

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP IN COMMITTEES**

**A case study in a public rural combined school in the Oshana  
region, Namibia**

**A thesis submitted by**

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## ABSTRACT

The existing education legislations in Namibia call for school principals to put in place appropriate support mechanisms and create necessary internal conditions for leaders, including teachers who do not hold formal leadership positions, to exert their sphere of influence beyond the classroom and into school-wide leadership activities. The establishment of various committees in the school is to enhance and improve the performance of the school and to create a pleasant work environment and spirit of collaboration and teamwork (*Namibia* Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2005). Leadership in committees is one of the expectations of new education policy

The aim of this study was to explore the leadership practices within a range of committees in a public rural combined school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. It further unpacked the purpose, roles and membership of each of the four committees; how these committees were established; what leadership functions the teachers as committee members exercised and what challenges inhibited their leadership practices within committees. The study provided recommendations for future research in the area of leadership practices in committees. This research is a case study. The study is designed within the qualitative interpretive paradigm. It is rooted in a social constructivist tradition and employs a range of data collection tools, namely document analysis, semi-structured interviews, observations and questionnaires to enhance the validity of findings.

The study found that committees were established in line with the Namibian education legislation. However, the study found the principal lacked the experience and skills to use the committee system more effectively, and maintained the status quo. This resulted in the committees practising pure management responsibilities rather than leadership interest. The study also found that only the leadership tasks were distributed to the committees but the power was not distributed. It was revealed that committees were dormant; while they were named in school documents, they functioned variously, intermittently or not at all. The significance of the contradiction was there were no regulations to guide the conduct of committee members.

## DECLARATION

I, SIMON VAETA, declare that this thesis is my own unique work and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university. Where I have drawn on the work and ideas of others, these have been accordingly acknowledged by means of references as per the Rhodes University Education Department Guide to Referencing.

Signature -----  
(Mr. Simon Vaeta)

-----  
Date

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is affectionately dedicated to both my late and living family:

To my late father Nghitekalute Polycarpus Vaeta and my mother Linea Niiye Hamoshaila Shipale for the spirit of determination that they have instilled in me. I am indebted to you all Dad and mom. To my loving wife Hambeleleni Ndinelaο Nakale for believing in me and taking excellent care of our family while I was away in Grahamstown. I love you dearly! To my children and nephews for coping without my presence and please emulate. To all my brothers, specifically Sakeus for looking after our family mini farm.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

**CC= Committee Chairs**

**CPD= Continuous Professional Development**

**DoE= Department of Education**

**MEC= Ministry of Education and Culture**

**MoE = Ministry of Education**

**MBSC= Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture**

**NIED National Institute for Educational Development**

**NIPAM=National Institute for Administration and Management**

**NSPIN =National Standard for Schools in Namibia**

**SMT=School Management Team**

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY .....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background and context of the study.....	1
1.3 Research motivation.....	3
1.4 Potential value of the study.....	4
1.5 Research goals .....	4
1.6 Research methodology.....	5
1.7 Outline of the thesis .....	6
CHAPTER TWO .....	7
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Defining the broad concepts educational leadership and management .....	7
2.2.1 Defining educational leadership .....	8
2.2.2 Defining educational management .....	9
2.2.3 The relationship between educational leadership and management.....	11
2.3 Distributed leadership .....	12
2.3.1 Defining distributed leadership.....	12
2.3.2 Applying Spillane et al. model of leadership practice in committees.....	14
2.3.3 The shadow side of distributed leadership.....	16
2.3.4 Distributed leadership as a practice (theoretical framework).....	17
2.4 Conclusion .....	22

CHAPTER THREE .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
METHODOLOGY .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2 Research paradigm.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.3 A case study approach .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.3.1 The research site .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.3.2 Sampling and participants.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.4 Data collection process .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.4.1 Questionnaires.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.4.2 Document analysis.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.4.3 Semi-structured interviews .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.4.4 Observations .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.5 Data analysis .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.6 Ethical considerations .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.7 Positionality .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.8 Trustworthiness.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.9 Conclusion .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
CHAPTER THREE .....	24
METHODOLOGY .....	24
3.1 Introduction.....	24
3.2 Research paradigm.....	24
3.3 A case study approach .....	25
3.3.1 The research site .....	26

3.3.2 Sampling and participants.....	28
3.4 Data collection process .....	29
3.4.1 Questionnaires.....	29
3.4.2 Document analysis .....	30
3.4.3 Semi-structured interviews .....	31
3.4.4 Observations .....	32
3.5 Data analysis .....	33
3.6 Ethical considerations .....	34
3.7 Positionality .....	35
3.8 Trustworthiness.....	36
3.9 Conclusion .....	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	37
DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	37
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.1.1 Coding and data presentation.....	37
4.2 A profile of the four committees: purpose, roles and membership.....	38
4.2.1 Examination and assessment committee.....	39
4.2.2 Culture and entertainment committee.....	40
4.2.3 Sports Committee.....	41
4.2.4 Disciplinary Committee .....	42
4.3 The establishment of committees.....	43
4.3.1 The creation of committees.....	43
4.3.2 Nomination of Committee Members .....	44

4.3.3 The Life span of Committee members.....	45
4.3.4 Teachers as Committee members .....	47
4.3.5 The attributes of a Committee Chair.....	48
4.4 What leadership functions did the teachers as committee members exercise?.....	49
4.4.1 The roles of Committee Chairs .....	49
4.4.2 Job description for committee members .....	51
4.4.3 Committee meetings .....	53
4.5 What are the benefits of having committees? .....	56
4.5.1 Committee benefits .....	56
4.6. Challenges that inhibit leadership practices in committees: contradictions in the activity system .....	60
4.6.1 Committee Chairs as inhibiting agents .....	60
4.6.2 A lack of time.....	61
4.6.3 Lack of commitment and co-operation among committee members.....	62
4.6.4 Lack of monitoring of Committees Activities .....	64
4.6.5 Induction, mentoring and staff development .....	66
4.6.6 Dormant Committees .....	67
4.7 Conclusion .....	70
CHAPTER FIVE .....	70
CONCLUSION.....	70
5.1 Introduction.....	70
5.2 Research purpose .....	70
5.3 Research questions.....	70

5.3.1	What is the purpose, roles and membership of each of the four committees?.....	71
5.3.2	How were committees established? .....	71
5.3.2.1	The creation of committees.....	71
5.3.2.2	Nomination of Committee Members .....	71
5.3.2.3	The Life span of Committee members.....	72
5.3.2.4	Teachers as Committee members .....	72
5.3.2.5	The attributes of a Committee Chair.....	72
5.3.3	What leadership functions did the teachers as committee members exercise?.....	73
5.3.3.1	The roles of Committee Chairs .....	73
5.3.3.2	Job description for committee members .....	73
5.3.3.3	Committee meetings .....	74
5.3.4	What are the benefits of having committees? .....	74
5.3.4.1	Committee benefits .....	74
5.3.5	Challenges that inhibit leadership practices in committees: contradictions in the activity system .....	75
5.3.5.1	Committee Chairs as inhibiting agents .....	75
5.3.5.2	A lack of time.....	75
5.3.5.3	Lack of commitment and co-operation among committee members.....	76
5.3.5.4	Lack of monitoring of Committees Activities .....	76
5.3.5.5	Induction, mentoring and staff development .....	76
5.3.5.6	Dormant Committees .....	77
5.4	Significance of the study.....	77
5.5	Limitations of the study .....	77

5.6 Recommendation for practice .....	78
5.7 Suggestions for future research.....	79
5.8 Conclusion .....	80
REFERENCES .....	81
Appendix A: Questionnaires.....	85
Appendix B: Interview Schedules .....	97
Appendix C: Observation Schedule.....	100
Appendices D, E, F: Letters to and from gatekeepers .....	102
Appendix G: Invitation to take part in research.....	106
Appendix H: Declaration form .....	108

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study which is an exploration of the leadership practices within a range of committees in a public rural combined school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. I first discuss the context and motivation of the study. I then present my research goals, and questions as well as the potential value of this study. Next I highlight the paradigm and methodology used in this study. Finally the chapter gives an outline of the entire thesis.

### 1.2 Background and context of the study

After the fall of apartheid in Namibia in 1990, many changes had to be made at a systemic level in the country. The education system was one such system. Namibia inherited an undemocratic education system organised along ethnic lines, with different administrations created for all the different ethnic groups of Namibia, in line with an apartheid ideology (Namibia. Ministry of Basic and Culture [MEC], p. 2, 1993). With the dawn of independence on March 21, 1990, the Namibian government embarked on education reform by introducing various initiatives to make education more equal for all Namibians after years of apartheid domination (Namibia. Office of the President, 2004, Namibia. [MEC], 2005, Namibia. Ministry of Education [MoE], 2005, Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBEC], 2002). These educational reforms and development are based on four major goals of access, quality, equity and democracy (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 32). This dramatic shift led to the creation of “a democratic education system in Namibia that is organised around broad participation in decision-making and clear accountability of our leaders” (Namibia. MEC. 1993, p. 41). It became necessary that the governance of education be decentralised down to the grassroots level in order to encourage and enable wider participation in the leadership and management of schools. Subsequently, this approach led to the introduction of the decentralisation policy in Namibia introduced in 1996 which saw schools become decision-making centres through self-management and participatory practices (Namibia. MoE, 2005). A committee management system-the focus of this study – can be viewed as one manifestation of decentralisation in education.

The establishment of school committees provides a context within which teachers can show initiative individually or collectively. Teachers heading these committees may therefore be viewed as teacher leaders whose agency has the potential to have a significant effect on the school. The possibility of teacher leadership practice through committees has become increasingly prominent as Namibia has moved, at least in policy discourse, towards more democratic participatory approaches to educational leadership and management (Namibia. MEC, 2005).

In the context of the Namibian schooling system, the committee management system has its roots in the Namibian Education Act, Act 16 of 2001 (Namibia. MBEC, 2002, p. 15). This Education Act calls for the establishment of school boards (school governing bodies as they are known elsewhere) for state schools to administer the affairs and promote the development of schools and learners of schools (ibid, p. 15). In reaction to the Education Act 16 of 2001, various Namibian policies such as the Policy on the Guidelines for School Principals and the School Cluster Policy provide a framework for a range of committees to be established to assist in various needs of schools so as to upgrade the quality of teaching and learning.

The principal, who is an ex-officio member of the school board committee, also heads the School Management Committee (also known as School Management Team) in the school which is a sub-committee of the school board. In this sense the school board empowers the principal to ensure that various sub-committees and their members are in place in the school. Committee members, in this case teachers, are appointed or nominated by colleagues during staff meetings on the basis of their skills, expertise and years of service (Namibia. MBEC, 2002).

The committee management system has strong support from the Ministry; it is described as “an effective leadership and management tool that guarantees broad input, participation in and ownership of school affairs” (Namibia. MoE, 2005, p. 143). For the purposes of this study a committee may be considered a team comprising a manageable number (approximately eight) of teachers working towards a common purpose in order to achieve or make things happen for the benefit of the whole school. Examples of management committees at schools include subject committees, a disciplinary committee, curriculum committees, examination and assessment committees and school development and maintenance (Namibia. MoE, 2005, p.145).

In the literature, a committee system of management is equated with collegial models which “assume structures to be lateral or horizontal with participants having an equal right to determine policy and influence decision” (Bush, 2003, p. 74). Furthermore it is believed that decision making in committees depend more on “specific expertise” rather than an official position” [and] it is assumed that “decisions are reached by consensus or compromise rather than acquiescence to the views of the head or principal” (ibid. p. 74). This implies that in the school set up, committees act as a vehicle of involving teachers in decision making in the whole school where decision-making is decentralised and this practice encourages self-management. This also suggests that committees act as division of labour as they are essential for leadership opportunities to flourish in the school as they enable leadership practices to be distributed through them (committees) and dispersed across the whole school. Thus through committee management system, a conducive environment is created for multiple leaders to emerge as leadership is said to be fluid and could emerge from anywhere anytime (Gronn, 2000, Harris, 2003). Leadership practice can be stretched from the committees to classrooms and outside the classroom to the sport field and beyond the school.

### **1.3 Research motivation**

This study is firstly, triggered by my professional motivation as an Inspector of Education to assist schools to improve on their leadership practices in committees. I write from the perspective of the Inspector of Education in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in Namibia. Being an Inspector of Education for ten years, I visit schools a lot. During these visits, I noticed often that committees were dormant; while the committees were named in school documents, they functioned variously, intermittently or not at all. Secondly, the study was motivated by the gap in the literature on school leadership particularly in the leadership practice in school committees in the Namibian context. The systematic review I conducted on the leadership practices in school committees specifically in the Namibian context found very little sources on leadership practices in committees and none offered a comprehensive view based on empirical work. I argue here that this study appears to be the first of its type in Namibia, as I could not find any in - depth research on leadership practices in school committees. I am not aware of any research done in Namibia concerning leadership in the context of committee structures. Most of the studies on school leadership practices in Namibia as well as in South Africa incline more towards the School Board Committee or School Governing Body as it is known elsewhere (Niitembu; 2006; Shekupakela-Nelulu; 2008; Khama; 2014, Xaba; 2011,

Mncube; 2012; Majola, 2013) overlooking the critical aspects of leadership practices in sub – committees in schools. School Board Committee research has been saturated in the Namibian context. Furthermore, the literature on leadership practice in committees is hard to come by especially in the South African (Moodley, 2012) and Namibian context.

Thirdly, I spent time at a school in Ohangwena region for a research assignment for the coursework component of my Master of Education degree (MEd). During my stay at the research site, there was a sign of distributed leadership through committees headed by teachers, but I was not sure whether these committees functioned effectively (Vaeta, 2014). Therefore, due to these doubts, I developed a personal interest to do my research study on leadership practises in school committees in order to understand better the what, the how and the why of leadership practice in the committee management system (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2004).

#### **1.4 Potential value of the study**

With its focus on the workings (or otherwise) of committee structures in schools, my study has the potential value of uncovering factors that enhance and inhibit leadership practices in school committees and it has the capacity to provide recommendations for both practice and future research. With the knowledge reaped from my research, I am in a good position to lead and manage schools in my circuit better and provide assistance to schools in other circuits in the Ohangwena region. Through the findings in this study I hope to inform the policy makers, especially those at the Namibia Institute of Education Development (NIED), Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM), and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) unit in Namibia, in identifying professional needs and developing relevant training programmes for committee chairs.

#### **1.5 Research goals**

This study sets out to explore leadership practices in a public rural combined school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia, whose management structure is characterised by a range of committees, each taking control of one aspect of school management. To achieve this, this study seeks to answer the following five research questions:

- What is the purpose, roles and membership of each of the four committees?
- How were committees established?

- What leadership functions did teachers as committee members exercise?
- What are the benefits of having committees?
- What challenges inhibited these teacher leadership practices?

## **1.6 Research methodology**

This study is situated in the interpretive research paradigm with the focus on participants' experiences and interpretations. For Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004), the "interpretive paradigm focuses on the understanding of individual participants' experience and perceptions of their professional roles as experienced in their day-to-day working environment, from the standpoint of their unique contexts and backgrounds" (p. 21). This links well with the focus of this research, as its purpose is to explore the leadership practices within a range of committees in a public rural combined school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia.

I employed a case study methodology to frame the investigation of the questions in this study. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) claim that case studies "provide unique examples of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly" (p. 289). This study explored and reported on the real-leadership life practices of Committee Chairs in the unique environment of their school. So, and because of its ability to zoom in on the leadership activity and examine leaders' thinking and action in situ, distributed leadership (Spillane et al. 2004) was applied as a theoretical framing, which draws from the work of Engeström's activity theory. These two theories are appropriate for this study because of their understanding of human activity in complex, emergent, and discretionary environments (Spillane et al. 2004, p. 8).

In the case study school, there were 13 committees in total. However, four committees formed the focus of my study; these included the examination and assessment committee, the culture and entertainment committee, the disciplinary committee and the sports committee. The study's sample entailed the four Committee Chairs, a further teacher committee member on each of the committees and the principal at the case study school. In order to boost the validity of my study, I used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation and documents analysis as data collection tools to allow for triangulation. I discuss these and other methodological issues in greater detail in the third chapter of my thesis.

## **1.7 Outline of the thesis**

This study is presented in five chapters. The first chapter deals with the context of the study, its research motivation, its research goals and methodology. Chapter Two constitutes the literature review pertinent to the topic. In Chapter three I examine the methodology used to conduct the research and provide a detailed description of the approach, the procedures and instruments used for data collection and data analysis. This chapter also looks at the ethical issues and positionality. Chapter Four deals with the presentation and discussion of findings. Chapter Five, the conclusion, presents a summary of the main findings, and suggests some recommendations for research in the area of leadership practice in school committees. I also discuss the limitations and implication of the study in the final chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

My study aims to explore leadership practices in a public rural combined school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia, whose management structure is characterised by a range of committees, each taking control of one aspect of school management. Therefore, this chapter reviews relevant South Africa, Namibian and international literature and provides a theoretical framework for my study. In order to have a complete picture of the phenomenon under review, the first section of this chapter presents broad definitions of leadership and management. Since one of the main interest-points of this study is how Committee Chairs see their roles as Committee Chairs, an understanding of the concepts of leadership and management is vital to my thesis. I see that leadership and management are often equated; hence I clear out the differences immediately. Drawing on my experiences as an Inspector of Education, Arts and Culture, I see the functions of Committee Chairs as a combination of management and leadership since they are expected to do something new all the time, introduce something which maybe the school has not had before, hence a clear understanding of the concepts are essential. Since their role is also to maintain the structure and processes of school life a consideration of management is equally important.

Next I define, discuss and briefly unpack distributed leadership (according to Spillane et al. 2004) which informs the theoretical framework of my study and, through which I examine the leadership practices in various school committees. Distributed leadership is also adopted to be used as an analytical tool for my data in chapter four. I then conclude the chapter by summarising the main arguments.

#### **2.2 Defining the broad concepts educational leadership and management**

Leadership and management are inextricably linked and as such are central to the effectiveness of school operations. As is the case in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and Australia, the terms ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ are “often used interchangeably

[in Namibia] in everyday speech [and] in practice it is often the same people who are both leading and managing [schools]" (Coleman, 2005, p. 7). However, leadership and management are also seen as two different concepts that are sometimes interpreted and used differently in some parts of the world (Coleman, 2000). The main difference between leadership and management according to Cuning and Cordeiro (2003) is that "leadership relates to mission, direction and inspiration, whereas management relates to implementing plans, arranging resources, coordinating effort and generally seeing that things get done and working effectively with people" (p. 13). For them, "leadership is doing the right things, management is doing things right" (ibid., p. 137). Bush (2007) elaborates on this and sees leadership as concerned with transformation whereas management is more to do with maintaining the status quo in schools.

In the next section I discuss definitions of the concepts of educational leadership and educational management as defined by various authors.

### **2.2.1 Defining educational leadership**

A preliminary glance at the vast educational leadership literature reveals that leadership is a contested concept. There is no agreement in the literature on the meaning of the leadership term. As Coleman (2005) notes, "its usage varies at different times, in different countries and in different professional cultures" (p. 7).

Traditionally leadership was understood as "focused leadership" (Gronn, 2002) with the focus on 'the lone ranger'— the solo leader. This implies that traditionally leadership has had a positional quality and was often equated with the person at the top of hierarchy. Similarly there are those who conflate the terms leadership, management and principalship. On this basis, I argue that this has added to a limited understanding of the leadership concept.

Moreover, Van der Mescht and Grant (2014) in their lecture notes accentuate that there has been a shift in the leadership trends globally over the past decades. This move occurred specifically in business sectors, governments, non-governmental organisation, education and other business entities where leadership evolved from being associated with trait thinking (*the great man* theory) to non-traditional leadership such as transformational leadership and distributed leadership.

For the purposes of my study, and drawing mostly on Christie (2010), I define leadership as a relational function, a process of social influence and consent where one or more person(s) can solicit the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. Christie (2010) explains that, “leadership may be understood as a relationship of influence directed towards goals or outcomes, whether formal or informal” (p. 695). She further makes an important claim that “leadership is characterised by consent rather than coercion [and] since it is directed towards achieving goals, leadership is often associated with vision and values” (ibid., p. 695). However, I further argue here that in a school situation the principal is in a designated hierarchical position which carries with it responsibilities and accountabilities. Hence, the principal may legally move beyond consent and influence to coercion as he/she is ultimately accountable for the achievement of the organisational goals.

I believe that power is not the prerogative of one, hence leadership need not solely be centred in individual qualities of a leader, but it could be more usefully located as Christie (2010) asserts “in terms of social relationship of power whereby some are able to influence others” (p. 695). Similarly, Muijs and Harris (2003) in their recent studies of effective leadership observe that the “authority to lead need not to be located in the person of the leader but can be dispersed within the school in between and among people” (p. 437). Thus leadership is detached from person, it is not positional, and it is infinite and can spring from anywhere, outside or inside of school (Van der Mescht & Grant, 2014, p. 16).

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001) take this idea further by suggesting that leadership is “the ability to empower others” (ibid., p. 24). Leadership is the “identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning” (ibid. p. 24). This point is vital because the focus of my studies is the leadership practices in committees.

### **2.2.2 Defining educational management**

My study works from the basis that “management is the process which works towards the stability, preservation and maintenance of the organisation” (Grant, 2008, p. 86). Bush, (2007) goes a step further and defines “management as a maintenance activity” which implies that “managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements” (p. 392). I also believe that management is an organisational concept that relates to structures and processes by which organisations meet their goals and central purposes. I particularly like Van

der Westhuizen's (1991) definition of management as "a specific type of work which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation" (p. 55). I support his definition because it links management to the educational field putting in mind that in a school there are specific areas (in this case various committees) run by different personnel but guided by specific rules and regulations and job descriptions.

However, I further argue that management is hierarchical in nature as teachers are expected to work toward the achievement of aims set by the principal or a higher authority to which they are answerable. So in this stance, Bush reminds us that "management can be defined as a hierarchical structure, where teachers are made accountable to principals, who possess legal power by virtue of their position as heads of their schools" (cited in Johannes, 2009, p. 22). I argue that hierarchical structures are task oriented rather than person oriented which in my view is managerial leadership (pure management). Coleman (2005) believes that a "bureaucratic and hierarchical organisation is run according to rules and targets with one key leader at the apex who is exercising strong leadership" (p. 19). I further argue that good management is an important aspect of any educational institution, but its main goal is the promotion of effective teaching and learning in schools through leadership practices such as in school committees.

In the Namibian context, policy supports these notions of management functions. The *National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia* (NSPISN) states that the four key management tasks that may be emphasised here are planning, implementation, organising, and controlling of an organisation's day-to-day activities (Namibia. Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2005). Henceforth the management of teaching and learning requires school managers to carry out management tasks to create a positive commitment in the school, such as to involve all teachers in the development of a School Development Plan (SDP) and Plan of Action for Academic Improvement (PAAI). This suggests that leaders should ensure that schools are in possession of policy documents (national and internal policies), establish a system of continuous monitoring to ensure implementation of plans, direct and co-ordinate efforts, motivate, manage staff absenteeism, physical resources and school finances.

In the next section I discuss the relationship between the concepts of educational leadership and educational management as explored by various authors.

### **2.2.3 The relationship between educational leadership and management**

As I have tried to argue, leadership and management are two different concepts, which are inseparable because in the context of a school set up, one has to apply both leadership and management when leading and managing. Leadership and management need to be accorded the same treatment, as Bush (2007) affirms: “if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives [because] leading and managing are distinct, but both are important” (p. 392). Bush (2007) links this idea to the reality of change, arguing that the rapidly changing world comes with its challenges of modern schools that “require the objective perspective of the manager as well as the flashes of vision and commitment wise leaders provides” (p. 392). In other words, schools of today need a leader and a manager who is capable of determining aims of the school based on the school and learners’ needs; a leader and manager that is capable of adapting predetermined policies to suit his/her situations. I also contend that educators need to be able to balance the two concepts (educational leadership and management) if they are to run their schools efficiently and effectively. If not, Bush (2007) warns us “there is a danger of managerialism, a stress on procedures at the expense of educational purpose and values” (p. 391). This happens as a result of government “initiatives which stress accountability and performativity” (ibid., p. 20) from school leaders and managers.

Furthermore, Bush (2007) draws a close link between educational leadership and management by highlighting that “educational leadership and management has to be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education” (p. 391). For him, “these purposes or goals provide the crucial sense of direction to underpin school management” (ibid., p.391).

Another point worth here noting is that leadership and management are interconnected to functions and actions which may be very difficult to separate (Bush, 2003). Thus both leadership and management focus on efficiency and effectiveness.

It is my conviction that schools cannot operate effectively without good leadership and management. Therefore it is imperative that school leaders including Committee Chairs are able to strike a balance between leadership and management which is vital for an organisation to operate smoothly and in Grant’s words, “to prosper” (2012, p. 52). As mentioned earlier, committees functioning as part of a school’s structure clearly need both leadership and management skills; the skill lies in striking a balance so that there is both a drive towards change as well as concern for smooth functioning.

In the next section I discuss the concept of distributed leadership in relation to leadership practices in school committees.

## **2.3 Distributed leadership**

My study is framed by distributed leadership theory. I argue that the committee management system presents an ideal home for current leadership thinking which tends to emphasise participative and shared approaches to leadership; hence I will lean on the theory of distributed leadership “as a practice, a shared activity in which all educators can participate” (Grant & Singh, 2009, p. 291) and as a group function requiring human interaction between a web of actors (Crowther & Olsen, 1997; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004).

As depicted in figure 2 on page 13, distributed leadership as a “theorisation draws mainly on distributed cognition and activity theory, with reference to micro politics, and Bourdieu’s thinking tool of habitus” (Gunter et al. 2013, p. 561). This framework is extremely helpful in making sense of what happens at committee meetings, since the surfacing of contradictions or tensions between the various components of the framework would indicate areas of concern or interest. Since I will be looking at committees through a leadership lens, it is likely that the use of this framework will help me to identify the strengths and weaknesses of committee structures as far as leadership practices in committees is concerned. My application of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) will be clarified later in this chapter. For now, I need to present a brief overview of distributed leadership.

### **2.3.1 Defining distributed leadership**

Distributed leadership became prominent in mid-1990s. It is currently in fashion and continues to gain momentum in popularity within the scholars of educational leadership and management (ELM). Hartley (2007) remarks that “it has turned into something of a social movement” (p. 202) in several countries and has emerged as a viable alternative to traditional ways of thinking about leadership. Moreover, “while there seems to be widespread interest in the idea of distributed leadership” (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins, 2006, p. 45) there are numerous competing understandings and overlapping definitions of what it actually means (ibid., p. 45).

Gamage (2006) defines distributed leadership as:

a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school, who work towards mobilising and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change. It extends the boundaries of leadership significantly to increase the levels of teacher involvement to encompass a wide variety of input, skills and expertise (p. 113).

The use of collective and inclusive words by Gamage in describing distributed leadership resonates with Harris's (2003) view when she draws on the work of Gronn (2000) to claim that "distributed leadership is more appropriately understood as fluid and emergent, rather than a fixed phenomenon [and] it opens up the possibility for a more democratic and collective form of leadership" (p. 317). In the same vein, Bennett, Harvey, Wise and Woods (2003) in their literature review identify three domains of distributed leadership: the emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals; openness to the boundaries of leadership; and varieties of expertise distributed across the many, not the few.

For Harris and Muijs (2005), distributed leadership is premised on "multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture" (p. 31). This is the same line of thinking as Spillane, Halverson and Diamond's (2001) work that suggests that distributed leadership is best understood as "practice" distributed over leaders, followers and their "situational contexts" which incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals (p. 23). This implies a "social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders" (ibid., p. 20). According to Harris (2003), this "implies interdependency rather than dependency embracing how leaders of various roles share responsibility" (p. 318). The notion of "interdependency" is key to understanding distributed leadership, departing from the traditional view of the leader as independent 'hero'. Distributed leadership is also seen as independent of formal roles. Thus as Grant (2006) indicates, distributed leadership engages expertise where it exists within the organisation not only through people in formal positions (p. 513). What this suggests is that schools are big institutions with staff of varied qualification and specific experiences and expertise that only need to be tapped for instance through teacher leadership practices in school committees. With the establishment of a proper platform (in this case school committees headed by teachers) there is a possibility for leadership to spring from any corner of the school (Harris, 2003). For Williams (2013), distributed leadership is a vehicle through which teachers can be empowered to take part in the whole school development. In support of this stance, Townsend (2011 in Williams, 2013, p. 35) suggests that:

distributed leadership as one strategy not only for building the capacity of the principal as sole leader of the school, but to ensure that the school as a whole is capable of moving forward by encouraging leadership in others as well.

The main issues surrounding the concept of distributed leadership reverberates with inclusivity, collectivism, empowerment and the democratic, collaborative, contextually-situated, sharing of responsibilities and focusing on the achievement of a common vision and goal of the organisation which are the characteristics of committee management system. This implies “internal devolution of power within the school” (South Africa. Department of Education, [DoE], 1996, p. 29).

### **2.3.2 Applying Spillane et al. model of leadership practice in committees**

I now go on to elaborate on Spillane and colleagues’ model in relation to leadership practice in school committees which is the focus of my studies. The triangle in fig. 1 represents leadership practice in a given situation, in this case committees. Each leg represents one of the three constituting elements of leadership practice, namely, leaders, followers and their situations (Spillane, 2004, p. 11). The first leg represents leaders (committee chairs) and committee members (teachers) for that specific committee. Take for example the sports committee. The followers under the leadership of that committee chair are the teachers who are members of that specific committee. However these committee members (teachers) are also leaders on their own right because they serve as coaches of various sports codes such as volleyball, netball, soccer and athletics. The second leg denotes the followers such as committee members and other committee chairs and the third leg represents the situation/socio-cultural context which includes cultural, historical and institutional setting (Spillane et al. 2004, p. 22). Leadership *practice* is central to distributive leadership.

The triangle further illustrates, as Spillane et al. (2006) puts it, that “leadership practice is generated in the interactions of leaders, followers and their situations [and] the situation both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice” (p. 4). Therefore, Spillane et al. (2004) underscore the criticality of “the interdependencies among the constituting elements-leaders, followers and situation-of leadership activity” (ibid., p. 16). Thus, as discussed earlier in this section, there are multiple individual leaders within the committees, such as a leader plus leader that take responsibility for leadership activities in the committees. From a distributed perspective, Spillane (2005, p. 4) claims that, “it is the collective interactions among leaders, followers and their situation that are paramount”. This

implies that the relationship between the committee chairs and committee members is crucial in the committees. Committee chairs and committee members interact and act using various tools and materials at their disposal to execute their leadership task. In the committees, leadership practice is not restricted to the committee chair. It can move beyond the committee chairs to include other potential leaders. It can emerge from anywhere within the committee followers.

Consider the following situation. At a hastily called sports committee meeting, the school volleyball co-ordinator, and the sport committee chair were working together to prepare for the upcoming volleyball tournament in their cluster. This meeting was made up of the committee chair, different sports codes co-ordinators and other committee members (teachers). The volleyball co-ordinator was nominated by other sport committee members merely on the basis that he seemed to be active when it comes to sports and particularly volleyball. But the volleyball co-ordinator and the committee chair both lacked basic skills when it comes to the game of volleyball itself. The Physical Education teacher, who recently graduated from college, completed a module on coaching and teaching volleyball techniques and strategies. He also attended numerous coaching clinics while he was at the college.

The practice of facilitating the preparation of volleyball tournament was constituted *in the interaction* of these three leaders, the teachers and the material artifacts they used. For example, both the volleyball co-ordinator and the committee chair argued that volleyball players (learners) must just use any open space in the schoolyard as their volleyball court to practise for the upcoming volleyball tournament. At this point the young graduate interjected, noting that players need to be provided with a safe physical environment and also get acquainted with the rules of volley ball. Most of the committee members agreed and the committee chair was then tasked by other committee members to ensure that the sandy makeshift volleyball court is supplied with a proper net and poles and players given proper outfits for the tournament. At this point the committee chair and volleyball co-ordinator became followers. In a nutshell, in committees there are arrays of other individuals who in one way or another bring different skills, expertise and viewpoints to the committee that the committee chairs might not have (Spillane, 2006). Thus in the scenario discussed, “activity is distributed in the interactive web of actors, artifacts, and situation” (Spillane, et al. 2004, p. 20) whereby the young graduate’s practice enabled the practice of the volleyball co-ordinator and vice versa.

In the context of committees, leadership is influenced by the situation, for instance the situation influences the leader, the leader influences the followers, and they influence the leaders. This implies that leadership in committees is a dynamic process. It is not a ‘thing’ but process that can change anytime. Thus “leadership is present in the *flow* of activities” (Harris, 2003, p. 317, my emphasis) and can move from both sides of the committee setup and vice versa as illustrated in Fig. 1 by the arrows.

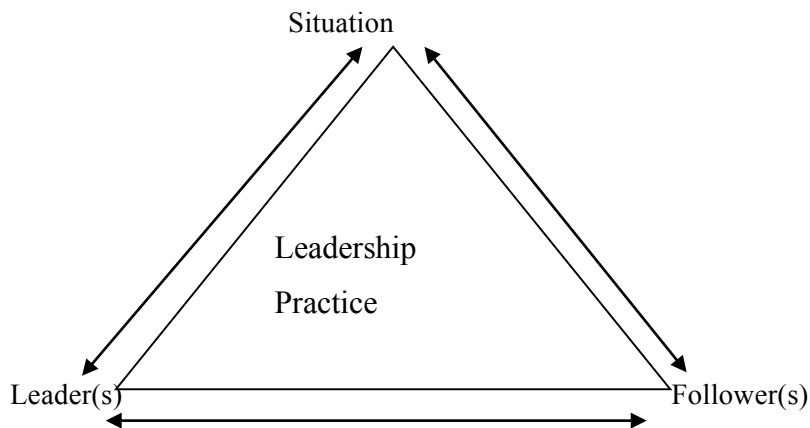


Figure1. Constituting elements of leadership practice. A model of Leadership Practice from a Distributed Perspective (adapted from Spillane, et al. 2004, p. 11)

However, despite these positive qualities the literature does warn that there is a dark side to distributed leadership to which I now turn.

### 2.3.3 The shadow side of distributed leadership

The theory of distributed leadership may have shot to prominence during the last decade, but Bush and Middlewood (2013) warn us to recognise “the dark side of distributed leadership - managerialism in a guise” (p. 23) The suspicion here is that principals may use distributed leadership as a subtle tool of manipulation and control, in this case through a committee management system. Thus Harris (2012) warns that distributed leadership may be “little more than a palatable way of encouraging teachers to do more work, a way of reinforcing standardisation practices in a contemporary guise” (p. vii). This suggests that committee chairs and teachers are enticed into believing that they are empowered when delegated work by the principal while in reality the power remains with the principal. This is in line with Grant (2008) when she explains that, distributed leadership as authorised which also termed delegated leadership, is where work is distributed from the principal to others (p. 87). This type of

leadership is, as per Woods (2004), “evident where there are teams, informal work groups, committees and so on, operating within a hierarchical organisation” (p. 6). This would not qualify as distributed leadership at all.

Some academics acknowledge that distributed leadership theory is not perfect. For example Harris and Spillane (2008) warn that “it is not a blue print for doing school leadership more effectively” (Spillane, 2006, p. 15). It is neither good nor bad. Instead it works as “an analytical or conceptual tool to guide researchers and practitioners in doing their work, not a prescription on how to do it” (Timperley, 2008, p. 823). This is an important observation at a time when much of so-called leadership ‘theory’ is nothing more than a set of ‘recipes’. A further criticism of distributed leadership is that the literature lacks clarity on the power re-distribution within the school where the distinctions between followers and leaders tend to blur. In addition, there is “no mention made of the kinds of structural barriers such as gender and race that might provoke questions about including a wider range of people in leadership” (Lumby, 2013, p. 583). Distributed leadership literature usually does not explicitly spell out how the issues of power re-distribution, gender, race and age are accommodated within the school structures and what enables or constrains leadership practice therein. Thus, as Lumby (2013) points out, “the assertion that everyone could lead is not generally accompanied by deep reflection on the implications of this stance and what inclusion of more in leadership might imply” (p. 583).

Despite these shortcomings there is widespread support of distributed leadership and it will be useful in my study as a lens to diagnose the enactment of leadership practices in school committees. It is also true that distributed leadership as a magnifying glass gives me the tools to help me to think about leadership in a particular context (Spillane et al. 2004). It will further help me as a researcher to decide on what to look at when investigating leadership practices in the school committees. Drawing on Spillane et al. (2004) and Gronn (2000), my unit of interest is *practice* rather than a person or position. I also align myself to their idea that distributed leadership is a good tool because practice is framed as a product of joint interactions of school leaders, followers and aspects of their situation in the case study school.

### **2.3.4 Distributed leadership as a practice (theoretical framework)**

As I indicated earlier in this section, distributed leadership is the theoretical framing of my study. It draws on the work of Engeström’s activity and cognitive theory (Spillane et al. 2004). An activity system is “a collective labour process composed of the interaction of six

intermediate components: subject(s), instrument(s), object(ive), division of labour, community (of practice), and rules” (Hatcher, 2005, p. 256).

Engeström’s model (fig.2) articulates with Spillane et al. (2004) and Timperley’s (2008) understanding of followers and situation being the core constituents of leadership. The model’s strength is its ability to analyse the nature and scope of leadership practice through examination of a complex situation (community), what roles (division of labour) are taken on and or allocated and, in terms of the outcomes of the activity, how followers are affected. The interactive components mentioned above of Engeström’s activity system support and relate well to a distributed leadership perspective’s interactive web of leaders, followers, artifacts and the situation with various instruments at their disposal to accomplish a leadership task. That is to say both models of Spillane et al. (2004) and Engeström (2000) focus on relationships among elements or components in the sense that agency and structure mutually constitute each other at the committee level in this case through the continuous flow of activities. This suggests that both models acknowledge the fact that leadership does not exist in isolation.

The central point of distributed leadership as a magnifying glass is the leadership activity, which examines “leaders’ thinking and action in situ” (Spillane, 2004, p. 24). In this instance, we cannot remove human cognition and action from the environment or situation in which it enmeshed. Another point is, as per Spillane et al. (2004), is that human reasoning is not solely dependent on mental capacity as, “sense-making is enabled (and constrained) by the situation in which it takes place” (p. 9). Therefore, the success of actors’ thinking and response are connected to the instruments (tools and resources) at their disposal and the situation. It is for these reasons that I elect to use distributed leadership theory, as articulated by Spillane et al. (2004) as my theoretical framework.

In this study, committee leadership activities are studied as activity systems usually represented (see fig. 2) as follows:

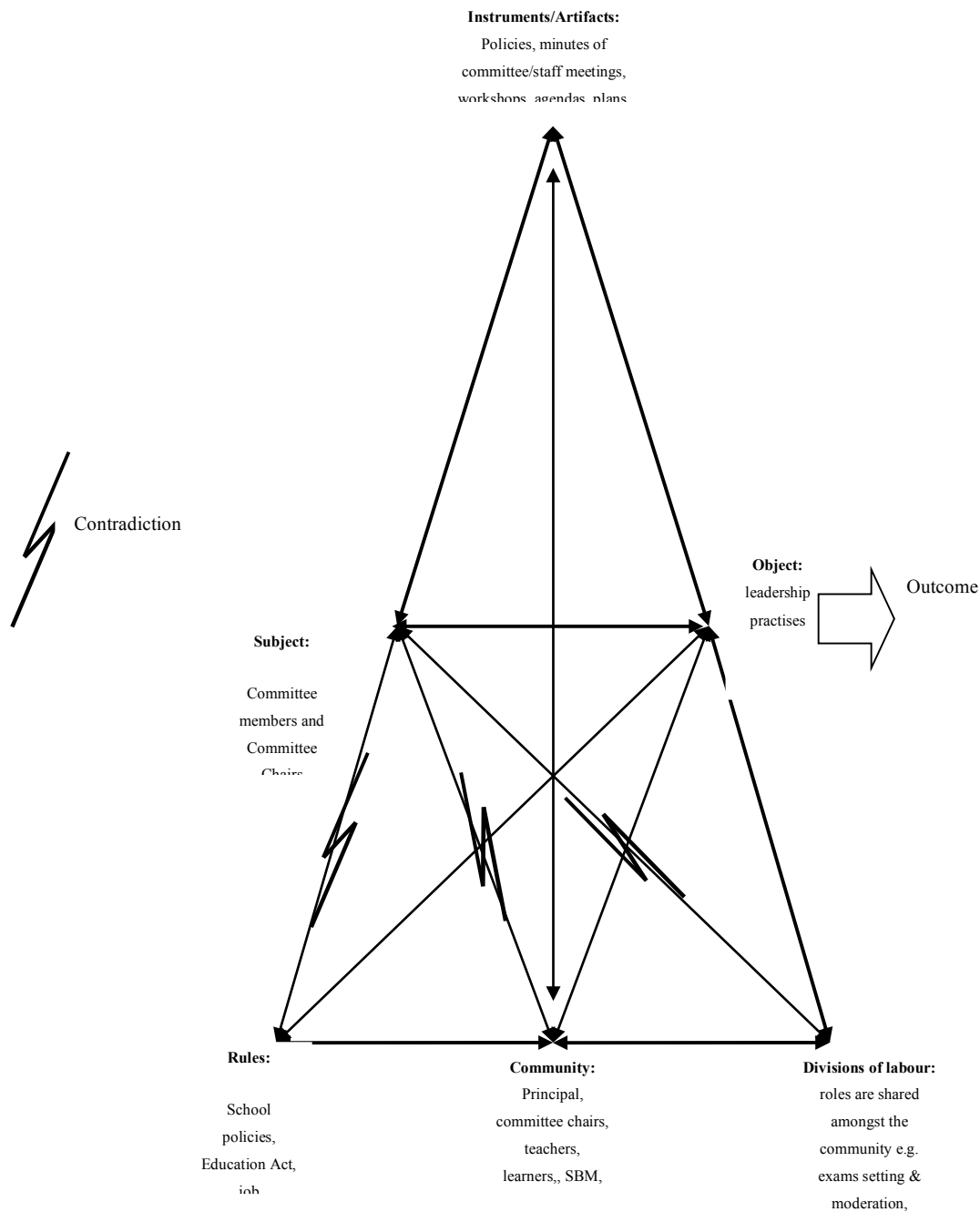


Figure 1 above depicts Engeström's Human Activity System (2<sup>nd</sup> Generation) (Engeström, 2000).

The activity system in this case study school is the committees. The study is about the committees members therefore the committees members as shown above in Engeström's Human Activity System are the subject. The object is learning about leadership practices in committees.

The instruments or artifacts at their disposal are agendas, minutes of previous meetings and any other documents pertaining to their work at school. The *tools/artifacts* shape the way the committee members) interact with reality and usually reflect the experiences of other people who, for example, have tried to solve similar problems at an earlier time and invented or modified the *tool* to make it more efficient (Spillane et al., 2004). This experience is accumulated in the structural properties of *tools* as mentioned above in this paragraph as well as in the knowledge of how the *tools* should be used. Thus, it is vital how *resources* and *tools* are used because they regulate and give direction (Vennebo and Ottesen, 2012). Furthermore the *tools* or *artifacts* help to generate the knowledge and understanding to enhance leadership practices in committees and in the school as a whole. Tools such as *programmes, plans of action, internal school policies* are created and transformed during the development of the activity itself and carry with them a particular culture - the historical remnants from the “previous human action” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 23). Therefore, the use of *tools* is a means for the buildup and transmission of social knowledge. This advocates that even when an individual commences on a particular cognitive task, that individual relies on numerous sociocultural artifacts, (Spillane, 2004. p. 9). In other words the use of tools does not only influence the nature and the external behaviour, but also the mental functioning of individuals.

The regulations expressed in the official documentations govern the conduct of the community. However, in the Namibian context, policy documents (such as *Education Act, Act 16 of 2001 and Guidelines for School Principals*) do not stipulate clearly how the subject (*committee members*) should operate and this leaves them (the subjects) in a dilemma. For this reason, the community (*principal, committee chairs and teachers*) develop their own *rules (job descriptions and other internal school policies)* to govern committees in line with their unique environment. The community served includes the school as a whole and even beyond the school (such as *parents, cluster, and circuit*).

Furthermore, rules *enable* or *constrain* the subject from carrying out its leadership practices in committees fruitfully, for instance in the case of the sport committee wanting to get money approved by the finance committee to buy un-budgeted items. In this case the finance committee refused to approve the requisition from the sport committee on the grounds that the *rules* state that money must only be used for budgeted items.

On the other hand, *rules* help the *community* to work towards the *object* and the *division of labour*. Division of labour is determined by the *roles* allocated or developed by the *community*

as they interact among themselves in committees in what is referred to as an ‘*interactive web*’ by Spillane et al. (2004) and as ‘*interactive components*’ in Engeström’s activity system. These would include *roles* such as chairpersons, secretaries, setting and moderation of examination papers, coaching different sport codes and buying cultural attire. They would also allow for *informal role* adoption such as the expression of unsolicited leadership initiatives (Harris and Muijs, 2005). This insinuates that informal role adoption is an example of agency.

Moreover, Spillane et al. (2004) postulate that leadership practises in the community are socially distributed over leaders, followers and their situational contexts. In schools there are staffs of varied qualifications and specific *experiences* and *expertise* it is against this ground that *division of labour* provides the opportunity for the specialization of cooperating individuals to perform specific tasks and roles in school committees. Thus there is a high degree of *interdependency* in the community rather than *dependency* when leaders of various roles share and carry out responsibility.

CHAT is extremely helpful framework in the sense that it was designed to surface contradictions. This is in line with Roth (2004) when he says “Cultural Historical Activity Theory provides the tools to locate and articulate internal contradictions and to design concrete collective actions to remove them” (p.7). That is to say, it is an accepted fact that human activity never runs as intended, and there will always be problems and unforeseen stumbling blocks. CHAT enables one to identify these as contradictions between various parts of the activity system. This chapter aims to surface contradictions. Contradictions are healthy for an activity system as they are according to Engeström (1999) “sources of change and development” (p.3).

In this scenario, the examination committee is busy setting up a mock or school based examination. Committee members are working on this leadership task using various mediational tools/artifacts and resources at their disposal (for example agendas, memos, previous question papers, syllabi, schemes of work, marking pens, textbooks and examiners’ reports). The examination guide, the availability and non-availability of resources enable the committee members and constrain them during this leadership activity. As they navigate their way through, tensions and contradictions are likely to arise along the road to a successful outcome. These may occur between any elements of the activity system, for example some members may not observe the committee’s rules in order to achieve an effective outcome. Moreover, Spillane and friends underscore the interdependencies among the constituting elements (leaders, followers and situation) of the leadership task.

Interestingly, these committee members bring various but rich cultural capital, such as expertise and experience, which they use to execute and reach their objectives. Furthermore, the committee members divide roles such as chairperson, secretary, subject experts, setters, moderators and typists amongst themselves. The committee chair and teachers interact, think and act using tools to execute their leadership tasks. The situation in which they are enmeshed influence their thinking and action.

As per the work of Spillane et al. (2004), this scenario implies that, “human activity is distributed in the interactive web of actors in situations working with socio-cultural artifacts” (p.20). For Harris (2003), “in activity theory, the notion of activity bridges the gaps between agency and structure which implies that social or organisational structures can be modified by the agency of individuals by using whatever power resources are at hand” (p. 316). In other words, during this interactive activity rules are bent and twisted to suit the situation actors find themselves in.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed some South African, Namibian and international literature on leadership practices and provided a theoretical framework for my study. The chapter began with a discussion of the broader terms of leadership and management as the foundation of distributed leadership. The chapter presented the theory of distributed leadership to provide conceptual framework to the data of leadership practice as presented and discussed in Chapter Four.

The chapter has argued that leadership practices in school committees are very critical in school, especially, in this era when school environments world-wide have become complex entities. Leaders need to create a conducive environment where leadership can flourish. Distributive leadership has the capacity to transform schools, raise performance, encourage and inspire staff. Each school committee could be inspired to take control of one aspect of school management through its leadership practices. The Committee Chairs’ influence reverberates from classroom contexts, throughout the whole school, the school community, the cluster and the circuit. Committee Chairs work with fellow teachers and some even serve on the School Management Team (SMT) and in the community, such as in the cluster and the circuit availing their expertise, experience and initiative to benefit the school holistically. A good school committee leadership practice is more than taking control of an aspect of school life. In conclusion, it is worth noting that, leadership practices in school committees management

system is characterised by interactions between actors (Committee Chairs and teachers). Basically in school committees consensus and compromise is reached through dialogue. As such, the chapter argues for the use of Engeström's activity as a suitable lens through which to analyse my data.

In the next chapter I present and justify my research design.

# CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Methodology is an encompassing term that discusses the manner in which scholars approach a case under study in their quest to understand it and seek resolutions (Creswell, 1998). Kaplan (in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 45) suggests that “the aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself”. Cohen et al. (2007) refer to methods as “a range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction” (p. 47). Therefore, this chapter presents the research methodology and methods used to explore how leadership is practiced in school committees in a public rural combined school in the Ohangwena Region, Namibia. It further includes a detailed explanation of the research approach used, the research site, the data gathering and analysis processes, and the ethical aspects of the research.

I now go on to discuss the research paradigm.

### 3.2 Research paradigm

In an attempt to understand how leadership is practiced in school committees at a school, I employed a qualitative research framework, specifically the interpretive approach. I believe that the qualitative interpretive approach is the most suitable for my study as it seeks to understand different social perspectives, make sense of them and develop a deeper understanding of a specific situation (Lotz-Sisitka, Fien & Ketlhoilwe, 2012). Similarly, Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) assert that the interpretive paradigm focuses on “the understanding of individual participants’ experience and perceptions of their professional roles as experienced in their day-to-day working environment, from the standpoint of their unique contexts and backgrounds” (p. 21).

The interpretive researcher, argues Wellington (2000, p. 16), accepts that reality is a human construct and knowledge is constructed through the interaction of people and there are multiple realities out there in the world and that knowledge arises through a process of human actions

which have motives and are preceded by intentions and possibly accompanied by reflection. Grounded on these assertions and to gain a deeper understanding of the views of people regarding the phenomenon under study, I interviewed people occupying different positions in the case study school with varying experiences of the phenomenon of leadership practices in committees. Thus I, as an interpretive researcher, focused on the understanding of individual participants' experiences and viewpoints of their leadership practices as experienced in their day-to-day working environment (in this case committees) in their unique context.

### **3.3 A case study approach**

The research adopted the case study approach. A case study approach is a form of qualitative descriptive research which is used to look at a small group of participants (Creswell, 1998). This suggests that the end product of a case study is a rich 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study. A 'thick' description refers to the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated within a context that is bounded by time and place (Creswell, 1998, p. 37). Yin (2014) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon ('the case') in depth and within its depth and within its real world context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). As per Yin (2014), a case study method is used in educational research because of its numerous hallmarks. That is to say, a case study inquiry

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result,
- benefits from the prior development theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2014, p. 17).

Rule and John (2011) argue that a case study as a process "involves following a number of steps such as identifying a case, reading around the case and its context, gaining access to people, documents and places, gathering information about the case, analysing the data, writing it up and presenting it" (p. 5). They further state that the process of conducting a case study often involves interacting closely with other people and developing relationships with them (ibid). For Cohen et al. (2007), "a case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by representing with

abstract theories or principles” (p. 289). These views are in line with the goal of this study which sought to explore and report on the real leadership practices in committees in the unique context of the case study school. For these reasons, a case study design was found appropriate for this study where leadership practices of Committee Chairs and other committee members was the unit of analysis.

Cohen and colleagues (2007) argue that “it is important in case studies for events and situations to be allowed to speak for themselves, rather than to be largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher” (p. 290). Based on this view, as a researcher, I allowed the data to “*speak*” with minimum interference. For Leedy and Ormrod (2010), “a case study may be especially suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation” (p. 137). This case study did exactly that by unpacking leadership practices in a range of committees in a public rural combined school in Namibia – a topic poorly understood and under researched in this context. One of the main objectives of this study was to consider the participants’ views and experiences of their leadership practices in committees. So, my study employed the strategy of a single case, which drew on data from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation and documents analysis with the intention to investigate the leadership practices within committee structures. The strategy of a single case study implies that “researchers focus on a single case, perhaps because its unique or exceptional qualities can promote understanding or inform practice for similar situations” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 137). My study did precisely this by uncovering factors that enhanced and inhibited leadership practices in school committees and providing recommendations for both practice and future research. Hence, this study is in the position to inform the Ministry of Education, Non-Governmental Organization, Inspectors of Education, principals, teachers, and researchers who are interested in the leadership practices of members of committees in the Namibian schooling system.

### **3.3.1 The research site**

A remote rural public Combined School in the Evida Circuit (pseudonym) of the Ohangwena region in Namibia provided the research site for this study. Ekuva Combined School is situated in the Ohama cluster (pseudonym) in the Ohangwena Education Directorate. Ohangwena is one of the furthest regions from Windhoek and the most populated rural region in Namibia.

There are six schools in the Ohama cluster where my case study school, Ekuva Combined School, is situated. Four schools are primary schools (pre-primary to grade seven) and two

schools are combined (pre-primary to grade 10). Ekuva, a combined school, is situated approximately 10 kilometres from the Southern Namibian Angolan borders, and it is about 25 km North - West of Eenhana, the capital city the Ohangwena Region. It is a day school, named after the village where it is situated. The school is one of the oldest schools in Namibia, established in 1921. According to one of the cleaners at the school whose parents were born there, the school suffered during the then Apartheid regime in 1980. Some of its buildings were razed down to the ground by the then South African Defence Force (SADF) (I). However the school rebuilt itself with the help of the community, the church and with very little help from the government of the day.

The school has a staff complement of 28 educators, eight male and 20 female, and a learner enrolment of 842. There are 31 permanent teachers, one Peace Corps volunteer from the United States of America (USA), two teachers on a one year contract, a school secretary and two cleaners. The school management team comprises the principal, three Heads of Department and four teachers. Furthermore, the school educates learners from the pre-primary grade to Grade 10 and offers Oshikwanyama first language as a language of teaching and learning (medium of instruction) from pre-primary to grade three whereas English is offered as a subject. English, which is the official language in Namibia, is offered as the language of teaching and learning (second language) from grades four to ten. Moreover, the school has 29 permanent classrooms, 12 water closet flushing toilets; a small library housed in a storeroom and a well-equipped play area for the pre-primary and foundation phase learners. The older learners spend their break times on the not-so-well equipped open school ground that houses the soccer, netball and volley ball pitches. There is a national programme called the Namibia School Feeding Programme (NSFP) which is specifically designed to cater for learners in pre-primary to grade seven (D1). Therefore, 490 learners under this feeding scheme receive maize blend and are fed with soft porridge at school during a mid-day break time (D1). The school administration block houses the staffroom, head of departments' offices and the principal's office. There is a teachers' house on the premises that can accommodate three teachers while the rest of the teachers rent accommodation in the nearby location. The school has a strong fence and a gate which is always locked for the safety of learners.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, in a recent pilot study that I conducted at this school for the coursework component of my Master of Education degree, there was a sign of distributed leadership through committees headed by teachers, but I was not sure whether these

committees functioned effectively (Vaeta, 2014). Due to these uncertainties, I decided to return to the same school for the thesis component of my degree to explore how leadership is practiced in committees.

### **3.3.2 Sampling and participants**

A sample is a limited number of elements selected from a population to be representative of that population (Merriam, 2009). The sampling of committees as well as the participants for my study was informed by the purposive preference in qualitative research. Purposeful sampling according to Creswell (2007):

is not a probability sample that will enable a researcher to determine statistical inferences to a population; rather, it is purposeful sample that will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination (p. 18)

As supported by Cohen et al. (2011), “in purposive sampling often (but by no means exclusively) a feature of qualitative research, researchers hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought” (p. 156). Similarly, Merriam (2009), sees purposeful sampling as “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 77). In the case study school, there were 13 committees in total. The sampling of these committees was influenced by the following: I had an interest in the leadership practices of teachers within committees. Thus I selected committees chaired by teachers who did not hold a management position in the school. Following this criterion, four committees formed the focus of my study; these included the examination and assessment committee, the culture and entertainment committee, the disciplinary committee and the sports committee.

The primary participants in my study included the committee chair and a teacher member of each of the four committees. The Committee Chairs and the teacher committee members were selected because they were in possession of first-hand information concerning leadership practice in committees. In addition, I included an additional participant in my study, the principal of the case study school. I included the principal to get his perceptions and to explore his understanding of leadership practices in committees and establish how he promoted or did not promote leadership practices in committees. So, I had nine primary participants in total. I also included a secondary group of participants in my study. This was an additional group of

nine teachers who were members of the other nine committees at the case study school. This sample was selected in order to complement other views collected across the dataset on the study phenomenon and to enable triangulation.

### **3.4 Data collection process**

The data collection process took a period of four weeks. During this period I spent every day at the case study school and used a range of instruments to collect my data. Rule and John (2011) claim that “instruments of data collection are what you use to gather and record the data” (p. 59). Grounded in this claim, I used various methods to collect data, namely: questionnaires, document analysis; semi-structured interviews and observations. The reason behind using various tools was to boost validity of the data collected through triangulation. Cohen et al. (2011) note that “validity is an important key to effective research. If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless. Validity is thus a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative / naturalistic research” (p.179). To reduce the chances of reaching false conclusions and to boost validity, the information from all four data collection methods was carefully compared and then triangulated. To enhance the trustworthiness of this research, I did member checking to confirm accuracy of responses from participants and I carefully created audit trails of evidence. The data collection methods are explained in detail in the following sub-sections.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaires**

Rule and John (2011) assert that questionnaires are “printed sets of field questions to which participants respond on their own (self-administered) or in the presence of the researcher” (p.66). In line with Rule and John (2011), self-completion questionnaires (Appendix A) were administered to the 17 teacher participants in my study. These questionnaires were handed out to participants at the beginning of the study to allow ample time for participants to complete them. The purpose of the questionnaire was to enable me to get the perceptions of teachers on leadership practices in committees. The questionnaires consisted of closed-questions covering all *four* research questions in this study. I chose the closed-question approach with the idea that it is able to, as Cohen et al. (2007) claim, “prescribe the range of responses from which the responded may choose and enable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample: and they are quick to complete and straightforward to code” (p. 321). Qualitative data from questionnaires were used to serve as a frame work to triangulate with document analysis and observations. Furthermore, participants responded to field questions by placing a cross in the

column that most closely described their opinions using a *scale* such as 4= *strongly agree*, 3= *agree*, 2=*disagree*, 1= *strongly disagree*. Participants did this exercise without the presence of the researcher which also provided greater anonymity for the respondent. Cohen et al. (2011) affirm that

The absence of the researcher is helpful in that it enables respondents to complete the questionnaire in private, to devote as much time as they wish to its completion, to be in familiar surroundings, and to avoid the potential threat or pressure to participate caused by the researcher's presence (p. 404).

The downside of not being present is that a researcher might experience a low return of questionnaires (ibid. p 404). However, my return rate was 100%, all 17 questionnaires were completed and returned. This 100% return rate was because of the continual reminders to the teachers by the principal during the morning briefing sessions to please complete the questionnaire!

### **3.4.2 Document analysis**

A document may be defined briefly as a record of an event or process (Cohen et al. 2011, p. 249). Hodder (1998, in Cohen et al., 2011) advises researchers to observe very important broad distinctions, namely: “distinction between documents created by private individuals and family groups in their everyday lives, and the records produced by local, national and international authorities and small or large organizations” (p. 249). In my study, three sets of school documents were reviewed: the minutes of meetings for: staff, committees, management, briefings, school board and parental meetings (**D 1**), the job descriptions for Committee Chairs and different committees in the school (**D 2**) and correspondences: regional circulars, ministerial guidelines, letters from stakeholders (**D 3**).

The analysis of minutes of meetings for different leadership bodies for example committees, staff, school board, SMT and parents was done to provide me with relevant information on past and present leadership practices in committees. The job descriptions were viewed to analyse what the responsibilities of the committee chairs were. The correspondences were viewed to analyse what support past and recent ministerial policy documents offer to the committee management system in schools - the official standpoint of the government of Namibia and Ministry of Education in respect of leadership practices in committees. These documents are authentic (D2) as they have not been altered to suit research hence they can provide relevant and accurate information. This is in line with Cohen et al. (2011) when they say “primary

documents are produced as a direct record of an event or process by a witness or subject involved in it” (249). Document analysis proved to be worthwhile as a source of data. This is because, as Bowen (2009) argues, “documents can provide data on the context within which research participants operate. Bearing witness to past events, documents provide background information as well as historical insight” (p. 29). The analysis of documents began as soon as I received them and my findings informed the interview process. However, I struggled to get copies of relevant documents to my study, such as the minutes of the committee meetings and job descriptions for committee chairs and other committee members. I discuss these documents and other findings in greater detail in the fourth chapter of my thesis.

### **3.4.3 Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews use predetermined questions and, as Rule and John (2001) explain, “a semi-structured interview would involve a set of pre-set questions which initiate the discussion followed by further by further questions which arise from the discussion” (p.65). For them “this style of interview allows for more flexibility during data collection and creates space for the interviewer to pursue lines of enquiry stimulated by the interview” (p. 65). Similarly Gillham (2000) affirms that the most helpful form of interviewing in case study research is the semi-structured interview in the sense that it offers flexibility in responding to what participants say. I adopted the semi-structured interview process because it allowed me more flexibility during data collection and created the opportunity for further probing and clarification.

I held individual semi-structured interviews with each of my nine primary participants. Each interview session lasted for about 45 minutes. My purpose in interviewing the participants was to gain deep insights into the research questions and to get raw information from the people in situ. I interviewed each participant as per the interview schedule (Appendix B) and the interviews were done mainly in the afternoon so as not to interfere with the core function of the school which is teaching and learning. I sought permission to record participants’ voices with a voice recorder which I later transcribed into written conversation for analysis and the findings are presented and discussed in Chapter Four. The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions that focused mostly on the what, how and why, enabling interviewees to talk freely and to tell their experiences, thereby allowing me to collect thick and rich data in

the process. Through the course of each individual interview, I asked follow-up questions based upon statements made by participants.

There were challenges experienced during this interview process. These included the noisy after-school environment with the school bells ringing at intervals, one participant not keeping to the appointment, some participants who spoke quietly and did not talk much, some participants who talked too much and some participants who failed to bring the requisite documents to the interviews. I overcame these challenges by ensuring that the windows in the interview room were closed, I rescheduled the interview with the teacher who could not keep the appointment, I made sure that the voice recorder was close to the participants who appeared shy and encouraged them to speak more by asking more probing questions (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 421). When I sorted out all these aspects, the interviews went well. Furthermore, these challenges are ubiquitous with interview process. Nonetheless, there are, claim Cohen et al. (2011), “several problems in the actual conduct of an interview that can be anticipated and, possibly, prevented, ensuring that the interview proceeds comfortably, for example avoiding interruptions from outside e.g. telephone calls, people knocking on door” (p. 423).

#### **3.4.4 Observations**

I used observation as another of my data collection tools (Appendix C) to supplement the other data sets. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 456) argue that “observation is more than just looking. It is looking (often systematically) and noting systematically (always) people, events, behaviours, settings, artefacts, routines and so on”. The observation process took a period of four weeks. This is in line with Creswell (2007) who states that “conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied” (p. 18). He further notes “in practice, qualitative researchers conduct their studies in the field where the participants live and work”. For him, “these are important context for understanding what the participants are saying. The longer the researcher stays in the field or get to know the participants, the more they know what they know what from first hand” (ibid).

I planned to do my observations by attending committee meetings, *one* per each committee. However, this did not materialise because during my four week period at the case study school, none of the committees held meetings. I instead observed daily activities as they unfolded such as morning briefing sessions, morning assembly and extramural activities. I observed during these times that some committee activities were announced, such as sport, cultural and cleaning

campaign events that needed the involvement of sport, culture and entertainment and cleaning campaign committees respectively. So, these announcements at these platforms helped me to learn more about the role and functioning of these committees. Additionally, I wrote on my observation schedule whatever I could find on leadership practices that teachers exhibited related to the committee workings within committees and outside the committees at school.

Observations have advantages. Observation helped me to bridge the gap between what my participants claimed through interviews, and what I observed as a researcher. According to Cohen et al. (2011), “observation is a highly flexible form of data collection that can enable the researcher to have access to interactions in a social and to yield systematic records of these in many forms and contexts, to complement other kinds of data” (p. 457). I had a separate observation schedules where I recorded the leadership practices for individual committee as well as a time-table that indicated the dates on which I observed each particular committee meeting but this proved useless. Nevertheless, I got sufficient observation data, despite not being able to observe the committee meetings. These observation data was mostly obtained during the morning briefings, morning assemblies and during extra-curricular activities where some members of sport committees used to be active coaching learners.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The term data analysis refers, as per Cohen et al. (2011), to “making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities”( p. 537). As for Creswell (2007),

data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organising the data (i.e. text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figure, tables, or a discussion (p.148).

As mentioned before in this chapter, my data analysis started immediately after the first data collection tool (self-completion questionnaires) was engaged and this process continued until all the data being collected from the four instruments were analysed. This activity also reduced the piling up of data as I immediately selected out the important data for future use. This is in line with Maxwell (2008, p. 236) when he asserts that “a basic principle of qualitative research is that data analysis should be conducted simultaneously with data collection. This allows you to progressively focus your interviews and observations and to decide how to test your emerging conclusions”. Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 462) add that “early

analysis reduces the problem of data overload by selecting out the significant feature for future focus”.

The data collected was collated, transcribed, coded, summarised, and sorted out into themes, clusters and categories. Categorising strategies such as coding and thematic analysis was applied to questionnaire data. The interview data was analysed in terms of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). CHAT articulates well with a distributed leadership perspective - the theoretical framework of this study.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical measures are principles that the researcher needs to consider when conducting research. Namukwambi (2011) asserts “social science research involves people, so considerable care needs to be exercised by the researcher” (p. 34). In the same stance, Leedy and Ormrod (2005) stress that “whenever human beings are the focus of investigation, we must look closely at the ethical implications of what we are proposing to do” (p. 101). They further state that there are four categories of ethical issues, namely: “protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues” (ibid).

Similarly, Bassey (1999) suggests that researchers, in taking data from persons, should do so in ways which recognize those persons’ initial ownership of the data and which respect them as fellow human beings who are entitled to dignity and privacy” (74). Additionally Creswell (2007) advocates that

A researcher protects the anonymity of the informants, for example, by assigning numbers or aliases to individuals [and] to gain support from participants, a qualitative researcher conveys to participants that they are participating in a study, explains the purpose of the study, and does not engage in deception about the nature of the study (pp. 141-142).

Having all assertions mentioned above in mind, I - as a researcher - guarantee that ethical principles regarding research were followed throughout the study. First, I obtained consent (Appendix D, E, F) from the various gatekeepers – for example, I sought permission from the Ohangwena Regional Directorate of Education and the principal of the case study school. This supports Cohen et al. (2011) who assert that “social research necessitates obtaining the consent and cooperation of subjects who are to assist in investigations and of significant others in the institutions or organisations providing research facilities” (p. 77). For Cohen et al. (2007),

“consent protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research” (p. 52).

In regard to issues of ‘access and acceptance’ by participants (Cohen et al., 2011), I wrote invitations to all potential participants to participate in the study (Appendix G) in which I informed them of their rights to confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study whenever they wished. Furthermore I as a researcher at the beginning explained and elaborated more to the entire staff on matters pertaining to purpose, aims and objectives of my study. For the primary participants I sought their permission to have their voices recorded during the interviews. Participants also signed a declaration form (Appendix H) stating their willingness and voluntary participation in the study.

### **3.7 Positionality**

To study a case where I have a direct interest, presented a distinctive challenge in the sense that participants might have concealed important information from me because of my position as an Inspector of Education. Bourke (2014) claims that “positionality represents a space in which objectivism and subjectivism meet” (p. 3). Freire (as cited in Bourke, 2014, p. 3) suggests the two exist in a “dialectic relationship”. In addition, Bourke (2014) further explains that “we have to acknowledge who we are as individuals, and as members of groups, and as resting in and moving within social positions. Positionality is thus determined by where one stands in relation to ‘the other’ (p. 3). In response, I as an Inspector of Education deliberately chose a school outside of my circuit to do this study to reduce the effect of an unequal power relation. Furthermore, because I was an outsider, one way to reduce the power differential was to try to build trust which I did by spending time in the school – a four week period trying to get to know the principal and staff as colleagues rather than as their ‘senior’. During this four week period, I spent every day in the school, thus I became more like an insider. Furthermore I, in line with Cohen et al. (2011), guarded against ‘bias’ for example, I made an effort to create a relaxed atmosphere of mutual trust and diminish this potential validity threat by talking to the participants informally before the data collection process began. During the morning briefing sessions and assemblies I did not participate in the staff’s discussions and ensured them that I was not there to spy on them.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness involves, argues Creswell (2007) credibility and confirmability of the research findings. Credibility is concerned with the consistency of the conclusion generated from the research findings whereas confirmability is all about the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest. So, to enhance the trustworthiness of my research findings, I collected data from different sources for triangulation purposes, for examples face-to-face interview, observing, questionnaires and document analysis. According to Patton (2002), triangulating data sources means comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times by different means within qualitative methods” (p. 559). This was done to enhance the trustworthiness of the data collected. In short, the trustworthiness of this study was boosted by triangulation and formulation of questions carefully to achieve clarity and the avoidance of bias. Bias according to Cohen et al. (2011) is defined as “a systematic or persistent tendency to make errors in the same direction, that is, to overstate or understate the true value of an attribute” (p.204). Trying to be as objective as possible and attempting as much as possible not to be influenced by perceptions, impressions and biases was beneficial for my study.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I deliberated on the research design and the rationale for using the qualitative research approach. I outlined and explained the methods I used for data collection that enabled me as a researcher to answer my research questions. Moreover I indicated how I chose the primary and secondary participants. I further dealt with ethical issues and trustworthiness of my study.

The next chapter presents, discusses and explains the data generated from the study.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present and discuss the main findings of my study collected from document analysis, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and observations. I begin the chapter by providing a profile of the committees I studied as well as the research participants involved in my research. To remind the reader, the aim of this study was to explore the leadership practices within a range of committees in a public rural combined school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. The study set out to examine what the purpose, roles and membership of each of the four committees were; how these committees were established; what leadership functions the teachers as committee members exercised and what challenges inhibited their leadership practices within committees.

In this research study, the presentation and discussion is structured around my four research questions. These four research questions also served as themes to guide my interpretation:

- What is the purpose, roles and membership of each of the four committees?
- How were committees established?
- What leadership functions did teachers as committee members exercise?
- What are the benefits of having committees?
- What challenges inhibited these teacher leadership practices?

The primary data in this presentation is that obtained from the interviews with Committee Chairs, teachers and the principal. The data from questionnaires, my observation field notes and document analysis are used as harmonising data. I start with a profile of the committees and then continue with the presentation of the data in categories as they appeared from the data analysis process.

#### 4.1.1 Coding and data presentation

Due to ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality of participants which is in line with Basse (1999), pseudonyms are used in this study. It is for this reason that in this chapter, I used codes to present the various participants, data collection instruments and the research site.

The research site has been branded a pseudonym (Ekuva Combined School) in the text so as to respect and protect the identity of the participants in the study. For the sake of easy reading and reference purposes, participants are coded as: **CC1, 2, 3 and 4** for the four Committee Chairs, **P** for the Principal **and T1 to T4** for the four teachers. A description of the research participants is included in section 4.2. During the analysis, I triangulated findings across different data collection instruments to increase trustworthiness of my study.

In presenting my data in this chapter, I use the acronym “Q”, to refer to self-completion questionnaire data from teachers and “I” for individual interview data. The abbreviation “O” denotes Observation done during morning briefings, morning assemblies and at various other times during the school day.

I code the documents as follows:

Document 1: Minutes of meetings namely: staff, committees, management, briefings, school board and parental meetings-**D 1**

Document 2: Job description for Committee Chairs, different committees in the school-**D 2**

Document 3: Correspondences: regional circulars, letters from stakeholders-**D 3**

Because this is an interpretive study, I employ the narrative form as a way of portraying the perceptions and experiences of committee members of leadership practices in committees. I allow their voices to be heard throughout by way of quotations so that the reader is able to experience their environment and context.

## **4.2 A profile of the four committees: purpose, roles and membership**

As discussed in the first Chapter of this thesis, with the reform of the Namibian education system in 1993 and the introduction of the policy document on decentralisation in Namibian in 1996, the committee management system was introduced. In this section, I present and discuss the findings in response to research question one on the purpose, roles, and membership of each of the four committees at the case study school.

Furthermore, as introduced in Chapter One of this thesis, for the purposes of this study a committee may be considered a group comprising a manageable number (approximately eight) of teachers appointed to perform some functions and working towards a common purpose in order to achieve or make things happen for the benefit of the whole school (Namibia. Ministry

of Education [MoE], 2005, p. 143). Examples of committees at schools could include school management committee, finance committee, disciplinary committee, curriculum committees, examination and assessment committees and school development and maintenance committee (Namibia. [MoE], 2005, Namibia. Ministry of Education [MoE], 2010).

In this section I discuss the profile of each committee that was studied. That is its purpose, roles and membership to answer my research question one. In the case study school, there were 13 committees in total

I now go on to present the profile of each committee and that of its members as follow:

#### **4.2.1 Examination and assessment committee**

##### **The purpose:**

The committee was established to oversee the smooth running of school-based examinations and assessments. It consisted of six committee members. This committee was chaired by an ordinary teacher - a teacher not in a promotional post.

##### **1. The committee is responsible for:**

- The overall administration and security of the examinations written at school
- Adherence by the school to the examination dates and time
- Arrange the setting of school based examinations
- Control over the duplication of examination question papers at school
- Arrange for the moderation of marked scripts (D2)

##### **2. Duties:**

- Provide the colleagues and learners with important information, rules and dates pertaining to the examinations
- Draw up the setting and moderation time-tables
- Draw up school based tests and examination time-tables as well as the invigilation time-tables
- Receive, store, issue, control and take responsibility for the safe keeping of test / examination question papers
- Ensure that examinations starting and ending time is adhered to

- Ensure that there are enough materials for examination purpose, like copy papers, printers and copier ink, examination book etc. (D2).

NB: this is a flexible document subject to change (D2)

### **The committee members**

These are the committee members that participated in the individual interview that I conducted.

**CC2** is a male Committee Chair in his early 40s. He has been teaching for twenty years at Ekuva Combined School where he also attended his early school days. He is a member of the examination committee which he chairs as well. He offers Mathematics and Physical Science in Grades 8-10. He holds a Basic Education Teaching Diploma.

**T1** is a younger female teacher in her late 30s. She teaches English as a Second Language in grades 8-10. This teacher has seven years teaching experience. She is a member of the examination committee in which she is responsible for setting up the examination master timetable. She has a Basic Education Teaching Diploma (D2, I).

### **4.2.2 Culture and entertainment committee**

#### Purpose:

The committee was established to develop the culture of the Namibian people, traditions and artistic expression. Inspired by a rich variety of Namibian traditions and inherited styles, it comprised eight committee members and was chaired by an ordinary teacher.

#### Functions:

- Perform traditional dance and songs
- Research traditional dance and songs with ceremonial meanings
- Participate in community singing and dancing groups
- Obtain or make traditional music instruments and use them.(D3)

### **The committee members**

These are the committee members who were my research participants.

**CC3** is a female teacher in her mid-40s. She serves as a Committee Chair for the culture and entertainment committee. She holds a Bachelor of Education Degree, B Ed (Hons) in English as a Second Language and Oshikwanyama as a First Language and from the University of Namibia. She has been teaching since 2000 up to date.

**T4** is a male teacher in his early 30s and he has been teaching for seven years. He is a professionally qualified teacher. He teaches Oshikwanyama as a First Language in grade eight to nine, and English as Second Language in grade eight. He holds an Advanced Certificate in Education (D2, I).

### **4.2.3 Sports Committee**

The sports committee was established to run and organise extramural activities related to different sports codes, including volleyball, netball and soccer. It was comprised of eight committee members. Its organogram was hierarchical in the sense that it depicted the Committee Chair at the top and three coaches each responsible for each sport stated above. These coaches reported to the Committee Chair, an ordinary teacher (D, O).

#### **1. Responsibilities and duties**

- Implement the sport codes as determined by the school authority
- recommend sport days and attires to the School Management Team for approval
- Organise inter - school competition and other tournaments with other schools
- Ensure that learners who represent the school at tournaments are at all times supervised and escorted by a teacher (O, I).

#### **Committee members**

The following committee members were my research participants that represented the sport committee:

**CC1** is a young but energetic male teacher in his late 20s. He boasts of four years teaching experience. He is a Sport Committee Chair and teaches Mathematics in the Junior Secondary phase grades 8 - 10. He is in possession of Basic Education Teacher's Diploma.

**T3** is a male teacher in his late 20s and he has four years teaching experience. He is a professionally unqualified teacher. However, he is currently studying with the Institute of Open

Learning majoring in education. He teaches grade two which is a class teaching. He is a member of the sport committee where he acts as a soccer coach as well (D2, I).

#### **4.2.4 Disciplinary Committee**

The Disciplinary Committee was established to deal with learners' indiscipline or misconduct in the case study school. It comprised six committee members and it was also headed by an ordinary teacher.

Duties and responsibilities:

- Ensure that the school has school rules and regulations
- Register all the problems that teachers encountered with their learners
- Register all problems that learners encountered with other learners
- Refer learners to the counselling committee
- Write letters to invite parent and learners for disciplinary hearing
- Organise disciplinary committee meeting when need arose (O, I).

#### **Committee members**

These are the committee members who were my research participants from disciplinary committee.

CC4 is a male teacher in his early 40s. He is a highly experienced teacher who has been teaching for 12 years. He offers Agricultural Science to grade eight and nine learners, and Life Science to grade eight learners. He holds a Basic Education Teaching Diploma.

T2 is a young vibrant teacher in his late 20s. He has been teaching for four years, well versed with Information and Communication, and he currently teaches Life Science in grades 9 - 10, Agricultural Science in grade 10 and Natural Science and Health Education in grade six. He is a member of the disciplinary committee as an ordinary member. He is in possession of a teaching qualification, Basic Education Teaching Diploma and he is permanently employed as teacher (D2, I).

#### **The school Principal**

As indicated before in Chapter three of this thesis, I included the school principal of the case study school as a research participant and the following is his profile.

**P** is a slightly built school principal of the case study school in his late 30s. He has teaching experience of 15 years when this study was conducted. He became a principal at Ekuva Combined School in 2011 after serving as a Head of Department for Mathematics and Science (grades 8-10) in another school for merely three years. He is permanently employed after successfully completed his probationary period. Mr. P. offers Mathematics in grade nine and Agricultural Science in grade 10. He holds a Master's Degree in Education (MEd) from Midland University in Zimbabwe.

### **4.3 The establishment of committees**

In this section, I present and discuss the findings in response to my second research question on how committees were establishment at the case study school.

#### **4.3.1 The creation of committees**

The Namibian education policy documents namely: the *School Cluster System and Guidelines for School Principals* make provision for the creation of different committees in schools to assist in various schools needs so as to upgrade the quality of teaching and learning (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBEC], 2002, Namibia Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2005). According to policy, the system of committee management system can be “an effective management tool to ensure wider, participation in and ownership of school affairs” (Namibia Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2005, p. 143).

Moreover, in the policy *Towards Education for All and Guidelines for School Principals*, importance is placed on democracy as being one of the key concepts in the Namibian education system and should therefore be fundamental to the way in which schools are managed and administered (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 32). So, in view of the Namibian education legislations, committees were a product of democratic establishment.

Data collected from individual interviews and questionnaires confirmed that committees were established in the school during a staff meeting. The establishment of various committees in the case study school was also acknowledged by the school principal when he said “*What I did*

*when I came to this school, first I called for the staff meeting, and then I told them that there is a need for us to establish the committees” (I).*

To the question “Was there any law that requires the school to have committees”? The principal answered “*The provision is there to have different committees at the school, even though I cannot specify which law” (I).* Even though the principal could not specify which law calls for the establishment of different committees, his comment above clearly showed that he was aware of the provision to have committees in the school. Therefore the idea of coming up with various committees in a case study school was as a result of the principal acting on policy documents. Additionally evidence from the data revealed that there were different types of committees in the school namely, *school management committee, examination and assessment committee, sport committee, disciplinary committee, finance committee, counselling committee, school development committee, culture and entertainment committee, award committee, tuck shop committee and cleaning campaign committee (D2).*

The data further showed that different names of the above-mentioned committees were developed in a staff meeting. The development of names for various committees was further confirmed by the principal when he asserted “*Then during the staff meetings, I told them, these are the committees that we need to have at school” (I).*

The main issues surrounding the establishment of committee illustrate the concept of distributed leadership with emphasis on its central idea of inclusivity, collectivism, empowerment and the democratic. Furthermore the establishment of committees implies sharing of responsibilities and focusing on the achievement of a common vision and goal of the organisation which are the characteristics of committee management system. This democratic move is the first step in the process of “internal devolution of power within the school” (South Africa. Department of Education, [DoE], 1996, p. 29).

#### **4.3.2 Nomination of Committee Members**

Another notable feature that emerged from the data was the nomination of committee members (teachers) and Committee Chairs. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, the appointment of teachers to serve in committees reverberated well with the various Namibian education policies that encourage the principal to involve various stakeholders such as teachers, parents, senior

learners “in specific aspects of school management and administration” (Namibia. Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2005 p. 143).

The principal explained that committee members (teachers) volunteered themselves in a staff meeting to serve on the different committees. He further stressed that the Committee Chairs were also nominated in a staff meeting. This he acknowledged by saying “*And then we also have to identify someone to head a committee. It was decided in the staff meeting*” (I). On the same issue, T2 put it this way: “*I was appointed by other teachers in the staff meeting*” (I).

The nomination and identification of Committee Chairs and committee members in the case study school is one of those mechanisms that the school has put in place to involve teachers in specific aspects of the school leadership and management. In terms of distributed leadership theory, committee members could encompass a wide variety of input, interests, talents and expertise which are utilised for the benefit of the school. This is also in line with Harris and Spillane (2008) who claim that “in the increasingly complex world of education the work of leadership will require diverse types of expertise and forms of leadership flexible enough to meet changing challenges and new demands” (p. 31).

Similarly, this leadership practice of involving teachers in specific aspects of school leadership and management suggest school leadership as a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is scattered over (at least at the level of a committee) the work of a number of individuals where the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001, p. 20). What is implied here is that leadership practice in committees is a dynamic process. It is not a ‘thing’ but a process that can change anytime.

### **4.3.3 The Life span of Committee members**

In Namibia, the Education Act, Act 16 Of 2001 stipulates that “a member of a school board holds office for a term of three years and is eligible for re-election at the expiration of that term” (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBEC], 2001, p. 17). Based on the assertion above by the Education Act, Act 16 Of 2001, it is worth noting here that the life span of committee members has strong support from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in the sense that these sub – committees in the case study school were modelled on Education Act, Act 16 of 2001.

The data gathered at the case study school indicated that the term of office for committee members was three years. The term of office was also affirmed by the data collected during an individual interview with the principal when he stated “*Committees have a life span. So, I give them like three years*”. With follow-up questions the principal clarified “*I give them the duration of three years then I have to shuffle and shuffle, so that each and every one can get a chance in the leadership*”. For him “*The main idea is just I want to empower everyone*” (I). In direct contrast, CC4 said that only some teachers are rotated after their three year term has expired. He alleged “*This is my fourth year in disciplinary committee and I am in management committee for more than six years now*” (I). He recommended, “*They must change the teachers. Change the committees. Put new members for them also to get new experience. Not staying in one committee even for ten years*” (I). What CC4 alleged here was that not all committee members were shuffled or rotated as the principal claimed the active committee were retained members. It could be the fear that if they are rotated then a committee will be completely dysfunctional. The lack of rotation for all committee members to gain experience confirmed my own observations that only some committee members were active in certain committees. Then if committee members are in one committee for more than ten years how could the main idea of empowering everyone the principal alluded to be realised? So, one can conclude that without rotating committee members when the situation arises, the objective of empowering everyone as the principal alleged might not be achieved.

Moreover the interview data and documents too showed that committee members were always replaced with new members whenever a committee member was transferred to another school or when their three years term of office has expired. The replacement of committee members was evident in the document that I consulted (D1, 14.11. 2013) that reads “*Mr. P informed the house that because some committee members were no longer at school and some will only serve up to December, changes should be made*” (D1).

Furthermore, T2 confirmed that usually inactive Committee Chairs were replaced or as he put it “*re-activated*” (I). Similarly the principal in his own words stressed that “*Even the head, if I find out that someone is not that active, and then I have to give responsibility to another person*” (I). The principal’s action to re - activate a Committee Chair was prompted by a situation or context that was not conducive for followers in the committee (Spillane et al., 2004). In other words, and in relation to CHAT, the principal broke or bent the three year rule

when he saw that a certain committee was not functional to suit the situation he and other actors found themselves enmeshed. He took a leadership step that influenced the followers.

#### **4.3.4 Teachers as Committee members**

This section deals with teachers' perceptions about their appointment to various committees.

In Namibia, school principals have strong support from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to “involve various stakeholders in specific aspects of school management and administration” (Namibia. [MoE], 2005, p. 143). Furthermore the Namibian policy document on the *School Cluster System* advocates that committee members should be appointed or nominated by colleagues during staff meetings on the basis of their talents interests, skills, expertise and years of service (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBEC], 2002). I opine that by involving all stakeholders in the day - to - day running of the school paves the way for the committee members' expertise, talents and interests to be utilised for the benefit of the school.

When committee members were asked on what grounds their colleagues nominated them, they could not exactly explain what criteria were used. Some felt that maybe their fellow teachers looked at some skills and qualities such as self-esteem, being a good listener, good communicator and probably what the person likes - hobbies (I). In others words, they gave various views on this issue. *T1* for example deduced that she was nominated by her colleagues, because culture was her favourite and that she liked dancing all the times. “*They just look at what you always do, although I don't know how they did it*” (I). Supporting the same stance, *CC3* reasoned that, “*Maybe they found out that I am a good entertainer with cultural activities that is why they chose me*” (I). On the other hand, *T2* who hailed from disciplinary committee seemed to have some clues “*They look at how probably confidential the person is and in terms of disciplinary how you act, how do you judge and for what reasons*” (I).

Different expertise in committees suggests a collective attribute spread across committee management system which is drawn upon to accomplish tasks. Consequently these attributes- “*skills, talent, expertise and experience*” are only useful when utilised in what Spillane et al. (2004) term as the “*interactive web*” or “*interactive component*” in CHAT - where interaction between actors and the artifacts they use around a leadership task is paramount. What is connoted here is that committee members with different background knowledge, expertise,

skills and experiences, could spark rich learning opportunities from each other when group members bring their various perspectives and skills to bear on the leadership task at hand. This expertise and knowledge enriches in terms of CHAT the division of labour in committees as well as promotes interdependencies among the committee members (Spillane et al, 2004). However during my stay in the case study school, it was not evident how this expertise was being used as the committee rarely met to work around a leadership task where their expertise and knowledge could be utilized for the benefit of the whole school. That is to say, when committee members meet if they meet at all, only some committee members turned up.

### **4.3.5 The attributes of a Committee Chair**

A Committee Chair needs to possess particular skills and where they are lacking some abilities; they need to involve other committee members. Data generated from various participants confirmed that a good Committee Chair needs to have the ability to think of something new that is not there at the school and then as CC3 put it, *“You need to be able to bring people on board because, again you cannot do it on your own. You don’t just tell them what to do. Invite them in if you want them to take part”* (I).

Additionally, the principal wanted *“A person who is really in charge of the committee, someone who can initiate and someone who can take decisions”* (I). He further elaborated that he did not want a committee chair to be there and just without taking any decision. For him *“A head of the committee is supposed to take decisions. Then give me the feedback or consult me when it is necessary”* (I). ). The giving of feedback as the principal alluded to above, I would say is an important aspect in the committee management system in the sense that feedback can help the principal to monitor and be in touch with the leadership practices in committees. Thus, in my opinion, the principal by virtue of the power invested in him by the appointing authority needs to get feedback from Committee Chairs which is one way of ensuring quality check in the school as a whole. However, despite the principal wanting a Committee Chair ( a subject in terms of CHAT) who gives feedback to him, I observed that it was not clear how feedback was given to him as there were no clear channels of communication or tools (minutes) on the grounds in this regards. Additionally, to initiate and take decisions are good attributes of a Committee Chair. But, I noticed that initiating and taking decisions in the absence of a proper job description for each Committee Chair in the case study school was a daunting task for Committee Chairs. This, one could say, was because Committee Chairs were not so sure what was expected of them.

Another strong skill that came out of the data was that committee chairs needed to be strong and well-focused when running a particular committee or group. This was how CC2 explained the point: *“You also need to be quite strong, resilient because sometimes things will not go well and you won’t give up”* (I). For him, *“when everyone wants to start losing interest the Committee Chair must be the one who says we are not giving up, carry on, we will find our way through this and that”* (I).

In a situation where a Committee Chair has to bring other committee members on board endorses the importance of a social distribution of leadership practice which is distributed among leaders and followers. In the language of Spillane et al. (2004, p. 19), this practice suggests that leaders are dependent on the followers they lead and vice versa because followers can influence leaders by drawing on personal characteristics, access to information, or special knowledge or expertise. Sharing of leadership between committee members is paramount because it places emphasis on the development of what Spillane and colleagues, (2004) term “a negotiated order between leaders and followers” (p.19). Furthermore inviting committee members on board exploits various experiences and expertise of other colleagues in the committees and these results in the division of labour that provides the opportunity for the specialization of cooperating individuals to perform specific tasks and roles in school committees. Thus Committee Chairs have the capacity to influence decision-making informally and formally through their interactions in committees, with each other and with other people in the school. Leadership in this informal sense, Harris and Muijs (2005) suggest, is a dynamic between individuals, a “by-product of social interaction and purposeful collaboration” (p.14).

#### **4.4 What leadership functions did the teachers as committee members exercise?**

This section presents and discusses the findings on my third research question, what leadership functions do committee members exercise?

From what was gathered across all the data sets, four themes emerged and are discussed below.

##### **4.4.1 The roles of Committee Chairs**

The Committee Chair is a key person responsible for the smooth functioning of the committee (Trecker & Trecker, 1979). To alert the reader, I am aware that the book by Trucker and

Trucker is an old one but the information is relevant to my situation and I am using it because literature on this topic is hard to find.

Participants, especially Committee Chairs, were asked to say what their leadership functions in the committees were. The purpose of asking this question was to establish if participants had a clear idea of what leadership practices were involved in the committee structure and what these entailed as well as to establish whether their understanding depended on their experience while serving in committees. In response, different answers were presented, for example the Committee Chair (CC3) for the culture and entertainment committee put it this way “*My functions in the committee is working as an initiator and monitoring the learners’ entertainment*” (I). Additionally, the Committee Chair (CC1) in charge of the sport committee expressed his view on the leadership function of Committee Chair as “*Giving people some responsibilities*” (I) for him, his leadership function in the sport committee was as he explained, “*I delegate, I delegate other colleagues*” (I). It was not evident in the case study what was initiated by the committee chairs. Nevertheless I have observed the committee chair delegating tasks to committee members during the morning briefing to take care of different sport codes volleyball and soccer in the afternoon (O).

Moreover, the Teacher (T1) from the examination and assessment committee also had almost the same understanding as other colleagues on the functions of a Committee Chair when she said, “*You are just supposed to lead them and tell, instruct them what to do. You are the head there. Tell them what to do, direct them*” (I). When T1 was further asked this question “*What is your role especially in the examination committee*” (I)? she revealed that she was an expert in when it comes to examination matters as she elaborated more, “*I used to come up with a time table for grade five to seven as well as the invigilation timetable for grade 10 which shows who is going to invigilate in which class and moderation list, who is going to moderate which subjects*” (I).

On answering the question on the roles of a Committee Chair, the principal commented as follow: “*I want the head of the committee, somebody who is responsible; convene meetings; discuss meetings then forward the minutes to my office and keep me updated on whatever have been discussed*” (I). What is implied here is that the duties of a Committee Chair can also include among others: organising committee meetings, giving feedback to the principal to enable him / her to keep track of everything that happens in the school (Namibia, [MoE], 2005, p.146). The principal’s intentions seemed to be straight forward but during my stay in the case

study school, I did not observe any committee chair convening meetings and forwarding the minutes to the principal's office. If I had stayed longer than the four weeks, maybe I could have observed some of the claims made by the principal above.

Furthermore, what I observed in the case study school was that in most situations leadership tasks (cluster based examination, disciplinary issues, cleaning campaign, sport tournaments) were delegated from the top, usually from the principal's office to the Committee Chairs and from Committee Chair to other committee members (O). The committee chairs' assertion that they delegate tasks to committee members is in line with what Grant (2008) calls distributed leadership as authorised which is also termed as delegated leadership (p. 87). Delegating work to committee members by committee chairs suggest that the roles are divided among each other through interactions. But as we shall see later in this section there were no clear guidance (rules) for all committees in the case study school on what their functions were. Hence in the absence of rules governing committees in the case study school on how the leadership practice should be done, Committee Chairs operated without really knowing what their leadership tasks entailed. Their roles became managerial (Bush, 2007) rather than leadership in the sense that Committee Chairs mainly focused on ensuring that work delegated to them from the principal's office was done well such as, among others, developing an examination timetable, ensuring that money is spent as per the budget and sport kits and cultural attires are looked after properly. Moreover, Committee Chairs implemented what was already planned and developed by policy makers without Committee Chairs' input (i.e. maintaining the status quo). So, the lack of input from the Committee Chairs may account for the absence of commitment and ownership the Committee Chairs have towards the committee management system.

#### **4.4.2 Job description for committee members**

A job description generally includes written duties, purpose, and responsibilities of the person, in this case a committee chair (Trecker & Trecker, 1979, p. 122). When a question was posed to participants whether they were provided with a job description, they were divided in their answers. Some said they had, some said they had not, and those who claimed they had could not produce a copy of their job descriptions. For example, when T1 was asked whether she had a job description, this was what she had to say, "*No, no. No evidence*" (I). Similarly, CC2 responded, "*We don't really have job descriptions. They know some ...you know most of the time like if a learner, most of the time we are just giving learners a guidance*" (I). CC1 and

CC3 claimed to have job descriptions but failed to provide them when asked for a copy. However, answering the question concerning job descriptions, CC3 said:

*Yes we did get. We were given the job description since I can remember one circular that we got from the region on what to, do. But now I could not remember because I did not consult the person who remained in my office when I left for study whether that document is still in place. I will still go and find out (I).*

The quotation above was referring to the circular from the regional office, already cited in this chapter, on how to establish cultural clubs at school but not the job description provided by the school. Hence CC3 was unable to provide her job description as requested. In contrast to what Committee Chairs and teachers said above about not having job descriptions, the principal reiterated that Committee Chairs were provided with job descriptions that should be shared with other committee members. He further explained that:

*What I did when committees were established, they were given job descriptions that your work is to do what, what. The Finance Committee, your work is to do what, what. So, and I filed those job description. Some of them are in my file there (I).*

The excerpt above was clear that only some of those copies of job descriptions were filed and available in the school. I observed that even though some job descriptions were filed in the principal's office, committee members were not made aware of them. So, those job descriptions were not helpful. The data revealed that the following committee duty sheets were available in the school as claimed by the principal: duty sheet of the examination and assessment committee; duty sheet of the support group and counselling committees; duties and responsibilities of feeding programme committee, and the duty sheet for the awarding committee (D2). The roles stipulated in the job description documents of some of the committees studied are, for example, the implementation of all the sport codes, convening committee meetings, referring learners to the counselling committee and researching traditional dance songs with ceremonial meanings.

The whole sub-section above presents conflicting responses from participants about the availability of the job descriptions in committees but only some committees were in possession of duty sheets. In the language of CHAT, rules would serve as meditational means for leadership activity in committees. Since they are rules derived from policies, they guide and assist in the day-to-day running of the committees. The non-existence of job descriptions in the case study school leaves the subject-committee members in a dilemma when it comes to operation or performing of various tasks in the committees. Job descriptions direct and

empower committee members. The policy documents (Education Act, Act 16 of 2001 and Guidelines for School Principals) did not develop regulations in relation to how committees should operate, schools were expected to develop their own rules to govern the committees and in line with their unique situations or contexts. However, as indicated above, a quick glance at the rules at hand indicates that they focus on pure management-rigid regulative tasks and procedures. So, in this situation, I would say, the lack of balance between leadership and management in the job descriptions leaves few opportunities for leadership practices in committees. Similarly, the absence of balanced job descriptions in the case study school constrained the leadership practice in committees in that it inhibits communication among committee members. This implies that Committee Chairs in most cases did not know what is expected of them by their peers and the school as a whole. Therefore a situation like this is not conducive to the achievement of the objective-leadership practice in committees. From a leadership perspective there was a lack of initiative, creativity and agency. This implies that there were no activities to bridge the gaps between agency and structure. This is something the CHAT model does not really account for. Thus the fact that the committee members did not, of their own accord, realise that they needed job descriptions and proceeded to design them suggests an absence of leadership. It suggests that they are waiting to be told what to do, a real managerialist mind-set.

#### **4.4.3 Committee meetings**

The data collected from across the data sets demonstrated that formal committee meetings were rarely convened and, when convened, few committee members showed up. As pointed out before in this chapter, my study concentrated mostly on four committees - the examination and assessment committee, the culture and entertainment committee, the disciplinary committee and the sports committee. But for better triangulation of data and because my questionnaires had a question on committee meetings, I requested minutes from other committees as well as staff meetings dating as far as 2012. The evidence across the minutes showed that the last formal committee meeting was held in 2012 by the Finance Committee (D1. 19.03.2012). None of the committees apart from finance committee produced any minutes on request but if they met during 2013 or 2014, their meetings were not documented. So, minutes are constitutive of leadership practice, they are cultural tools that depicts previous human activities (Spillane et al., 2004) - and the absence of any documented committee meetings demonstrates that

leadership practice in committee meetings was not taking place in the case study school in the sense that minutes.

However during the interview, the principal alleged that committee meetings were normally convened by what he alluded to as '*Active committee*' (I). When I asked him "*how often committees convened meetings*", the principal claimed "*It depends on different committees*". He went on to mention some of the committees that he termed as "*Very, very active in the school*", like the one for "*Sport, for counselling, for examinations. Those committees are very, very much active*". He further explained that they can have a lot of meetings even in the terms compared with other committees. "*Take like the disciplinary committee can only meet when we refer cases. Otherwise, if there is no case referred to them, they hardly meet*" (I).

In direct contrast, T1 when asked this question whether they normally have committee meetings where they deliberate on issues and decide on what to do, her answer was "*That one I am saying no. Meetings are not always conducted. We don't normally have formal meetings like that and that*" (I). Also CC1 representing sport committee disputed the principal's claim when he said "*Not, not often*" (I). In the same vein, CC3 from the culture and entertainment committee affirmed that,

*Normally we used to meet, but this year we never met. But before we used to meet, especially we have the Wednesdays. It is a sports day. We don't have study on that day. So we selected that day. While others are busy we are busy preparing our cultural and entertainment activities* (I).

What CC3 had alluded to here is that they normally used to use Wednesdays afternoon to prepare for their cultural activities however, "*I only observed learners doing their cultural activities without the supervision of the committee members*" (O). Although some of the data from the questionnaires showed that meetings were convened depending on the situation, during my stay in the case study school I found little evidence of a meeting that took place as there were only some minutes of the previous meeting of few committees (D1, O.). Moreover, there were no committee meetings conducted during my stay in the case study school for the four week period. The study could not also find agendas, plans of action and committee meetings schedules at the case study school.

However, I did observe that some of the issues concerning committees were dealt with during morning briefings and assemblies. For example, during the morning briefing meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 2015, it was announced by the Committee Chair responsible for the cleaning

committee that *“there will be a cleaning campaign in the school in two days’ time” (O)*. During the morning briefing meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 2015, duties were allocated to different grades to be supervised by their class teachers. The principal cautioned that *“All teachers must join in the cleaning campaign and no teacher will be allowed to stay in the staffroom as that was a directive from the school board” (O)*. At the same morning briefing meeting, it was also announced by the Committee Chair for Sport Committee that *“a coaching clinic was going to be held in a nearby town in the Multi-Purpose Youth Centre and a soccer tournament in the cluster” (O)*.

Furthermore, evidence collected from across the data sets also showed that committees sometimes gave feedback to general staff meetings and the last feedback was given on 14.11.2013 (D1, 14.11.2013). One of the feedbacks reads *“CC1 informed the house that the sport is functional. He therefore raised a concern that they are facing some challenges such as sports field was very small that the players could not move freely” (D1, 04.07. 2013)*. Similarly, CC2 from examination committee *“reminded the house about the examination starting date which will be on 15.11.13. He reminded the staff to adhere to the examination rules and regulations as stipulated in the act” (D1, 14.11.2013)*.

This was also confirmed by the principal who said, *“What I usually used to do, the very first topic is for head of every committee to give us feedback”*. He further explained that he always used to give CCs that platform to enlighten the staff meeting on their strengths and challenges that they have experienced during the term *“And from there we can pick it up with the School Management Team” (I)*. Furthermore, when a question was posed to the principal whether Committees used to submit minutes of their meeting, he replied that, *“Like for sport, they did not forward them to my office, but I do have one for examination and the one for finance” (I)*.

However, T1 has this to say on feedback from committee meetings *“Only when you attend a meeting somewhere then you can have the feedback and give to the whole staff” (I)*. What T1 suggested here is that feedback is only given to the whole staff meeting when someone had attended a meeting at cluster, circuit or regional level but not from a committee meeting in the school. I observed that feedback was mainly given by those who attended workshops elsewhere but not of those from the various committees in the school (O). *This confirmed what the most of the participants mentioned during the individual interviews (O)*.

Committee meetings are essential for committee management system to function and achieve their objectives in that they create a platform for the community to interact among themselves in their interactive web or interactive components. They are designed to monitor activities in the committees and ensure that plans and programmes are implemented accordingly in the committee structures. Committee meetings also help the community in this case committee members to deliberate on issues of common interest, reach consensus and then divide roles (division of labour) among themselves evenly. The absence of committee meetings in the case study school inhibit leadership practice in committees because committee meetings create spaces for the possibility of informal leadership practices to emerge through interactions between leaders, followers and situation in the execution of their leadership tasks using artifacts and other resources at their disposal in their unique environment (Harris, 2003).

#### **4.5 What are the benefits of having committees?**

In this sub-section, I present and discuss the findings in response to my research question four on what are the benefits of having committees. Apart from the fact that committees were established because they were legislated in policy, the data revealed that there was more to their creation, such as being beneficial to the school. It is against this background that I now go on to discuss committee benefits.

##### **4.5.1 Committee benefits**

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the data was the notion of committees creating a cornerstone of a conducive platform for teachers to work together in smaller groups where they share good practices, work on a task, influence one another and create a good working relationship. The majority of the participants also referred to the benefit which both the School Management Team (SMT) and teachers gain in terms of having their burden lessened.

This was confirmed by the principal, *“With the committees; they make my work much easier, because not all the cases, not all the problems have to be solved by my office”* (I). The principal further pointed out *“People can come to my office with a certain issue, then I will refer that person to the committee and then that person might be assisted by people that are serving in a certain committee instead of only me doing the work”*(I). In his view, the principal felt the committee management system *“Is a fair distribution of work among all the staff members”* (I). In the same position as the principal, T2 accentuated that the school was a huge organisation

and as such it will benefit from the committee management system for its smooth running. Therefore T2 felt committee management system *“Reduces a burden of work and also the work is evenly distributed among staff”* (I). It is ironic what all the research participants said that the committee management system reduces their work load. This is because this study established that the committee management system is not working as such and therefore, this burden would not be reduced.

Furthermore, the thinking of the principal suggested that the committee management system allows individuals or sub-groups to share in the object in which they have an interest. This is in the same stance with what Edwards (2014) terms as “division of tasks between people involved in the activity” (p. 24). However my observation of the case study school was that the structure created to enable the sharing in object was loosely functional as there were no work schedules, job descriptions each committee, monitoring or evaluation tools, targets set towards the completion of an object just to mention but a few.

- **Committees as a platform for sharing good practices**

It emerged across the data set that committees were felt to be a sound platform for good leadership practice. For example, sharing information, knowledge and skills as CCI claimed *“It was worthwhile having committees in the school because they allow for people to come together and share good practices”* (I). CC4 from the disciplinary committee alleged, *“You will share some knowledge on how to solve problems on your own. Not only on your own, but even people closer to you if they have problems”* (I).

Moreover, teachers and Committee Chairs also believed that one person will not be able to successfully overcome problems single-handedly insofar as improving the committee and school leadership was concerned and as CC3 rightly put it *“ You cannot think alone all the things”* [and] *the things that you don’t know, your friend can come up with initiatives”* (I). She further argued *“If you don’t have this information, then one could have that good information and if you put together that information, you can have something that is fruitful”* (I). On the other hand, T2 compared committees in this way: *“You know they are like chains, they are interconnected”* (I). Moreover, CC3 was contented that *“Committees make teachers to get a chance to say something and in that sense contributing to participative leadership as well”* (I). Participants praised the committee management system as the best platform for leadership practice. Research participants make a claim that committees are a sound platform for good

practices, however, despite this positive data to support the claim my observations and the lack of supporting documentary evidence, provided evidence to the contrary. Given that Committees seldom met and when they did it was very irregular, it seems unlikely that they could become platforms for sharing and good practice. This is perhaps another example of where the ideal (what should happen) is far removed from reality.

The point that committees create the platform for teachers to have a voice that emphasises participative and a shared approach to leadership thinking concurs with Grant and Singh's (2009) view on leadership "As a practice, a shared activity in which all educators can participate" (p. 291). Similarly, committees as a platform enhance what Spillane et al. 2004 refer to as "collective cognitive properties of a group of leaders working together to enact a particular task that leads to the evolution of a leadership practice that is potentially more than the sum of each individual's practice (p. 19). The adage of "*two heads are better than one*" makes sense here. However, given that many committees did not meet regularly, if at all, one has to wonder whether there was real sharing and connectivity amongst the committees' members.

Furthermore committees as a platform suggest interdependencies coupled with communication in committees and as a contributing factor to great leadership practices in committees and academic achievements. Good communication further develops a good relationship with other committee members created by the interactions of all actors and their environment. This is line with Spillane et al., (2004) who underscore the criticality of "interdependencies among the constituting elements - leaders, followers and situation-of leadership activity" (p. 16). In the same stance, Vennebo & Ottesen, (2012) make a claim that "leadership emerges in complex chains of actions oriented by purposes constituted in the interplay of hierarchical and distributed dimensions of agency and authority (p. 255). The ways in which resources and tools are used is crucial to regulate and give direction. Thus, a way to account for the ways in which agency, initiative and authority are at play is necessary. However this was only in theory as this did not really happen in practice in the case study school.

- **Committees as a sense of ownership**

Committees create a sense of belonging for teachers. As T2 explained, "*Somebody is given a responsibility and that is a benefit to the staff. You are just not like a teacher, but people also see some qualities in you and that are going to contribute to esteem, self-esteem*" (I). T1 was

of the opinion that “*The more you are involved in that committee the more you understand things better. You gain more experience on how they do things, understanding things much better*” (I). The interview data also showed that committees promote accountability. The principal argued:

*If work is to be done by a certain committee, it will be completed pretty well, compared to when the work is being done by all different people in the school. You can also hold those people accountable. If something did not go well, you go to the committee, and say these are the responsibilities. This is what you were supposed to do (I).*

What is suggested here from the excerpts above is that in this situation (the committee management system), firstly committee members are content with the fact that they are members of committees. Secondly, committee members implied that they learn on the job or as they interact with colleagues in their interactive webs or interactive components around a leadership task using artifacts materials at their disposal. This boosts their self-esteem and they eventually take ownership of the whole school which in the long run leads to the achievements of their objectives (leadership practice). This further implied that committee members work together in groups that provide them with opportunities to discuss instructional issue with peers instead of being isolated in their classroom (Spillane., 2004, p. 26). Sharing and learning from each other is in alignment with CHAT and distributed leadership theory in that these theories focus on relationships among elements or components of the activity system in the sense that agency and structure mutually constitute each other. However, in spite of this positive data to support the allegations made by research participants that committees are wide-ranging platform for leadership provisions, once again my observation and the lack of documentary evidence suggest the contrary. The fact that they rarely met at least formally, implied that there was little opportunity for them to learn on the job and to have their self-esteem boosted by their participation in the committee activities. So, I sum up that all that was said by the research participants was more likely they were expressing what they were striving for in establishing the committee system-the ideal, or vision. What has failed to happen is the vision turning into reality. So, the question is why has this not happened?.

I now go on to discuss the factors that inhibit leadership practices in committees.

## **4.6. Challenges that inhibit leadership practices in committees: contradictions in the activity system**

This section is in response to the final research question of my study on challenges that inhibit leadership practices in committees. It emerged from the data that there were a number of challenges that hampered the successful practice of leadership practices in the committee management system. In terms of the analytical framework I have used (CHAT) these challenges are contradictions, that is, points of tension between two or more of the elements in the framework. I therefore discuss these as challenges as well as contradictions.

### **4.6.1 Committee Chairs as inhibiting agents**

I observed that there were no programmes or agendas of committee meetings and only some committees managed to have minutes of committee meetings although they were dated some two years back (D1, 14.11. 2013) In Namibia, policy documents on educational issues such as the National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia advocates that day –to-day activities of the school are well planned in advance and all staff is informed about what is expected of them (Namibia. [MoE], 2005, p. 11). Based on this assertion by the policy, Committee Chairs were supposed to have initiatives and to take on leadership responsibilities in their committees and in the school as a whole. However my observation and the data gathered from various data collection tools indicated that the Committee Chairs were in most cases the barriers to successful leadership practices in committees. That is to say, they seemed to lack energy, creativity and interest. For instance, T3 had these to say: *“Let me say they don’t call meetings, they don’t run the meetings properly. That’s what creates a bad committee when there is no outside force stopping it. It comes from itself”*.

Similarly, CC3 blamed herself when she argued that *“We used to have formal meetings but this year we didn’t. I think we are late now one. But I don’t know what really happened. But it is my poor organisation”* (I). The citations above implied that Committee Chairs were not proactive and according to T2, a Committee Chair *“needs to be a catalyst converter. They must keep the fire burning”* (I). The absence of meetings postulated that leadership practices would not be achieved in committees and this in itself is already an inconsistency in the committee management system. These *artifacts* (meeting agenda) were designed, according to Spillane et al. (2004) “to illustrate how material artifacts are constitutive of leadership activity, especially

when it comes to determining the legitimate issue of discussion in the school” (p.25). For Spillane and colleagues (2004), “one important constituting element of leadership practice is the meeting agenda, and because of its power for shaping meeting conversation agenda-setting is an influential tool available to leaders” (ibid. p. 25). In summation, the subjects (committee Chairs) are governed by the rules to lead and manage the committees. The rules such as workable plan of actions and job description assist the Committee Chairs to work towards the object and division of labour by getting other committee members on board. I would say Committee Chairs occupy an influential position in the committee management structure in the sense that, in CHAT terms, they are the subjects and at the same time community members. So, they need to set aside time so as to discuss co-curricular and extracurricular issues, committee plans and conduct committee meetings together with other committee members. However in the case study school Committee Chairs are not proactive, have little initiative and in this sense they were inhibiting factors. In fact, in the case study school there were no rules in place for the Committee Chairs to use in the committees and the subject (Committee Chairs) did not attempt to develop a workable plan. Due to this reason, the objective-leadership practice will not be achieved. In this case the contradiction is within an element, namely the Subject, since the Chairs are failing to carry out their leadership role. This is a primary contradiction.

#### **4.6.2 A lack of time**

The data gathered during this study has shown that it was an overwhelming task to balance the often conflicting responsibilities of committee leadership and teaching load. A Committee Chair is caught between leading a committee and teaching his/her learners. In other words Committee Chairs, like other teachers, have quite a full teaching program and as this *CCI* stressed: “*I teach a language and a language is hard work. So, I always have so much marking, kids are writing, writing, writing*” (I). Although most of the Committee Chairs’ classroom work seemed to be number one to them, they seemed to have been caught between the ‘*sword*’ and the ‘*knife*’ (committee leadership and subject teaching). For example, *CC2* seemed to be in a dilemma when he asserted “*If I have to make a decision, do I spend time in a classroom teaching or committee, I’ll take classroom on every time because is more important*” (I). For him, the reason why he and his colleagues were in the school was to deliver in terms of teaching and learning and that suggested spending more time in the classroom with learners. On the other hand, he believed that the school cannot run without committees. “*So, I have to pay attention to committees as well*” (I). So, this view suggested that as Committee Chairs, they

had to make the committee management system to happen. The data further indicated that tension existed for Committee Chairs in balancing their committee leadership, particularly when it came to conducting committee meetings. They were unable to find the proper time when to hold committee meetings. This was evident when *CC1* in his own words queried, “*When can you have committee meetings*”? (I). For him, it was not proper to have meetings during school instructional time because as he put it, “*It is not likely that all those teachers are free at the same time*”. His views were supported by other Committee Chairs who observed that they wanted to call committee meetings. But they found it difficult to find the proper time of the day to conduct those meetings because teachers seemed to be occupied during the morning as well as in the afternoon. *CC2* for example acknowledged that, “*In the afternoon sometimes teachers are busy with extramural activities or sometimes they just want to go home because they had enough I think for everyone it is difficult*” (I). The situation here is that the collective labour system is not that functional. As it stands now in the case study school, community is not clear on what time is for what activities due to the absence of the rules that guide the community. The situation can however be improved when the committee chairs call meetings to develop proper time slots, time tables for committees and extramural activities and allocate roles to each other. In other words CHAT’s explanation for this problem is that there is a need for the rules to help the community to develop the object and share different roles (division of labour) among themselves as they interacts in its ‘interactive web’ or ‘interactive components’. When roles are divided among the community, each committee member is accountable for carrying out /her task. In this situation the contradiction is within an element, specifically the Subject, since committee chairs are failing to carry out their leadership roles by not developing time tables for committee activities drawing on relevant Namibian education legislations.

#### **4.6.3 Lack of commitment and co-operation among committee members**

The main purpose of being a committee member suggests that you are a person to whom a charge or status is committed and this brings an individual accountability that comes as a result of discussion, decision, and delegation. However the data indicated that this was not the case with some of the committee members in the case study school. According to *CC1* and *TI*, there were some committee members who undermined the power of others as well as those who refused to accept responsibilities such as drawing up an examination timetable and other leadership activities delegated to them (I). For instance, *CC1* had this to say: “*I delegate other*

colleagues. However I find out that sometimes they undermine me” (I). On the follow up question what he used to do if he found out that they were undermining him when he gave them something to do, he said that “I do it myself ”(I). He further substantiated his claim by saying that:

*There is somebody responsible for each sport code in the sport committee such as soccer, netball and volley ball. With me, my spectrum must be checking that things are there. Just to see if there are sport kits. However I ended up also being a coach for athletics, netball and soccer (I).*

When asked a follow up question, he reasoned that “Coaches refused to participate in the tournament maybe because it was on weekend” (I). A similar concern was aired by CC2 (examination and assessment committee) when he said that

*Sometimes you invite a meeting but some people will not come. You tell them in advance that we are having a meeting for example that in a week’s time we are going to have a meeting. But when the time of the meeting comes they will tell you I am having some other things to do. We have some problems there.*

When he was asked further: “what do you do when some people refuse to attend the meeting”? “I just brief them on what we did” (I). Sharing the same sentiment with C1 and CC2, T1 who is an expert when it comes to examination timetabling and moderation also had this to say,

*When other committee members are delegated by the Committee Chair, they refuse. They say I don’t know. You can find that you are seven in the committee but when it comes to those issues of giving out questions papers to invigilators every morning, is only you who will be doing that. All those in the committee are also supposed to take leadership functions, come up with a timetable. Today is you and the other day is maybe the other person. What happens if I transfer to another school (I)?*

The situation in the case study school indicated that only some committee members were active in committees such as sport, examination and assessments, culture and entertainment and disciplinary committee. This demonstrates that committees are not functioning as a committee structure but in most cases as a one person show. I also observe that most of the veteran committee members are reluctant to take part in committee activities. In addition, when the Committee Chairs attempt to divide leadership tasks among the colleagues, some refuse. This suggests that power relationship between the Committee Chairs and other committee members is not balanced. That is to say only tasks are distributed to the committees but the power is not distributed to the committee members (Harris, 2012). So, the power re-distribution in committee is not clear. In other words, Committee Chairs are not empowered by the rules for example internal school policies to hold other committee members accountable and bring them

to book. Moreover, in CHAT's language, there were no rules and regulations that enable or constrain the conduct of committee members. This further suggested that as I alluded to in this thesis the power remains with the delegating authority-the principal in this case (Lumby, 2013). Thus in the absence of proper line of communication the Committee Chairs did the work themselves. The work they have delegated or the work that was supposed to have been divided amongst the committee members. In this situation where the interactive components or interactive elements (committee members) are not cooperative, the division of labour among peers is not a viable option and this suggests that the objective-leadership practice will not be achieved.

Furthermore non participation in the committee leadership tasks by committee members alluded to a lack of self-motivation of committee members. Similarly what is insinuated in this sub-section indicate that there were many contradictions in the committee management system for both Committee Chairs as well as committee members. This is normal in activity systems and as Engeström (1999) elucidates "activity systems move through relatively long cycles of qualitative transformation [and] as the contradictions of an activity system are aggravated, some individual participants begin to question and deviate from its established norms"(p. 3). Moreover this type of attitudes in the case study school symbolised that members lacked basic knowledge of simple committee procedures such as the duties of a Committee Chairs, secretary, treasurer and other officers like a coach and so forth. Furthermore, what is happening here is that the sense of community in the activity is severely impoverished-so the division of labour cannot run its course and become a factor because there is no community as such. In this case the contradiction is within an element, namely the Subject, since the Chairs are failing to carry out their leadership roles and develop rules to assist them in the day-to-day activities of the committees.

#### **4.6.4 Lack of monitoring of Committees Activities**

Monitoring is one of the most important aspects of leadership (Namibia. MoE, 2005). This implies that principal and management are required to "implement an effective system of continuous monitoring of academic and other activities" (ibid. p. 13). Proper monitoring can also promote good leadership in committees, but the findings collected from the data discovered a lack of monitoring and supervision by the School Management Team. The principal confirmed this when he was asked this question "*Is there any monitoring done*"? He

replied *“I’m not very strict with them when it comes to monitoring; maybe that is where I have failed” (I).*

The data further revealed a lack of constant evaluation and monitoring of committees to say what they have achieved as T2 opined, *“Maybe there are no goals and objectives set. What are the objectives of the committees? What is it supposed to do at school and at the end of the day there is supposed to be a check list to check if these objectives or goals that were set are met”?* (I). He (T2) strongly felt,

*Without monitoring, there won’t be any progress. How would you see any progress if you can’t see, you can’t monitor your back. You can’t reflect on your yesterday? There must be critical inquiry of what happened yesterday so that you know where you are going (I).*

And on the aims and objectives, T3 doubted and reasoned, *“I don’t think there is something like that...aims and objectives. That is the reason why they are dead. So people don’t really meet and discuss what we can do next” (I).*

The findings in this section showed that there were no goals and objectives in place in the case study school. This implies a visionless situation in the committee management system. The absence of aims and objectives made it difficult for the division of labour and for the community to work towards the object. Second the community was not supportive when it comes to monitoring the activities of the committees. I would say, since there were no aims and objectives, the monitoring would not make sense in this situation as one has to monitor set targets. CHAT model offers a suggestion that the community develop rules to regulate its conduct and use those rules to develop the purpose, goals and objectives. That is the community uses the rules to put in place monitoring tool to monitor the leadership activities of the committees such as the committee monitoring forms. However in this case study school, rules were not set to regulate the monitoring of committees activities and this, one can say prevented the proper leadership practice in committees. So, monitoring tools for example forms are advantageous because they as per Spillane and colleagues (2004) *“serve as mediational means for leadership activity”* (24). In this situation the contradiction is in an element particularly, the Subject since, the chairs are failing to carry out their leadership roles. That is the committee chairs failed to develop goals and objectives, set targets on how the goals will be achieved and use the rules to develop committee evaluation and monitoring tools.

#### 4.6.5 Induction, mentoring and staff development

In Namibia “learning is a lifelong activity - a process not an event (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 11). Consequently, the provision of adequate opportunities for staff development in terms of human capacity is critical. However, it clearly came out from the data that Committee Chairs and other committee members at the case study school were not inducted on aspects of committee management system. The absence of a practical induction programme demonstrated that staff members did not know what was expected of them. Furthermore the un-availability of an induction programme was also acknowledged by some teachers, Committee Chairs and even the school principal. For example when T1 was asked this question “*Were you trained on how to make a timetable*” (I)? She replied, “*No, I just...I never attended any workshop, whatever. It is something I just enjoy doing*” (I).

Similarly, when CC2 was asked, “*Where you inducted before you became a committee leader*” (I)? He also said: “*I was not trained or inducted as such. We were just given feedback and some guidelines on some problems and how we should go about them by a teacher who went to attend a workshop somewhere*” (I). When the principal was also asked to shed some light on whether Committee Chairs as well as other committee members were inducted, he was at pains to explain it and this is what he stated, “*May be as a school we failed to induct those people*” (I).

The non-existence of an induction programme is contrary to the spirit of the *National Standards and Performance Indicators for School in Namibia (NSPISN)*. NSPISN requires School Management Teams to direct, inspire and motivate the work of teachers in this case Committee Chairs and other committee members (Namibia. Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2005, p. 12). Hence, in terms of Spillane et al., (2004) and CHAT, the contradiction is between the community and the rules respectively. To illuminate further on this point, the Namibian education policy documents, Education Act, Act 16 of 2001 and Guidelines for School Principals provide the frame work for the creation of committees in schools but the schools have to develop their own regulations with which to facilitate committee management system and line with their different environments. The school can align its induction, mentoring and staff development policies with various external instruments for example regulations made under the education act, 2001, public servants staff rules and key area number five (management and leadership of the school and hostel) of the National Standards and

Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia. The point here is that there is no prescribed induction, mentoring and staff development plan for all schools in Namibia because the government promotes democracy in schools and because each school's environment is unique. And according to Spillane et al. (2004) predetermined educational policies leave little space for school leaders to manoeuvre and as such constraint leadership practice in schools. For them "district and school policies often do not bear the imprint of local actors and, while designed, are received in the context of schools as constraints on practice" (ibid. p. 26). The absence of the induction programme in the case study school then suggested that the committee members would not know what is expected of them and this situation inhibit leadership practice-i.e. leadership practice (the object) will not be achieved. In this case the contradiction is within a component, namely the Subject, since the Chairs are failing to carry out their leadership roles. Committee chairs are ought to develop their own regulations using the Namibian education policy documents and guidelines at their disposals in line with their unique environments.

#### **4.6.6 Dormant Committees**

The data gathered across the data set showed that some of the committees were dormant, some worked a little and in my view none was successful. Committees such as examinations and assessments, finance, sport, culture and entertainment, counselling, disciplinary, awards and clean campaign were to some extent functional. Sport committee was vaguely active however with only some members dominating the whole show for instance I observe on a certain sport day-Wednesday the Committee Chair for sport committee was playing soccer with the school team, another teacher and school janitor were playing volley ball with some other learner. Meanwhile the American Peace Corp volunteer coached learners on some techniques on how to play volley ball (O, 18.03.2015).

Furthermore, these committees were only functional when a leadership task was delegated to them through the principal's office, for example I observed that cleaning campaign committee only started de-bushing the school surroundings on the request of the School Board Committee (O). The aim of de-bushing was according to the Committee Chair for cleaning campaign committee was to promote general cleanliness in and around the school. During this exercises, the labour was divided as per grades. Learners were supervised by their class teachers. This suggests learner teacher collaboration at its best. Thus there was a higher degree of interdependence, interactions, negotiation between teacher, learners and cleaners (the whole

school community was involved). In the same line, some members of the examination and assessments committee become active during circuit, cluster and school based examinations and in sport committee some members especially coaches of different codes become active when the case study school was invited to take part in a cluster tournament. The same applies to the culture and entertainment committee only active when preparing for cultural festival outside the case study school. For example the Committee Chair for culture and entertainment committee *announced during the morning assembly that cultural activities were going to be intensified to prepare for the regional cultural festival* (O, 18.03.2015). In regard to the disciplinary committee, I have observed learners who were sent to bring their parents to the school and were only assisted by him alone (O, 13.03.2015). He is also on record when he said; *“I refer the case to them as a school principal. The case is brought to my attention, when I, I found out that this case needs the attention of the disciplinary committee, then I refer the case to the disciplinary committee”* (I).

I could not find evidence through my observation of committees such as school development committee, and tuck shop committee being very active. Evidence on the ground shows that Award Committee is seasonal in that it becomes only active during a particular period of the year, for example in the second trimester around July there. This excerpts suggests that the Award committee becomes active only some times of the year as opposed to motivating learners throughout the year , *“the Award Committee was not well aware of what type of gifts / awards should they give to the learners according to their performances so they need advice from the house”* (D1, 04.07.2013). In this situation whereby only some committees worked a little was not healthy for the smooth running of the school as an organisation. The dormancy of these committees was confirmed by T2 when he made this observation; *“I believe school committees are dormant”* To him *“The dormancy of committee is of course that like a gap in the railway track”*. He opined,

*If there is a gap, then of course the train is no more going to move forward. A school is like a train. You have so many departments and they have to be run at the same time. And if there is one committee that is lagging behind, no other one will move (I).*

In line with distributed theory the quote above by T2 reverberated well with (Spillane, et al., 2004) when they allege that, “human activity is distributed in the interactive web of actors in situations working with socio-cultural artifacts” (p. 20). Furthermore some of the interviewees, viewed committees as ineffective, ‘*window dressing*’, and as T2 observed *“These committees are there of course, and their names are just on paper”* (I). The assertion above implied the

rhetoric of school committees and a saying that “a camel is a horse designed by a committee” Trecker and Trecker (1979, p. 91) make sense here.

I observed that there were no schedules or plans of actions for different committees in the case study school. As Bardram, (1997) puts it, “plans, checklists, schedules, protocols, work programmes etc. have proved extremely valuable as mechanisms giving order to work” (p. 18). Similarly, for Spillane et al. (2004) these artifacts collectively form representational schemata within which time-usage and action in the school are structured” (p. 25). So, in my opinion the absence of plan of action, schedule of the committees and targeted goals, suggested that there were no leadership tasks at hand for committee members to execute because “leadership practice (as both thinking and activity) emerges in the execution of leadership tasks in and through the interaction of leaders, followers, and situation” (ibid. p. 27). Therefore, the absence of schedules inhibits leadership practices in committees. The contradiction is within an element, namely the community since the community is failing its leadership roles by not developing rules that regulate the leadership activities in the committees. Rules regulate the conduct of the community. In the absence of the rule (job descriptions), the community has little focus or direction. The contradiction is within an element, specifically, the subject, since the Chairs are failing to carry out their leadership roles. Committee chairs are ought to develop their own regulations using the Namibian education policy documents and guidelines at their disposals in line with their unique environments. This is a primary contradiction.

So all the contradictions are in fact primary and this suggests that the committee chairs are the problem themselves. The committee chairs are selected as the main actors in the activity system but are failing to act on the object (leadership roles). They are failing to develop activities directed to the object to transform it into outcome. So this implies that there is no constant construction and renegotiation within the activity system-the committee management system. The fact that there is no other CHAT elements present in the contradictions tells us that there is no activity system in the case study school. Since committees are not activity system it is obvious to see why they are dormant. In the absence of an activity system, one can conclude that the committee management structure in the case study school is what Bush and Middlewood (2013) warn us to recognise “the dark side of distributed leadership-managerialism in a guise” (p. 23). One can also assume that the principal lacks the experience and skill to use the committee system more effectively, and that perhaps he is happy with the status quo.

## **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter presented and discussed the purpose, roles of the committees; the leadership functions of teachers as committee members, the benefits of having committees and challenges that inhibited teacher leadership practices in committees. I now go on to the fifth and final chapter, I summarise the main findings of the study and conclude the thesis.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the key findings of the study. These are simply the main threads from Chapter Four. The chapter further discusses the potential value of the study. It makes recommendations for both practice and future research. The chapter also presents the limitations of the study are discussed and then ends with a brief conclusion.

### **5.2 Research purpose**

The aim of this study was to explore leadership practises within a range of committees in a public school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia.

### **5.3 Research questions**

The investigation sought to find answers to the five research questions below.

- What is the purpose, roles and membership of each of the four committees?
- How were committees established?
- What leadership functions did teachers as committee members exercise?
- What are the benefits of having committees?
- What challenges inhibited these teacher leadership practices?

### **5.3.1 What is the purpose, roles and membership of each of the four committees?**

The research discovered that the case study school had 13 committees in place each established with the purpose of taking control of one aspect of school leadership and management. For example, to develop the culture of the Namibian people, traditions and artistic expression. The study found that the purposes of different committees in the case study school were mainly about management issues. That is, the duties and responsibilities indicated in committee members' job descriptions these jobs were leaning on pure management rather than a balance between leadership and management.

### **5.3.2 How were committees established?**

#### **5.3.2.1 The creation of committees**

Data collected from individual interviews and questionnaires confirmed that committees were established in the school during a staff meeting. The establishment of various committees in the case study school was in reaction to the Namibian education legislations (*Towards Education for All and Guidelines for School Principals*). *These policy documents suggest that the creation of different committees in schools can assist in various schools needs to upgrade the quality of teaching and learning-and they can be an effective management tool that ensure wider, participation in and ownership of school affairs.*

The data further showed that different names of the above-mentioned committees were developed in a staff meeting. Meanwhile the research revealed that the main issues surrounding the establishment of committees illustrate the concept of distributed leadership with emphasis on its central idea of inclusivity, collectivism, empowerment and the democratic. The findings gathered across the data spectrum indicated the wish of the school. Furthermore the study revealed that the establishment of committees implied sharing of responsibilities and focusing on the achievement of a common vision and goal through the committee management system

#### **5.3.2.2 Nomination of Committee Members**

Another notable feature that emerged from the data was the nomination of committee members (teachers) and Committee Chairs. Teachers nominated each other in a staff meeting.

The study noted that the nomination and identification of Committee members was one of the mechanisms that the school had put in place to involve teachers in specific aspects of the school

leadership and management. The study also found that involving teachers in terms of distributed leadership theory, committee members could encompass a wide variety of input, interests, talents and expertise which are utilised for the benefit of the school.

### **5.3.2.3 The Life span of Committee members**

The data gathered at the case study school indicated that the term of office for committee members was three years. Moreover the research through various data collection instruments showed that committee members were always replaced with new members whenever a committee member was transferred to another school or when their three years term of office has expired. Furthermore, some participants revealed that usually inactive Committee Chairs were replaced or even if their term of office has not expired. The study found that the action to break the three year rule and replace a Committee Chair was prompted by a situation or context that was not conducive for followers in the committee-the lack of leadership from the Committee Chairs.

### **5.3.2.4 Teachers as Committee members**

The findings across the data set revealed that committee members were nominated by colleagues based on their skills and qualities such as self-esteem, being a good listener, good communicator and probably what the person likes-hobbies. Different expertise in committees suggests a collective attribute spread across committee management system which is drawn upon to accomplish tasks. The study revealed that despite the fact that committee members were appointed based on their skills; it was not evident how this expertise was being used as the committee rarely met to work around a leadership task where their expertise and knowledge could be utilized for the benefit of the whole school.

### **5.3.2.5 The attributes of a Committee Chair**

Data generated from various participants revealed that participants knew the attributes of a good Committee Chair. They felt that the good Committee Chair should possess the following attributes:

- ✓ needs to have the ability to think of something new that is not there at the school and then as. A person who is really in charge of the committee, someone who can initiate and someone who can take decisions”
- ✓ should to be able to bring people on board because; again you cannot do it on your own. You don’t just tell them what to do. Invite them in if you want them to take part
- ✓ A person who is really in charge of the committee, someone who can initiate and someone who can take decisions” then give me the feedback or consult me when it is necessary
- ✓ Should be strong and well-focused when running a particular committee or group.
- ✓ need to be quite strong, resilient because sometimes things will not go well and you won’t give up
- ✓ when everyone wants to start losing interest the Committee Chair must be the one who says we are not giving up, carry on, we will find our way through this and that

### **5.3.3 What leadership functions did the teachers as committee members exercise?**

#### **5.3.3.1 The roles of Committee Chairs**

The study found that committee chairs and other committee members were not certain of what their functions entailed. The study revealed that the ideal leadership functions of a Committee Chair could also include among others: organising committee meetings, giving feedback to the principal to enable him / her to keep track of everything that happened in the committee (Namibia, [MoE], 2005, p.146). Furthermore, the research observed that in most situations leadership tasks (cluster based examination, disciplinary issues, cleaning campaign, sport tournaments) were delegated from the top echelon, usually from the principal’s office to the Committee Chairs and from Committee Chair to other committee members.

#### **5.3.3.2. Job description for committee members**

The finding that emerged from various data collection indicated that some committees had job descriptions developed by the schools. However the study revealed that these job descriptions were not know by the committee members and as such were not useful. The study discovered that the structure (committee management system) created by the school to enable the sharing in object was loosely functional as there were no work schedules, job descriptions for each committee. From a leadership perspective, the study revealed that there was a lack of initiative,

creativity and agency in the committees. Thus the fact that the committee members did not, of their own accord, realise that they needed job descriptions and proceeded to design them suggests an absence of leadership. It suggested that they were waiting to be told what to do, a real managerialist mind-set.

### **5.3.3.3 Committee meetings**

The data collected from across the data sets demonstrated that formal committee meetings were rarely convened and, when convened, few committee members showed up. The absence of committee meetings in the case study school inhibited leadership practice in committees because committee meetings create spaces for the possibility of informal leadership practices to emerge through interactions between leaders, followers and situation in the execution of their leadership tasks using artifacts and other resources at their disposal in their unique environment (Harris, 2003).

## **5.3.4 What are the benefits of having committees?**

### **5.3.4.1 Committee benefits**

Apart from the fact that committees were established because they were legislated in policy, the study revealed that there was more to their creation, such as being beneficial to the school. The study found that although participants alleged that committees created a conducive platform for teachers to work together in smaller groups where they shared good practices that were not the case in the case study school. The majority of the participants also referred to the benefit which both the School Management Team (SMT) and teachers gained in terms of having their burden lessened. However this study observed that the structure created to enable the sharing in object was loosely functional as there were no work schedules, job descriptions each committee, monitoring or evaluation tools, targets set towards the completion of an object just to mention but a few.

- Committees as a sense of ownership

The committee members claimed that they were contented with the fact that they were members of committees and that they learnt on the job or as they interact with colleagues in their interactive webs or interactive components around a leadership task using artifacts materials at their disposal. The study also learnt that committee management system boosted

their self-esteem and they eventually took ownership of the whole school. However, in spite of these positive comments from the research participants that committees were wide-ranging platform for leadership provisions, the study found no evidence to support the participants' claims. Furthermore, the study discovered that committees rarely met at least formally and as result, there was little opportunity for them to learn on the job and to have their self-esteem boosted by their participation in the committee activities. So, the study concluded that all that was said by the research participants was more likely they were expressing what they were striving for in establishing the committee system-the ideal, or vision. What has failed to happen was the vision turning into reality.

### **5.3.5 Challenges that inhibit leadership practices in committees: contradictions in the activity system**

It emerged from the data that there were a number of challenges that hampered the successful practice of leadership practices in the committee management system. In terms of the analytical framework I have used (CHAT) these challenges were contradictions, that was, points of tension between two or more of the elements in the framework. As results, the study found that all the contradictions were in fact primary (Committee Chairs)-this suggested that the committee chairs were the problem themselves. The fact that there is no other CHAT elements present in the contradictions tells us that there is no activity system in the case study school. Since committees are not activity system it is obvious to see why they are dormant.

#### **5.3.5.1 Committee Chairs as inhibiting agents**

The study found that Committee Chairs were not proactive, have little initiative and in this sense they were the main inhibiting factors. In fact, in the case study school there were no rules in place for the Committee Chairs to use in the committees and the Subject (Committee Chairs) did not attempt to develop a workable plan. Due to this reason, the objective-leadership practice was not achieved. In this case the contradiction was within an element, namely the Subject, since the Chairs are failing to carry out their leadership role. This is a primary contradiction.

#### **5.3.5.2 A lack of time**

Study discovered that the collective labour system was not that functional in the committee management system due to the absence of the rules that guide the community. The study found

that in this situation the contradiction was within an element, specifically the Subject, since committee chairs were failing to carry out their leadership roles by not developing time tables for committee activities drawing on relevant Namibian education legislations.

#### **5.3.5.3 Lack of commitment and co-operation among committee members**

The study found that the sense of community in the committee activity system was severely impoverished-so the division of labour could not run its course because there was no community as such. In this case the contradiction was within an element, namely the Subject, since the Chairs were failing to carry out their leadership roles and develop rules to assist them in the day-to-day activities of the committees. Therefore in the absence of the rules, the study revealed that there were some committee members who undermined the power of committee chairs as well as those who refused to accept responsibilities such as drawing up an examination timetable and other leadership activities delegated to them by committee Chairs.

#### **5.3.5.4 Lack of monitoring of Committees Activities**

The findings collected from the data discovered that there were no goals and objectives for the committees. There were no targets set for committees as result no monitoring was done. In this situation the study found that the contradiction was in an element particularly, the Subject since, the chairs were failing to carry out their leadership roles. That is the committee chairs failed to develop goals and objectives, set targets on how the goals would be achieved by using the rules to develop committee evaluation and monitoring tools.

#### **5.3.5.5 Induction, mentoring and staff development**

The study discovered that there was no induction programme for committee members in the case study school. In this case, the study showed that the contradiction was within a component, namely the Subject, since the Chairs are failing to carry out their leadership roles. Committee chairs are ought to develop their own regulations using the Namibian education policy documents and guidelines at their disposals in line with their unique environments. Thus the school can align its induction, mentoring and staff development policies with various external instruments for example regulations made under the Education act, 2001, public servants staff rules and key area number five (management and leadership of the school and hostel) of the National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia

### **5.3.5.6 Dormant Committees**

The data gathered across the data set showed that some of the committees were dormant; some worked a little and was not so successful. In the absence of rule (job descriptions), the community has little focus or direction. The study established that the contradiction was within an element, specifically, the subject, since the Committee Chairs were failing to carry out their leadership roles. Committee chairs were ought to develop their own regulations using the Namibian education policy documents and guidelines at their disposals in line with their unique environments. This was a primary contradiction. Furthermore, the study found that the principal seemed to lack experience and skills to use the committees more effectively and perhaps he was happy with the status quo.

### **5.4 Significance of the study**

The findings of this study demonstrated that there is potential for further research on the leadership practises within a range of committees in Namibian schools. As an Inspector of Education, I have always wanted to understand what were the purpose of committees; how were committee established, what leadership functions did teachers as committee members exercise; what were the benefits of having committees and what challenges inhibited these leadership practices in the committee management system. I have now gained greater insight into why committees were not activity system and what could be done to improve teachers as committee members' leadership practices in the committee management system.

It is my hope that these findings could serve to give guidance and direction to educators and other stakeholders in Namibia and elsewhere. Through the findings in this study I hope to inform the policy makers, especially those at the Namibia Institute of Education Development (NIED), Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM), and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) unit in Namibia, in identifying professional needs and developing relevant training programmes for committee chairs.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

The main purpose of being a committee member suggests that you are a person to whom a charge or status is committed and this brings an individual accountability that comes as a result of discussion, decision, and delegation. The scope of this study was motivated by a master's degree study. This study like other researcher that employed a qualitative research framework

has short falls. Firstly, it was a small scale research-half thesis limited the sample as the researcher only talked to few people. Secondly the study was conducted in one public school in one region, suggests that the findings cannot be generalised. Thirdly the ‘positionality’ of the researcher coupled with the size of the sample suggests that the research was not free from biases. Thus the researcher might have used his predetermined conclusions. On the other hand, the participants might have hidden valuable data from the researcher or gave him false data- this border on subjectivity. However in order to be objective as much as possible, the study utilised raw data from different sources, (more voices included), compared the data with other researchers’ work; worked within an analytical framework and allowed the data to talk to each other-triangulation.

The study cannot claim generalizability but the reader can claim generalizability. Generalizability can be achieved in qualitative research because they are naturalistic generalisation (Falk & Guenther, undated). Therefore, Falk and Guenther ( p.3,) suggest that qualitative methods may provide a vicarious link with the reader’s experience and thus be natural basis for generalization.

## **5.6 Recommendation for practice**

Through careful analysis and interpretation of data, the study revealed that there was no activity system in the case study school. As a result, committees were dormant; while they were named in school documents, they functioned variously, intermittently or not at all. The study revealed that Committee Chairs were the major inhibiting factors to leadership practices in the committee management system hence their dormancy. In this case the contradiction was within an element, namely the Committee Chairs, Subject, were failing to carry out their leadership role.

The Committee Chairs should develop rules (job descriptions) to regulate the day-to-day leadership activities in committees. They should also use those rules to develop the purpose, goals and objectives of the committees. The Committee Chairs should also use the rules to put in place monitoring tools to monitor the leadership activities of the committees such as the committee monitoring forms. The SMT and in particular the principal should embrace the notion that school leadership can no longer be regarded as the domain of the single heroic leader in Namibia, but as a process shaped by daily interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situations. Teachers as committee members are on the forefront of leadership

practices in the context of a school, and play a pivotal role in school improvement. So, principals need to put in place appropriate support mechanisms and create necessary internal conditions for teachers especially who do not hold formal leadership positions, to exert their sphere of influence beyond the classroom and into school-wide leadership activities-through committee management system.

The principal as well as the Committee Chairs should take note that the Namibian education legislations provide the frame work for the creation of committees in schools but the schools have to develop their own regulations with which to facilitate committee management system and line with their unique environments. The school should align its induction, mentoring and staff development policies with various external instruments for example regulations made under the education Act, Act 16 of 2001, public servants staff rules and key area number five (management and leadership of the school and hostel) of the National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia.

Committee should have meeting schedules, plan of action as well as aims and objectives. In the same vein, a school should develop an induction programme for committee members particularly Committee Chairs.

## **5.7 Suggestions for future research**

Leadership practices in committee management system is one the many under-researched areas in schools in both Namibia and South Africa. I therefore suggest that future Namibian and South African scholars conduct more comprehensive and large-scale studies involving as many schools in different regions/provinces as possible. The research could involve more committees unlike this study only studied four committees. The research could look at leadership practices in schools as well as beyond schools-at cluster or circuit level. A comprehensive study has the potential to provide more information on the *what*, the *how* and the *why* of leadership practices in committees. This could strengthen leadership practices in committees and that of school leadership in general. The research focused on the leadership practice in committee management system in a rural combined school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. Future research might explore the leadership practice in committees at other schools, such as senior secondary schools and private schools.

## 5.8 Conclusion

This study made an effort to explore leadership practises within a range of committees in a public school in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. This was triggered by the interest I developed when I spent time a school in Ohangwena region for a research assignment for the coursework component of my Master of Education degree (MEd). During my stay at the research site, there was a sign of distributed leadership through committees headed by teachers, but I was not sure whether these committees functioned effectively. Therefore, due to these doubts, I developed a personal interest to do my research study on leadership practices in school committees in order to understand better the what, the how and the why of leadership practice in the committee management system (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2004). According to the research findings the committees were dormant; while they were named in school documents, they functioned variously, intermittently or not at all. The study further revealed that Committee Chairs were the major inhibiting factors to leadership practices in the committee management system hence their dormancy. The study assumed that the principal lacked experience and skills to use the committees more effectively and perhaps he was happy with the status quo. The study also identified various challenges and contradictions. The researcher hopes activities will be developed through working on contradictions and that the Ministry of Education formulate relevant policies and brings about much needed change in the school leadership.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaires

### SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

#### Instructions for Questionnaire

1. Use a **Black** or **BLUE** ink pen. Please do not use a pencil
2. In the interests of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire
3. Please respond to each of the following items by placing a **CROSS**, correctly reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership in your school.
4. This questionnaire is to be answered by a member of the teaching staff

**ACRONYMY:** SMT= School Management Team (School Management Committee)

#### 1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (Cross all that apply)

##### 1. Gender

<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	
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##### 2. Years of teaching experience

<b>0-5 yrs</b>		<b>6-10 yrs</b>		<b>11-15 yrs</b>		<b>16+yrs</b>	
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Please rate the teacher leadership performance of your committee teacher leader (**CROSS** the best option)

Fair 50%+	Good 60%+	Very good 70%+	Excellent 80%+
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#### B.TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN COMMITTEES SURVEY

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

**Scale 4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree**

2. 1

<b>I believe:</b>	4	3	2	1
1. Only the SMT should make decisions in the school				
2. All educators can take a leadership role in the school				
3. That only people in positions of authority should lead.				
4. That men are better able to lead than women				

### 3. COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

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

**Scale 4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1=**

<b>Which of the following leadership activities are you involved in?</b>	4	3	2	1
6. I take initiative without being delegated duties.				
7. I organise committee meetings				
8. I organise and lead reviews of the school committee year plan.				
9. I participate in in-school decision making.				
10. I give in-service training to other committee members				
11. I bring leadership activities to the committee meetings				
12. I take minutes during committee meetings				

C.1

### 4. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Instruction: Please respond with a CROSS either Yes/ No/ Not applicable, to your involvement in each committee.**

**If YES, respond with a CROSS by selecting ONE option between: Nominated by colleagues, Delegated by SMT or Volunteered.**

<b>I play a leadership role in the following committee/</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>	<b>Nominated by colleagues</b>	<b>Delegated by SMT</b>	<b>Volunteered</b>
1.Sports committee						
2.Disciplinary committee						
3. Fundraising committee.						
4.School Development and Maintenance Committee						
5. Tuck shop Committee.						
6.Admission committee						
7.Awarding Committee						
8.Cleaning campaign committee						

9.Examination and Assessment committee						
10.School Management committee						
11.Counselling Committee						
12.Feeding Program committee						
13.Culture and Entertainment Committee						

## 5. FACTORS THAT SUPPORT OR FRUSTRATE TEACHER LEADERSHIP

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on what factors inhibit or frustrate leadership practices in committees**

<b>My school is a place where:</b>	4	3	2	1
The School Management Team has trust in my ability to lead.				
Teachers resist leadership from committee chairs.				

Teachers are allowed to try out new ideas in committees.				
The SMT (School Management Team) values teachers' opinions.				
The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision				
The SMT allows committee members to participate in school level decision-making.				
Only the SMT takes important decisions.				
Only the SMT takes initiative in the school				
Adequate opportunities are created for the committee members to develop professionally.				

## F. COMMITTEE BENEFITS

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the committee benefits**

<b>Benefits from school committees</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
I benefit a lot from committee activities				
I learn new skills as a result of committees				
I never attend any committee meetings				
Committees are a waste of time and energy				

**F1. COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the frequencies of committee meetings**

<b>Frequencies of committee meeting</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
We have a committee meeting once a week				
We have a committee meeting twice a term				
We have a meeting committee meeting at the beginning of each term				
We have a committee meeting when the need arises				
We never have a committee meeting				

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT!**

**SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

**Instructions for Questionnaire**

6. Use a **Black** or **BLUE** ink pen. Please do not use a pencil
7. In the interests of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire
8. Please respond to each of the following items by placing a **CROSS**, correctly reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership in your school.
9. This questionnaire is to be answered by a member of the teaching staff

**ACRONYMY:** SMT= School Management Team (School Management Committee)

**10. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION** (Cross all that apply)

**11. Gender**

<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	
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2. Years of teaching experience

<b>0-5 yrs</b>		<b>6-10 yrs</b>		<b>11-15 yrs</b>		<b>16+yrs</b>	
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Please rate the teacher leadership performance of your committee teacher leader (**CROSS** the best option)

<b>Fair 50%+</b>		<b>Good 60%+</b>		<b>Very good 70%+</b>		<b>Excellent 80%+</b>	
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**B.TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN COMMITTEES SURVEY**

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

**Scale 4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree**

12. 1

<b>I believe:</b>	4	3	2	1
1. Only the SMT should make decisions in the school				
2. All educators can take a leadership role in the school				
3. That only people in positions of authority should lead.				
4. That men are better able to lead than women				
5.				

**13. COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES**

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

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

Which of the following leadership activities are you involved in?	4	3	2	1
6. I take initiative without being delegated duties.				
7. I organise committee meetings				
8. I organise and lead reviews of the school committee year plan.				
9. I participate in in-school decision making.				
10. I give in-service training to other committee members				
11. I bring leadership activities to the committee meetings				
12. I take minutes during committee meetings				

C.1

#### 14. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Instruction: Please respond with a CROSS either Yes/ No/ Not applicable, to your involvement in each committee.**

**If YES, respond with a CROSS by selecting ONE option between: Nominated by colleagues, Delegated by SMT or Volunteered.**

I play a leadership role in the following committee/	Yes	No	Not applicable	Nominated by colleagues	Delegated by SMT	Volunteered
1. Sports committee						
2. Disciplinary committee						
3. Fundraising committee.						

4.School Development and Maintenance Committee						
5. Tuck shop Committee.						
6.Admission committee						
7.Awarding Committee						
8.Cleaning campaign committee						
9.Examination and Assessment committee						
10.School Management committee						
11.Counselling Committee						

12. Feeding Program committee						
13. Culture and Entertainment Committee						

**15. FACTORS THAT SUPPORT OR FRUSTRATE TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on what factors inhibit or frustrate leadership practices in committees**

<b>My school is a place where:</b>	4	3	2	1
The School Management Team has trust in my ability to lead.				
Teachers resist leadership from committee chairs.				
Teachers are allowed to try out new ideas in committees.				
The SMT (School Management Team) values teachers' opinions.				
The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision				
The SMT allows committee members to participate in school level decision-making.				
Only the SMT takes important decisions.				

Only the SMT takes initiative in the school				
Adequate opportunities are created for the committee members to develop professionally.				

**F. COMMITTEE BENEFITS**

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the committee benefits**

<b>Benefits from school committees</b>	4	3	2	1
I benefit a lot from committee activities				
I learn new skills as a result of committees				
I never attend any committee meetings				
Committees are a waste of time and energy				

**F1. COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the frequencies of committee meetings**

<b>Frequencies of committee meeting</b>	4	3	2	1
We have a committee meeting once a week				

We have a committee meeting twice a term				
We have a meeting committee meeting at the beginning of each term				
We have a committee meeting when the need arises				
We never have a committee meeting				

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT!**

## **Appendix B: Interview Schedules**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PRINCIPAL**

1. Where you a committee teacher leaders before principalship?
2. How did committees come to be established in this school?
3. What qualities do you look for in a committee chair? Please elaborate more.
4. Can you please shed some light on the core functions of your committee chairs?
5. How is leadership distributed in your committee ?
6. What is your understanding of teacher leadership?
7. What are the opportunities provided to develop teachers' leadership skills?
8. How is teacher leadership practice developed and enhanced in committees?
9. What difference is committee leadership practice making in your school?
10. In your opinion, what are the challenges that affect committee leadership?
11. What recommendations do you have for confronting and addressing the challenges that may arise in committee leadership practice?
12. What do you recommend for the smooth operations of committee leadership practice?

### **THANKS**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PRINCIPAL**

1. Where you a committee teacher leaders before principalship?
2. How did committees come to be established in this school?
3. What qualities do you look for in a committee chair? Please elaborate more.
4. Can you please shed some light on the core functions of your committee chairs?
5. How is leadership distributed in your school?
6. What is your understanding of teacher leadership?
7. What are the opportunities provided to develop teachers' leadership skills?
8. How is teacher leadership practice developed and enhanced in committees?
9. What difference is committee leadership practice making in your school?
10. In your opinion, what are the challenges that affect committee leadership?
11. What recommendations do you have for confronting and addressing the challenges that may arise in committee leadership practice?
12. What do you recommend for the smooth operations of committee leadership practice?

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS (TEACHERS)**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS**

1. How long have you been teaching here?
2. Do you belong to a school committee? If YES, how did you become a member?  
  
If Not, why not?
3. What is your understanding of teacher leader and teacher leadership?
4. What can you say are the functions of a teacher leader?
5. What do you think of school committees?
6. What do you think are the benefits of being a school committee member?
7. To what extend are you involved in decision-making in the committees?
8. How does the school Management Team assist committees?
9. In your opinion, what are the challenges of being a member of the committee?
10. What do your recommendation for the smooth operation of school committees?

### **THANKS**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

1. How long have you been teaching here?
2. What is a teacher leader?
3. What is your understanding of teacher leadership in committees?
4. Think about leadership practice in a perfect school! What would the Committee Chairs leader be able to achieve (probe roles/skills/knowledge/relationships)?
5. To what extend is teacher leadership practice enhanced in committee by the SMT?
6. What can you say are your leadership functions in committees?
7. How is it easy to carry out leadership work in committees as well as in the school?

8. What factors hinder the carrying out of leadership activities within committees and the school as a whole?
9. How do you balance your teaching load and your committee leadership?
10. In your view, what are the challenges of being a committee teacher leader and a subject teacher?
11. To what extent does the SMT support or hinder your effort in committee leadership?
12. What type of support would you like to receive from the SMT?
13. What recommendations do you have for the smooth running for school committees?

**THANKS**

## Appendix C: Observation Schedule

Date:.....

Week No:.....

Day:.....

Activity	Type of leadership practice done
1.Assembly	
2.Meetings( e.g. Committee /staff meeting chairing, collaboration, decision-making, reaching consensus	
3.Continuous professional development( e.g. Peer coaching, peer preparation, action research, school workshop facilitation etc	
4.Assessments (Exams settings/moderations in committees	
5. Extra-curricular activities (participation in sports, cultural dance	
6.Co-curricular activities(e.g. sport/ dancing	
7. Leadership Capacity (E.g. does the Committee Chair have the capacity to lead without being guided by the principal	
8.Committe Chair interaction (does the Committee Chair has network connection with other committees in the cluster	
9. Teacher-principal interaction (e.g. is there a parallel leadership? etc	

<p>10. Outdoor &amp; break time (do the committee members share experiences with others, does the teacher work in teams with others, supervision of learners, is there a sense of unity? Etc.)</p>	
<p>11. Committee chair-other committee members interaction outside the classroom (e.g. does the CC have the capacity to monitor the learners, guide, empower, motivate Etc.)</p>	
<p>Teacher-teacher interaction (e.g. do teachers share knowledge with others, plan committee activities together, design assessment tools with others etc.)</p>	

**Summary of the day**

## Appendices D, E, F: Letters to and from gatekeepers

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

Enquiries: Simon Vaeta

11 Hill's View

Cell: +264812728208 / +27782092422

Grahamstown

Email address: [vaetasimon@gmail.com](mailto:vaetasimon@gmail.com)

South Africa

10<sup>th</sup> February, 2014

To: The School Principal

Dear Sir / Madam

I am a part - time student (student number 05v5454) at Rhodes University Grahamstown, Eastern Cape in South Africa, researching towards a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). I am presently engaged in a research which aims to explore leadership practices in school committees. In this regard I have, for the purpose of convenience, selected your school for my research study which I plan to undertake from 2<sup>nd</sup> of March to 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2014. I would very much like to conduct my research in leadership practices in various school committees in your school, and work particularly with four committee chairs who are not on managerial post, four other committee members (ordinary teachers) from the same four committees as the committee chairs and you as the school principal as my primary research participants. I also would like to work with other nine committee members (ordinary teachers) from the other nine committees that are not represented by the primary participants.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of your teachers and by no means is it a commission of inquiry. The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the Rhodes University. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, in the interests of the participants, feedback will be given to them during and at the end of the research. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any questions you would like to be

answered. It is against this back ground that I request for permission to conduct my study in your institution.

Attached please find an approval letter from Regional Director of Education, Ohangwena and a copy of the confirmation letter from my supervisors, Prof. Callie Grant and Prof. Hennie van der Mescht who can be contacted as follow: Hennie Tel: +27746 6038384 email: h.vandermescht@ru.ac.za and Callie Tel: +27746 6037508 email: c.grant@ru.ac.ca.

Yours faithfully

-----

Simon Vaeta (Researcher)



## RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

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### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Tel: +27 (0)46 603 8383 • Fax: +27 (0)46 603 8028 • PO Box 94 Grahamstown 6140 • E-mail: education@ru.ac.za

19 January 2015

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr Simon Vaeta (student number 05V5454) is a registered Master's student at Rhodes University. He is now in the second year of the course and is about to enter the research phase. He plans to investigate leadership development in committee structures in a school in Namibia. The purpose of this letter is to obtain your permission to conduct research in a school in your region.

Mr Vaeta will need to spend some time at the school, observing and gathering data through interviews and document analysis. His findings are likely to add to the very small body of leadership and management literature on Namibian schools.

It would be highly appreciated if you could make it possible for him to have access to the school.

Thank you very much.

(Prof) Callie Grant

(Supervisor)



**OHANGWENA REGIONAL COUNCIL  
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION  
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Greenwell Complex Private Bag 88005 Eenhana Tel: 065 – 290 201 Fax: 065 -290 224

Enquiries: Magano Gaoses  
Email: [mcnotto@yahoo.com](mailto:mcnotto@yahoo.com)  
Ref: 12/3/10/1

23 February 2015

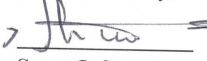
Mr. Simon Vaeta  
11 Hills View Street  
Grahamstown  
South Africa  
Email: [vaetasimon@gmail.com](mailto:vaetasimon@gmail.com)  
Cell: +264 812728208

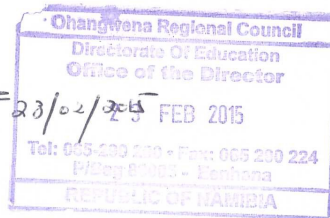
Dear Mr. Vaeta

**Subject: Approval granted to carry out a research study at Etomba CS**

1. Receipt of your letter on the above subject matter is hereby acknowledged.
2. The Ohangwena Education Directorate indeed supports and herewith grants approval to you to carry out the envisaged research on “Exploring teacher leadership in a highly structured committee environment”.
3. Your case study is most certainly welcomed as it will be done with a specific focus on the leadership abilities of teachers at Secondary Schools. You might, through this process, come across new ideas, strategies or create new knowledge that might enhance the leadership skills of teachers and others.
4. Kindly liaise with the principal of Etomba CS for the necessary arrangements to be made in advance. It is our firm believe that all ethical requirements will indeed be upheld.
5. We wish you all the best in your research and salute you for the initiative taken to fulfil your studies.

Yours Sincerely,

  
**Sanet L Steenkamp**  
Director: MoE  
Ohangwena Region



CC: **Inspector of Education  
Ondobe Circuit**

## Appendix G: Invitation to take part in research

Enquiries: S. Vaeta (Mr)  
Cell: +264 812728208  
Email: vaetasimon@gmail.com

11 Hills View  
Grahamstown  
South Africa  
10<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Dear Mr/Mrs / Ms.....

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

I am hereby inviting you to participate in a research study. I am a part-time Masters of Education student (Number: 05v5454) in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. I am presently engaged in a research which aims to explore leadership practices in school committees. In this regard I have, for the purpose of convenience, selected your school for my research study which I plan to undertake from 2<sup>nd</sup> of March to 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2014. I would very much like to conduct my research in leadership practices in various school committees in your school, and work particularly with four committee chairs, who are not on a managerial post, four other committee members (ordinary teachers) from the same four committees as the committee chairs and the school principal as my primary research participants. I also would like to work with other nine committee members (ordinary teachers) as my *secondary* participants from the other nine committees that are not represented by the *primary* participants.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of teachers and by no means is it a commission of inquiry. The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the Rhodes University. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a *consent form*. Furthermore, in the interests of the participants, feedback will be given to them during and at the end of the research. Please feel free to contact me at (+264812728208 or [vaetasimon@gmail.com](mailto:vaetasimon@gmail.com)) any time should you have any questions you would like to be answered.

It is against this context that I am humbly inviting you to participate in this research at your school. Attached, please, do find and complete the *Declaration form* upon accepting this

invitation. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

## Appendix H: Declaration form

I -----(full name of the participants in full) understand that this research is to explore leadership practices in school committees at my school as a case study.

I also understand that the information collected will be used to contribute to the understanding of leadership practices in committees at a case study school. The information will be used for the study of a Masters degree in Educational Leadership and Management (ELM).

I undertake to participate in this exercise on voluntary basis and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I understand that the information (discussion) will be voice recorded, however it remains confidential. My personal identity will remain anonymous as well as the name of my school. The information will be used only for study purpose as it will appear in the thesis that will be produced at the end of the study.

If I have any question about my rights as participant or I am dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of the study, I may contact Mr. Simon Vaeta (the researcher) at *Cell: +264812728208* or at his email address: *vaetasimon@gmail.com*.

I agree to participate in this study and also agree for the interview to be voice recorded.

Institution: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....