windhoek,

Namibia

17 January 2019

To: The Regional Director

Khomas Education Directorate

Private Bag 13236

Windhoek, Namibia

**Dear Mr Vries**

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] HIGH SCHOOL.**

My name is Justina Shilongo, a Senior Education Officer for Commercial Subjects at Khomas Education Directorate, Regional office. I am currently pursuing my Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and Management through Part-time mode of learning at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.

In fulfilment of this degree, it is required that I carry out a research study. The research study will be conducted during the first trimester of the 2019 academic year. The research will be carried under the title: "Exploring teacher leadership development through a formative intervention: A Namibian case study. The aim of the study is to develop leadership within novice teachers in a case study school and also to arouse an interest in these teachers to take part in leadership roles within the school and beyond. All this can be achieved by carrying out

Change Laboratory Workshops at the school where novice teachers are going to be the main participants.

Against this background, I would like to carry out the research study at [REDACTED] High School as it is Windhoek and I can easily access the site. However, my interest is not in any way to assess the school performance academically but to understand how leadership is practiced among teachers as well as to find ways to develop teachers as leaders despite the hardships the school and the community are going through. Hence, a need to gather data through focus group interviews for eleven teachers, including two SMT members. Observation as a data collection method will also be employed as soon as the permission is granted by the regional director and the school head. I will also be taking pictures and videos as a data-gathering tool and reviewing some internal and external educational documents as well as conducting six change laboratory workshops as part of an expansive learning process.

I promise to abide by the ethical standards of the Ministry of Education and that of the school as is required of me by the University thus the study is not going to interfere with the teaching and learning process of the school. I, therefore, request your good office to grant me permission in writing to conduct this research at [REDACTED] High School.

For further information please contact me at the above-mentioned contact details. The proof of registration and details of my supervisors are attached.

Thanking you in advance for your prompt response in this regard.

Yours sincerely

.....

Justina Shilongo (Researcher)

Student No: 611s7100

## Appendix C: Letter from the Director



### REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

#### KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL

#### DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 9411  
Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251

Private Bag 13236  
WINDHOEK

File No: 12/3/9/1

Ms Justina Shilongo  
Gough Island Road  
Rocky Crest  
Windhoek  
Cell: 081 415 5161

#### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED] HIGH SCHOOL

Your letter dated 17 January 2019 on the above topic refers.

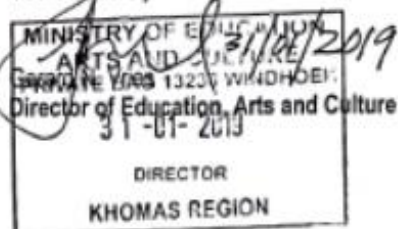
Permission is hereby granted to you to do research for your Masters of Educational (Leadership and Management) under the title: "Exploring teacher leadership development through a formative intervention: A Namibian Case Study" which will focus on teachers to develop leadership within and arose an interest in them to take part in leadership roles within the school and beyond. The study will target teachers at [REDACTED] High School in Khomas Region.

The following conditions must be adhered to:

- Permission must be granted by the School Principal;
- Teaching and learning in the respective school should not be disrupted;
- Teachers who will take part in the research should do so voluntarily;
- A copy of your thesis with your findings/recommendations must be provided to the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture, Khomas Regional Council.

I trust this confirmation will suffice.

Yours sincerely



## **Appendix D: Letter seeking permission from the School Principal for authorisation**

Enq: Justina Shilongo

Gough Island Road

Cell: 0814155161

Rocky crest

Windhoek,

Namibia

01 January 2019

To: The School Principal

██████████ H.S

Private Bag 12011

Wanaheda

Dear Mr █████

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT █████ ██████████ HIGH SCHOOL.**

My name is Justina Shilongo, a Senior Education Officer for Commercial Subjects at Khomas Education Directorate, Regional office. I am currently pursuing my Master Degree in Educational Leadership and Management through Part-time mode of learning at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.

In fulfilment of this degree, one of the requirement is to carry out a research study. The research study will be conducted next year during the first and second trimester of 2019. My research is carried under the title: “Exploring Secondary School teacher leadership development through a formative intervention: A Namibian case study”. The aim of my study is to develop leadership within teachers in this case study school and also to arouse an interest in these teachers to take

part in leadership roles within the school. All this can be achieved by carrying six Change Laboratory Workshops at the school where teachers are going to be the main participants.

- The plan is as follow while at your school, I will: Meet all teaching staff including you to explain the purpose of this study and its processes.
- Study some documents such as Minute of meetings, schedule of activities, agenda points and any other related relevant document.
- Conduct interviews with you as the school principal, one head of department, four novice teachers and three experienced ordinary teachers.
- I will need to observe the four novice teachers (main participants) in their classrooms and around the school to see how they fulfil leadership roles. The researcher will also take pictures and videos during observation, with the participants' permission.
- Attend one staff meeting, staff briefing meeting and a departmental/subject meeting where possible.
- Run six change laboratory workshops (one workshop per week) with eleven teachers and including you.

My interest is not in any way to assess the school performance academically but to understand how leadership is practiced among teachers as well as to find ways to develop teachers as leaders. Participation in this research study will be voluntary and anyone can withdraw any time without questions. The information to be provided will be treated in a confidential manner and participant's names will be withheld.

With all above mentioned, I therefore humbly request your good office to grant me permission to conduct my study in your school. For further information and questions please I can be reached at the above-mentioned address.

Thanking you in advance for your prompt response in this regard.

Yours sincerely

.....

Justina Shilongo (Researcher)

Student No: 611s7100

## Appendix E: Letter from the Principal



05 February 2019

Justina Shilongo

Rocky Crest

Namibia

Dear Madam

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY AT [REDACTED] HIGH SCHOOL**

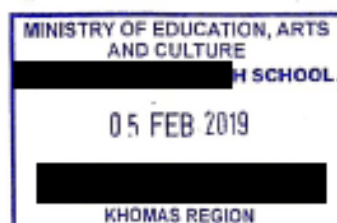
This letter serves to answer to your request for the permission to conduct research study on **Teacher Leadership Development** at our school.

Permission is hereby granted to you, on condition that during your study, the interactions with participants should not interfere with teaching and learning activities.

I am sure you will find the learning space at our school inviting and conducive for your study. May I wish you the best of luck with your research study. In conclusion, accept my assurance of highest consideration.

Yours Sincerely

  
[REDACTED]  
School Principal



## **Appendix F: Letter of Consent for the Teachers and SMT Members**

Enq: J. Shilongo

Gough Island Road

Cell: 0814155161

Rocky Crest

Windhoek

To: The teachers/HoD/Principal

Dear Mr/Ms

### **REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

I am kindly inviting you to take part in a research study that I am currently embarking upon in your school. The study is an interventionist study, and the purpose is to develop leadership amongst teachers and create awareness that leadership is key in bringing about change in the school. In the same vein, the study aims to address the challenges schools experience in building teacher leadership and hopefully result in some empowered teachers at the school. Your contribution will be valued as it will contribute to realising the objectives of this research.

Moreover, rest assured that the information shared between you and me will be kept highly confidential and your identity will not be revealed. The questions you will answer in this research will not count against your performance nor your competence. You have the right to withdraw at any time as this exercise will not be done against your will. Your participation will come in during interviews and the change laboratory workshops to be done after school.

Lastly, feel free to reach me at the above- mentioned address, should you have any concern or questions.

Yours faithfully,

Justina Shilongo (Researcher)

**Student number:** 611s7100

## **Declaration**

I ..... (**Full names of teacher/ HoD/Principal**) do hereby confirm that I fully understand the content of this document and the nature of this research study. I have accepted to participate in the interview, to be observed and take part in the change laboratory workshops. I agree to be photographed, and videos to be taken during the observation throughout the entire process. I also agree with the suggestion from the researcher that photographs to be taken will be blurred. I also understand that I reserve the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

## **Signature**

.....

**Teacher/ HoD/ Principal**

## **Consent form**

I ..... (Full names of teacher/ HoD/ Principal) do hereby confirm that photographs be taken during observation, however, they should be blurred.

## **Signature**

.....

**Teacher/ HoD/ Principal**



## **Appendix G: Consent form for the use of WhatsApp**

### **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT ON WHATSAPP PLATFORM DISCUSSION**

entered into by and between:

**Justina Shilongo**

(hereinafter referred to as (“Researcher-interventionist”))

and

**(Name of Participant)**

.....

Hereinafter referred to as “Parties”

**WHEREAS** the Researcher-interventionist is conducting the research in Teacher Leadership;

**AND WHEREAS** the Participant is desirous to participate in this WhatsApp platform discussion;

**NOW THEREFORE** the parties agree as follows:

#### **1. WHATSAPP GROUP CHAT**

- 1.1 It includes communications by sending and receiving texts, video, and audio files.
- 1.2 This method will be used as data collections mainly to probe more on questions which received inadequate information.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

To engage in constructive discussions after ordinary working hours and to reflect on teacher leadership practices by analysing and describing what really works in the case study school.

#### **3. CONDITIONS**

- 3.1 Parties may not divulge any information obtained through this platform to protect the parties and name of the school.
- 3.2 The information obtained through this platform shall not be used for any other purpose except this study.
- 3.3 Participants have the right to withdraw from the WhatsApp group at any time.

**SIGNED AT WINDHOEK ON THIS                      DAY OF                      (MONTH) 2019.**

**PARTICIPANT**

**RESEARCHER-INTERVENTIONIST**

-----

-----

## Appendix H: Observation Schedule

### Exploring Secondary School teacher leadership development through a formative intervention: A Namibian case study

DAY.....

DATE.....

Level of analysis		Features to consider	Observation notes
1	<b>Teachers leading in the classrooms-</b> managing the process of teaching and learning.	Physical arrangement of the classroom  Class rules set up  Time management  Aspects of motivation and guidance	
2	<b>Teacher working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom-</b> building rapport with other teachers	Planning with other teachers in the same subjects, cross teaching  Developing learning activities together  Teacher student-parent interaction  Supervision of learners outside the classrooms  Subjects meetings	
3	<b>Outside classroom in whole school development-</b> developing a culture and vision of the school	Discipline enforcement, taking lead at morning assembly, sharing of meetings chairmanship, taking initiative for school improvement, participating in staff and subject meetings, bringing initiatives & ideas forward in meetings, taking part in extra-curricular activities, serving on school board	
4	<b>Teachers between neighbouring schools in the community-</b> strengthening ties with	Networking with other teachers from other schools workshop facilitation, exam setting and	

	community, cluster and regional offices	moderation, leading cluster head meetings	
<b>General comments</b>			

## Appendix I: Interview Schedule for the Principal and HOD

### Background information

<b>Id code:</b>	<div>P</div>	<div>HOD</div>			
<b>Gender</b>	<div>Male</div>	<div>Female</div>			
<b>Years of teaching experience</b>	<div>6- 10</div>	<div>11-14</div>	<div>15-19</div>	<div>20+</div>	
<b>Nature of employment</b>	<div>Full-time</div>	<div>Part- time</div>	<div>Contract</div>		
<b>Qualifications</b>	<div>Grade 12</div>	<div>BETD+</div>	<div>BED +</div>	<div>MED</div>	<div>GR. 12 + other</div>

- How many years have you spent in the position you are currently serving?  
.....  
.....
- How do you understand the concept of teacher leadership?  
.....
- Identify either two behaviours shown by your teachers that show to me that some of your teachers are teacher leaders?  
.....
- In your view what are the factors hindering the development of teachers as leaders?  
.....
- In what ways do you promote the development of teachers as leaders in the school?  
Give examples.  
.....

**More questions will be generated through the discussion during our interview sessions.**

## **Appendix J: Interview Questions for Teachers**

1. What is your understanding of the concept of teacher leadership?
2. Do you consider yourself as a teacher leader, motivate your answer?
3. For how long have you been teaching at this school?
4. In your view do you think teachers are willing to volunteer in taking up leadership roles in the schools?
5. What do you think is hindering teachers in taking up leadership roles in the school?
6. During your stay at the school, what initiatives did you come up with and how did the management feel on the move you made?
7. In your view what could be the best possible way to develop teachers as leaders?

**More questions will be generated through the discussion during our interview sessions.**

## Appendix K: Document Analysis Guide

Name of Document	Cultural-historical	Teacher leadership model	Findings
	Level of Analysis		
Minutes of meetings	<b>Norms:</b> is it only the same people contributing to meeting, whether ideas come from all teachers	<b>Zone 1:</b> Class rules set up  Time management  Aspects of motivation and guidance	
Duty allocation sheets	<b>Use division of labour</b> to check whether teachers are given equal opportunity to head meetings, guiding how duties should be allocated to teachers, to see if novice teachers have equal opportunity or receive full support from management in carrying out leadership roles.	<b>Zone 3:</b> Check the distribution of extracurricular among teachers	
Agendas of meetings	Use it as a <b>tool</b> to discover whether teachers are given a chance to take up leadership roles or maybe it's just those in formal management position. or to check whether initiatives are coming from all teachers	Rotation of chairmanship of meetings  Agenda points of the meetings	
Code of conduct of teachers  National standards and performance indicators	Do the documents contain <b>rules</b> guiding the work of people at the research school, how these rules promote or constraint teacher leadership at the school	<b>Zone 4:</b> Check rules in place that promote teacher leadership between the schools in the community	