

**AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP:  
A CASE STUDY IN A NAMIBIAN URBAN  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**MASTER OF EDUCATION  
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By

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## DECLARATION

I, THOMAS KAYELE ZOKKA, declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any other institution. Quotes and references were duly acknowledged according to the Rhodes University Education Department Guide to Referencing.

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(Signature)

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(Date)

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## DEDICATIONS

This work is dedicated to the following people:

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## ABSTRACT

After independence in 1990, Namibian schools were required by the new government to shift from a hierarchical organisational structure with authoritarian leadership to a more democratic type of leadership that offers teachers the opportunity to participate in school leadership and in decision-making processes. This shift is suggested in a number of national policies in Namibia that highlight the sharing of leadership within the organization and, in particular, the sharing of leadership with teachers. As such, teacher leadership is a manifestation of distributed leadership which emphasizes that leadership can be located in the position of the principal but can spread over many people who work in a school at various levels. While teacher leadership is well researched in developed countries, it is under researched in Namibia. Against this backdrop, the purpose of my study was to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership as an organizational phenomenon in a case study school in the Ncuncuni circuit of the Kavango region in Namibia. It also examined the factors that enabled and inhibited the practice of teacher leadership.

My study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive paradigm and it adopted a case study approach in one school. The study used the following instruments to collect data: a closed questionnaire, document analysis, observations and individual interviews. The primary participants were the principal and three teachers, while the entire school teaching staff constituted my secondary participants. Quantitative data was analysed manually using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analysed thematically using a model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2008).

The findings of my study indicated that while the concept of teacher leadership was new to all participants, they had a common sense understanding of it. Although teachers in the study understood teacher leadership in a range of different ways, the overarching idea of the whole school was that teachers lead both in and outside the classroom. My study also found that teachers in the school practiced teacher leadership across the entire four zones. These included how teacher leadership was practiced inside the classroom and how teachers worked as leaders with colleagues and learners beyond their classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities.

It also included how teachers led outside their classroom in whole school development as well as how teachers led beyond their schools in the community. Teacher leadership was strong in the first three zones and weaker in the fourth zone, which constituted an example of 'successful teacher leadership' (Harris and Muijs, 2005). There were factors that promoted teacher leadership in the case study school such as a supportive culture and ongoing professional development. Factors that constrained the practice of teacher leadership were also evident like the SMT who used its power at times to control teachers' decisions and a lack of time also emerged as a barrier that impeded teachers from taking leadership roles because they already had full teaching programmes. Even though there were some barriers to teacher leadership, a dispersed distributed leadership context prevailed at the case study school.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

D	Document
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
II	Individual Interview
OSB	Observation Staff Briefing
P	Principal
Q	Questionnaire
RQ	Research question
SMT	School Management Team
SO	School Observation
T	Teacher

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Teacher leadership is a field of study in leadership that offers teachers opportunities to participate in school leadership without considering their formal positions. It also calls for those in formal positions to distribute power across the organization. However, teacher leadership in the African context is an under researched field, particularly in the context of Namibia. As a consequence of this and my personal interest in the topic this study aimed to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership as an organizational phenomenon in a case study school in Kavango, Namibia. This chapter presents the context where the study on teacher leadership emerged, the rationale for the study, the potential value of the research and it explains why the study on teacher leadership was necessary. This chapter also outlines my topic, research goal and questions that I examined. Next, the chapter gives a brief note on the research approach the study adopted as well as the methods and the tools I used. The chapter further explains the steps I took to make the research process work. Finally, the chapter offers an outline of how the thesis is structured.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In the colonial era in Namibia, a top-down hierarchical and authoritarian style of leadership and management characterized the education system (Nauyoma-Hamupembe, 2012, p. 1). This indicates that autocratic leadership put principals in positions to have control over all teachers and gave them absolute powers to make decisions in their local schools without any consultation or negotiation. In support of this view, Nyambe and Griffiths (1999) state that:

hierarchical and authoritarian management structures in certain institutions have also tended to create and perpetuate dependency as those staff members occupying lower levels in hierarchy have always depended on initiatives and decisions to come from the top. Independent thinking, critical decision-making and bottom-up initiatives have been stifled by top-down hierarchical structures (p. 5).

As a consequence, this history of oppression under the apartheid regime “left the populace militarized and bureaucratized” (Angula and Lewis, 1997, p. 235).

When Namibia became an independent nation in 1990 after a long and a bitter struggle, the new democratic government’s major step forward in the Namibian education system has been its move, more especially at a policy level, towards a democratic and participatory decision-making process in schools (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MEC], 1993, p. i). The aim of this move was “to redress the remnants of apartheid and colonial education” (Robertson, 2007, p. 1). As a result, a national policy entitled ‘Toward Education for All’ was introduced in 1993 “which translates the Namibian philosophy on education into concrete and implementable government policies” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p i).

Moreover, other policies were also initiated, among these included the ‘Education Act, Act no. 16 of 2001’, ‘Education for All: National Plan of Action’ (2002) and the ‘Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme’ (ETSIP) (2005). These policies suggest that leadership in schools should be distributed between and among all the educators in the institution. ‘Toward Education for All’ (1993) indicates that “responsibilities and authority in school require to be decentralized in order for all the stakeholders in education to have access and authority in school-wide leadership and decision-making processes in school” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 169). Furthermore, the above policies do not only talk about the distribution of leadership, but they include the decision making process which must be done at all levels of an organization for the purpose of solving the many problems that are affecting the attainments of goals and objectives of the school (Namibia. MEC, 2002). ‘Education for All: National Plan of Action’ (2002), states that “a process of decentralization has embarked on to give regional and local authorities and the people at grassroots level decision making powers in matters that concern them, which are important to be extended to school community levels” (Namibia. MEC, 2002, p. 14). This policy further states that “prior to independence the management of schools was the domain of principals only. From the outset of independence the democratic participation of

teachers, parents, learners and community members in decision-making has been the main gospel of the day” (Namibia. MEC, 2002, p. 14). Therefore, this shift offers teachers the opportunity to take up a range of leadership roles in their schools.

In addition, with the introduction of a policy called ‘National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia’ in 2005 which aims to ensure quality of education on offer across the country, principals are finding it more demanding to fulfill leadership responsibilities and management tasks in schools alone at present. Kapapero (2007) asserts that “more and more responsibilities have been added to the job description of a principal, making the position one of the most demanding and arguably least rewarding in the public service” (p. 1). Moreover, in line with the policy called ‘National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia’, principals are not only expected to lead and manage schools but they are also to “be allocated 25% of the total numbers of periods to teach regardless of the size of their schools” (Namibia. MEC, 2007, p. 12). This call from the Ministry of Education puts school leadership under pressure and results in additional responsibilities for school principals, beyond their already heavy workloads. However, the ‘National Standards and Performance Indicators for school in Namibia’ (Namibia. MEC, 2007) as recorded in ‘School Development Plan’ (Namibia. MEC, 2008, p. 9), indicates that “principals should involve teachers in decision-making in the execution of the activities in the School Development Plan”. This is to suggest that leadership can no longer exist without interaction with others. As Harris and Lambert (2003) assert, “leadership is profoundly interpersonal and exists via direct impact upon or exchange with others, or through their perceptions and interpretations of leadership actions” (p. xvi). Therefore, the roles of teachers in leadership are not negotiable if schools are to be effective. Next, I discuss the rationale of the study.

### **1.3 THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

My research focus is on teacher leadership. This research interest springs from the Rhodes University interview I attended in Okahandja, in Namibia for the Masters of Education Degree programme in Educational Leadership and Management in November 2011. This was when the

term teacher leadership was first introduced to me and indeed it was a new concept. I questioned why? Why had none of my undergraduate or honour's level courses ever introduced this concept? Right after the interview, I started to think of my school situation and whether the principal and teachers in my school could understand the possibilities of teacher leadership in the school; perhaps it would even result in a lessening of the workload of the principal?

Drawing from my own experience as a teacher for nine years and as a head of department for six years, the principal as a leader was the commonly accepted concept, with teachers as followers as the only option I had ever considered. Since I am a head of department I share some leadership responsibilities with the principal because I am in a formal position as a middle manager and I am being paid for it but I did not know that teachers could lead in schools since they did not hold formal management positions. I assume that other teachers and principals who do not understand the possibilities of teacher leadership in schools might also hold this misconception.

It is against this backdrop that I became interested in exploring the concept and practice of teacher leadership in a Namibian urban primary school.

I have found only two recent research studies on teacher leadership in Namibia, the first by Hashikutuva in 2011 and the second by Nauyoma-Hamupembe in 2012. Hashikutuva's study was about the enactment of teacher leadership, while Nauyoma-Hamupembe's research was about teachers' leadership roles. Their research found that teachers have little understanding of what teacher leadership meant. So it suggests that my research is relevant because it is an under researched topic and it also provides a platform for further investigation. The next section of this chapter discusses my research aims and questions as well as the research design and methodology.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS**

The aim of this study was to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership as an organizational phenomenon in a case study school.

To achieve my aim, this study was guided by the following three main questions:

1. How is the concept teacher leadership understood?
2. Where do teachers lead and what leadership roles do they take up?
3. What factors enable and constrain teacher leadership in the case study school?

## **1.5 RESEARCH ORIENTATION**

This research was a qualitative case study in the interpretive paradigm. I used document analysis, observations, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to collect data. This is discussed in more detail in chapter three, section 3.6 of this thesis. In this regard, the participants in the research produced the raw data from which I was able to draw together my findings. Next, I move to discuss the theory framing the study.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMING**

Teacher leadership is a new concept in Namibia. It is less so in South Africa, and beyond Africa (US, UK and Australia) it has been the focus of research for a number of decades (see for example Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Harris and Lambert, 2003; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Muijs and Harris, 2007; Grant, 2008; Grant and Singh, 2009). Teacher leadership is understood and defined in different ways by many different international scholars. Literature indicates that at the moment there is no specific definition of teacher leadership since writers are competing in seeking for a clear definition. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) define teacher leadership as “teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice” (p 438). Similarly, Grant (2008) defines teacher leadership as:

a form of leadership beyond headship or formal position. It refers to teachers becoming aware of and taking up informal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond. It includes teachers working collaboratively with all stakeholders towards a shared and dynamic vision of their school within a culture of fairness, inclusion, mutual respect and trust (p. 186).

Lambert (1998), as cited in Muijs and Harris (2003, p. 438), defines teacher leadership as a broad-based and skillful involvement in the work of leadership. She uses the term broad-based

involvement to refer to involving many people in the work of leadership. In summary, teacher leadership creates a space for educators to recognize and value the leadership abilities of other teachers. Thus, it does not equate leadership with a person, but it opens ways to share leadership responsibilities and empower teachers to participate in decision-making. This signifies the distribution of power over leadership responsibilities in the school. Thus, my research is informed by distributed leadership theory. As Muijs and Harris (2007) argue:

teacher leadership is conceptually closely linked to distributed leadership, but is narrower, being concerned exclusively with the leadership roles of teaching staff, while simultaneously being broader than many practical operationalizations of distributed leadership that have often concentrated on formal positional roles, in particular those relating to middle management and subject leadership, even though most theoretical conceptualizations of distributed leadership have stressed emergent an collaborative leadership that would incorporate teacher leadership as one of its manifestations ( pp. 112-113).

Distributed leadership theory is an umbrella concept and teacher leadership is one manifestation of distributed leadership in practice. Harris & Lambert (2003) describe distributed leadership as the process of creating the spaces, the contexts and the opportunities for expansion, enhancement and growth among all (p. xvii). Grant and Singh (2009, p. 291) argue that distributed leadership should be viewed “as a practice, a shared activity in which all educators, i.e. SMT members and teachers, can participate, such that the leadership practice is constructed in the interactions between leaders, followers, and their situations”. Similarly, Woods, Bennett, Harvey & Wise (2004) as cited in Hatcher (2005, p. 254) define distributed leadership as “an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals engaged in concertive action, creating a new organizational culture based on trust rather than regulation in which leadership is based on knowledge not position”.

The main idea underpinning distributed leadership view is that “leadership is not individual or positional but instead is a group process in which a range of people can participate” (Grant, Gardener, Kajee, Moodley & Somaroo, 2010, p. 402). Therefore, distributed leadership theory informs my research and offers me the conceptual tools to ‘unpack’ the concept and practice of teacher leadership.

## 1.7 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one provides an overview of the thesis including the theoretical framing and research design.

Chapter two gives an overview of the international and South African literature on the concept of teacher leadership. The review provides a theoretical framework of the study. The chapter starts with a discussion of the broad concepts of leadership and management as the overarching theoretical framing of the study. This is followed by the relationship between leadership and management. It further discusses a brief evolution of leadership theories from trait thinking to more recent developments such as distributed leadership. The chapter also defines distributed leadership and discusses its characterizations as Gunter (2005) offers them. The last part of this chapter is the focus of the study and it presents the literature review on the notion of teacher leadership in schools in the United Kingdom, United States of America and other parts of the world including South Africa. It attempts to define the concept of teacher leadership by engaging with different researchers, both in South Africa and internationally. The benefits of teacher leadership are also discussed. The chapter further outlines the roles of teacher leadership as well as factors that enable and constrain teacher leadership.

Chapter three focuses on the research process. It outlines the context of the school where I conducted the study. The chapter presents the research design, methodology and methods I used to collect the data and they are discussed in detail. The chapter further discusses how the quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analysed. Next, the chapter presents validity, ethical issues as well as my positionality as a researcher.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings of the study that emerged from the raw data that was collected. The data is presented by using the quantitative data, observation notes and participants' quotes which enabled me to find out how teacher leadership was practiced in the case study school. The constraining and enabling factors to teacher leadership in the case study school are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Five summarises the main findings of the study. The chapter suggests few recommendations for further research as well as for practice in Namibian schools. The next chapter reviews the literature on the concepts teacher leadership and distributed leadership.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study was to explore how the concept of teacher leadership was understood and practiced in a Namibian urban primary school. Therefore, this chapter reviews some of the International, South African and Namibian literature on the concept of teacher leadership. The review of this literature also provides a theoretical framework for teacher leadership, which is the focus of my study. In this chapter, I begin by discussing and defining the broader concepts of leadership and management as the overarching theoretical framing of the study. Next, I discuss the relationship between leadership and management. Thereafter, I move to traditional leadership theories to discuss a brief evolution of leadership theories from trait thinking, through situational, contingency (which equate leadership to a person) to more recent developments such as distributed leadership (which views leadership as a shared practice).

In the section on distributed leadership, I define the concept of distributed leadership and discuss its characterizations in order to offer a framing in which to locate teacher leadership the phenomenon under study. Teacher leadership is then defined and the formal and informal roles of teacher leadership are presented in order to have an understanding of where teachers lead and what leadership responsibilities they take up. After that, I move to discuss factors enabling and constraining teacher leadership. Finally, I conclude by drawing the main points of this chapter.

#### **2.2 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Generally speaking, it has been accepted that effective education cannot be achieved without strong leadership and management in schools. Therefore, leadership and management are core

elements that, ideally, should be combined in order for schools to achieve their common goals. As Coleman (2005, p. 7) states, in the United Kingdom the terms leadership and management are often used “interchangeably in everyday speech” as in South Africa and Namibia. She argues that in practice it is the same people who are both leading and managing schools. In addition, Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2007, p. 6) do not differ much with the views of Coleman. They view leadership and management as “two sides of the same coin as skills in both are essential to the effective function of schools”. Similarly, Bush (2003, p. 8) argues that “leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives”. These views show how the two concepts of leadership and management are tightly coupled because they can mean the same thing in practice. Therefore, one can argue that leadership and management are both needed for a school to function well because in practice a principal may start talking about leadership roles and end up talking about management functions. However, Schon (1994, p. 36) argues that “leadership and management are not synonymous terms because one can be a leader without being a manager or an individual can be a manager without leading”. In agreement with Schon, I believe that the two terms are not synonymous. However, I also agree with the authors who say that both are needed for the organization to function effectively. I therefore move to define the two concepts separately.

### **2.2.1 Defining leadership**

The literature indicates that there are different definitions of the concept leadership, but there is no agreed definition of the concept. I have noted from the literature that writers describe the concept leadership depending on their own understanding and features of the phenomenon under study. Yukl (2002), as cited in Bush (2003, p. 5), argues that “leadership involves a process of influence exerted by one person over other people to structure the activities and relationship in a group or organization”. The use of the words person or group, according to Yukl, serves to emphasize that leadership can be exercised by individuals as well as teams.

In addition, for Bush (2003), leadership is also associated with vision and ability to articulate this vision through an organization. Harris and Muijs (2005, p. 15) share the same sentiments as Bush when they view leadership as “providing vision, direction and support towards a different preferred state-suggest change” while, Spillane (2006, p. 10) defines leadership as “the

interaction between two or more members of a group than often involves the perceptions of the members". Harris and Lambert (2003) do not differ much with Spillane's ideas on leadership; they suggest that "leadership is profoundly interpersonal and exists via direct upon or exchange with others or through their perceptions of leadership action" (p. xvi). Furthermore, Donaldson (2006, p. 7), as cited in Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley and Somaroo (2010, p. 402) understands leadership as "the process which brings about change in the organization and mobilizes members to think, believe, and behave in a manner that satisfies emerging organizational needs, not simply their individual needs or wants the status quo". Continuing this line of thinking, it is Donaldson (2006, p. 8) who explain how "leadership helps the school to adapt to its changing function in society".

In the Namibian context Hashikutuva (2011, p. 15) defines leadership as the ability to influence others by supporting them, guiding them, inspiring them and directing them and work together as a team in order to change the school for the improvement of the school's performance. Similarly, Udjombala (2002) sees leadership as a "process whereby one person influences others to do something of their own volition, neither because it is required nor because of fear of the consequences of non-compliance" (p. 7). Furthermore, a definition by Kawana (2004) summarises the above two definitions and covers a range of ideas. She stresses that "leadership is not about commanding or controlling but about the acceptability of the leader to the followers, and involves coaching and collaborating so that others can be empowered too" (p. 7). In line with this thought Tjivikua (2006) states that "the dimension of relationship is a very strong feature in leadership, because in order to lead you need to be followed, if you are not followed than you are not leading" (p. 17).

From the aforementioned definitions one can view leadership as a relationship that brings people together in an organization to accomplish the purpose of education because, according to Donaldson (2006, p. 47), leadership resides in the relationships among people.

Having defined leadership according to different authors, I next define management according to the literature.

### **2.2.2 Defining management**

In education, particularly in schools, management can be referred to as a process of managing staff, resources, curriculum and time. Thus, management has to do with the “routine functions within the school organization that support teaching and learning” (Harris, 2003, p. 12). Glatter’s (1979) definition remains relevant to the current situation in education. He defines management as “the internal operations of an institution” (p. 16). He explains that this means that management involves dealing with systems, structures and culture of a school for effective and smooth day-to-day operations. Bush (2003, p. 4) shares a similar view when he defines education management in terms of educational operations. He argues that the aim of management in all areas of the school is to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning can take place.

Bush (2003, p. 1) further contends that “if the primary goal is education, then the core business of educational management is to focus on the effective delivery of teaching and learning”. In line with this idea, Sapre (2002, p. 102) sees management as “a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilization of organizational resources in order to achieve organizational goals”. Therefore, managers tend to focus not only on directing activities but they also know how to influence those activities carried out by members of the group in successful manner.

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

While I work from the premise that leadership and management are theoretically different, they are closely linked. Van der Mescht (2008, p. 16) views leadership as a “change-oriented and relationship phenomenon, while he sees management as a process focuses on maintenance and control”. This simply means that leadership brings about change in an organization and management makes sure that things are in order. This is to suggest that the two processes of leadership and management go together and both are needed for an organization to do well. In addition, I argue along with Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) who claim that it is vital “to see leadership and management as going together-in other words, not splitting the roles of leadership and management between people” (p. 170). They explain further that “leadership and management are, so intertwined and interdependent, they need to, as far as possible, be practiced together. Both are essential-you cannot have the one without other” (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002,

p. 170). This demonstrates how the two words complement each other and this is how I will be using the concepts in this thesis. In the next section, I discuss traditional leadership theories.

### 2.3 TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES

This section is a review of the literature on the evolution of leadership theories over the past 100 years, from trait thinking, through situational, contingency to more recent developments of leadership thinking such as distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is important for my study because it is premised on the view that “leadership is not individual or positional but instead is a group process in which a range of people can participate” (Grant et al, 2010, p. 402). The historical background of leadership theories show that leadership is not static but it evolves. The literature reveals that leadership began after the Second World War and the successful leaders were associated with that conflict (Clarke, 2007, p. 13). Clarke (2007) in his book, *The handbook of school management*, suggests it that after the Second World War most thinking about leadership was based on the identification of the character traits of great historical leaders, mostly men and military. This view shows that in the past leadership was understood as positional whereas today much of literature talks about leadership as an inclusive process in which all members of an organization can participate at one time or another.

From the literature on research into the behaviors and character traits of leaders, especially military and political leaders, a belief emerged that leaders were born and not made, but that those who aspired to position of leadership needed to emulate the personality traits, behaviors and values of the heroes of history. This first move of traditional leadership is known as Great-man or Aristotle theory, which suggests that “some individuals are born with certain personality traits which enabled them to lead” (Coleman, 2005, p. 9). More recent literature reports that the great man theory of leadership has limitations in improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The assumption that leaders are born and not made is not relevant to Namibian situation currently, because there are many effective leaders who are groomed by their mentors and are contributing a lot in improving the quality of education in schools (Molefe, 2010). Furthermore, great man theory believe that there are a range of qualities that are common to all

leaders as stated above, this overlooks the possibility that all people have leadership potential and this potential needs to be expanded in order for true leaders to surface. Therefore, the focus should be on creating space to develop leadership potential in all teachers.

The second move of leadership after the Great-man theory failed was situational leadership. According to the literature, situational leadership has a view that leadership should match the needs of the situations and the knowledge and skills of the leader (Coleman, 2005). The literature proposes that in schools, there are different situations and a principal cannot be expected to solve all the problems alone. This is to indicate that different situations require different leaders and if a person is successful in one situation, one would not be successful in another different situation. This shortcoming of the situational leadership model opens a door for contingency theory, the third move of leadership theory.

Contingency leadership relates the leader to the situation in which they find themselves (Coleman, 2005, p. 10). In other words, this leadership is determined by the behavior of the followers. The literature suggests that the shortcoming of this type of leadership is that a leader can be more or less successful in the context of favourable and unfavourable situations. In brief, traditional notions of leadership are premised upon “an individual managing hierarchical systems and structure” (Harris, 2004, p. 14), while distributed leadership is a shift away from leadership as positional to leadership as a shared endeavor. Moreover, distributed leadership is one example of a shared leadership in practice and it is important for my study because teacher leadership is one of the manifestations of distributed leadership.

Before I begin to define the concept of distributed leadership and discuss its characterizations, I see it necessary to ask this question, why distributed leadership? It is generally accepted that a strong principal makes an organization (school) function well. While this might be true, I also, argue along with Hartley (2007, p. 206) that it is not the heroic leader (principal) who makes an organization function well, but what makes an organization function well “are the competence of its members, the prompt use of initiative, an identification with a shared destiny based on trust, and a collective endeavor, and unobtrusive coordination”.

The literature reveals that similar notions regarding leadership as a shared responsibility are articulated in recent literature (see for example Barth, 1988; Harris and Lambert, 2003; Coleman,

2005; Gunter, 2005; Spillane, 2006; Donaldson, 2006; Harris and Spillane, 2008). Thus, distributed leadership is relevant to an understanding of teacher leadership, the focus of my study because it provides space for teachers to see themselves as leaders in their school. Therefore, in the next section I discuss distributed leadership as the theoretical framing my study.

## **2.4 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

My study is framed by distributed leadership theory because distributed leadership theory is an umbrella concept and teacher leadership, the focus for my study, is one manifestation of distributed leadership in practice. In this section, I discuss distributed theory under the following sub-sections, namely, definitions of distributed leadership and the characterizations of distributed leadership. The aim is to demonstrate how characterizations are connected to my study because they provide a frame for discussion of my data. As Spillane (2006, p. 10) claims, a distributed perspective on leadership “can be used as frame to help researchers decide what to look at when they investigate leadership”.

According to Gronn (2000, p. 1), distributed leadership is “an idea whose time has come” it is an alternative model of leadership (Simkins, 2005, p. 11) to traditional leadership which associates leadership with a person and office. In addition, the literature suggests that distributed leadership has come as a “pragmatic response to the demands of recent policy shift” (Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn and Jackson, 2006, p. 24). I am in agreement with the claim of Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn and Jackson (2006) because this shift in thinking, for example in Namibia, puts school principals under pressure and results in many responsibilities such as managing learners, curriculum, resources, time and teachers. Therefore, the notion of distributed leadership becomes necessary because it works from the premise that leadership in school not be located only in the principal of a school but should be “stretched over multiple leaders” (Spillanne, 2006, p. 15). In line with Spillane’s view, Hartley (2007, p. 203) claims that “schools need many leaders at all levels to overcome the many challenges affecting schools at present in the United Kingdom and many other countries” and here I would include Namibia and South Africa.

#### 2.4.1 Defining distributed leadership

The concept of distributed leadership is understood and defined differently by many writers, because the term means different things to different people. However, different writers seem to agree on one point that distributed leadership can be dispersed throughout the organization.

Distributed leadership is defined by Harris and Spillane (2008, p. 31) as a model of leadership which focuses “upon the interactions, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal roles”. Harris and Spillane (2008) further suggest that “a distributed perspective on leadership acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice, whether or not they are formally designated or defined as leaders” (p. 31). I agree with their view and I understand distributed leadership as a new way of thinking about leadership, which focuses on democracy, and allows all people in the school environment to demonstrate leadership, regardless of their formal or informal management positions. In addition, Spillane (2006, p. 3) claims that “there are multiple individual leaders such as a leader plus leader within the school, who take up responsibility for leadership activities in the school”. Spillane (2006) further suggests that “it is the collective interactions among leaders, followers and their situation that are paramount” (p. 4). In other words, this is to suggest that from a distributed perspective what is important is the relationship between the principal, heads of departments, teachers and learners, principal and teachers, teachers and colleagues and also teachers and learners. In line with this thinking, Harris and Lambert (2003, p. xii) assert that distributed leadership is “the process of creating the spaces, the contexts and the opportunities for expansion, enhancement and growth among all”. This indicates that distributed leadership is not premised on a singular view of leadership, for example the principal, but should be “stretched over two or more leaders” (Spillane, 2006, p. 15), including all teachers in the school.

I therefore, embrace the same school of thought to that of Gamage (2006) which views distributed leadership as:

a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school, who work towards mobilizing and guiding others 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. 11).

Similarly, Copland (2003) defines distributed leadership as:

a set of functions or qualities shared across a much broader segment of the school community that encompasses administrators, teachers and other professionals and community members both internal and external to the school. Such an approach imposes the need for school communities to create and sustain broadly distributed leadership systems, processes and capacities (p. 376).

In the context of my study, distributed leadership suggests that the principal as a leader should share leadership responsibilities with heads of departments, teachers, learners and parents. In so doing leadership can spread throughout the school and be regarded as an activity for all.

In this regard, the characterizations of distributed leadership as outlined by Gunter (2005) and expanded on by Grant (2010) formed a useful framing for my study.

#### **2.4.2 Characterizations of distributed leadership**

Different writers characterized distributed leadership differently. However, in this section I present characterizations of distributed leadership as suggested by Gunter (2005) in the context of United Kingdom and developed further by Grant (2010) in the context of South Africa. The characterizations, according to these authors authorized, dispersed and democratic and they provide a frame for discussion of my data.

The first characterization according to Gunter (2005, p. 51) is authorized distributed leadership, where different tasks are distributed from the principal to teachers. Grant (2010, p. 302) explains this by suggesting that, “power remains at the organizational level and the distribution of leadership is dependent on those who hold formal positions”. She elaborates-that in this way, “distribution within the practice is initiated by the principal or the SMT and it is where work is distributed from the principal to others in a delegated manner” (p. 302). Gunter proposes that teachers usually accept this form of distribution because it is regarded as legitimate within the hierarchical system of relations. Moreover, the delegated tasks are accepted because it “works in the school’s interest or serves personal interests of the teachers who take on the work” (Grant, 2010, p. 302). Grant’s claim enjoys the support of Woods (2004, p. 6) who argues that authorized distributed leadership is evident where there are “teams, informal groups and committees, operating within a hierarchical organization”. Grant and Singh (2009, p. 291) claim that teachers often accept the delegated work, either in the interest of the school or for their own empowerment. For example, the principal can authorize teachers to serve as subject heads, lead different committees, supervise study groups as leaders or lead different initiatives in the school.

The second characterization, dispersed distributed leadership, refers to a process where numerous leadership practices in an organization, for example a school, happen without the formal working of a hierarchy (Gunter, 2005). As a result, while the principal or the SMT as a formal structure exists in the school, “in practice people, regardless of position within the structure, work together in ways that work best” (Grant, 2010, p. 312). Furthermore, this characterization suggests that distributed leadership is based on trust (MacBeath, 2005, p. 353) and requires letting go by the principal rather than delegating responsibilities. It stands to reason that through sharing the leadership role broadly, the power relations in the school are moved away from the principal and heads of departments in the achievement of the organizational goals (Grant, 2010). In addition, dispersed distributed leadership “has a shared beliefs, moral purpose, shared professional capital and the social capital” (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p. xvii). In other words, dispersed distributed leadership is a bottom-up process where teachers have more autonomy and more space to lead than authorized distributed leadership. This is to propose that dispersed distributed leadership “facilitates the emergence of teacher leadership, initiated by teachers, in school” (Grant, 2010, p. 313).

The third characterization is democratic distributed leadership that is similar to dispersed distributed leadership but it goes beyond the school as an organization to the school as a public institution within a democracy (Gunter, 2005, p. 57). As Grant (2010, p. 319) argues that although the two concepts have some common features, democratic distributed “does not assume political neutrality, but instead it engages critically with organizational values and goals” (p. 319). This means democratic distributed leadership creates opportunities for teacher leadership to emerge and it is where teachers are given the platform to exercise leadership roles (Woods, 2004 cited in Gunter, 2005).

In conclusion, I urge that for distributed leadership to be democratic, the culture of the school need to change. Therefore, schools need to develop a “culture that supports collaboration, partnership, team teaching and collective decision-making” (Grant, 2006, p. 524). Collaborative culture as a need for the emergence of teacher leadership is also discussed in the work of Liebermann, Saxl and Miles (1988, p. 152).

In this section, I discussed the theory of distributed leadership with its relevance to teacher leadership. In the next section, I present literature on teacher leadership as the focus for my study.

## **2.5 TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

This section provides a review of the literature on teacher leadership as the focus of my study. The section consists of four sub-sections. Sub-section one presents various definitions suggested by different writers. Sub-section two gives an overview of the literature on roles of teacher leadership proposed by different scholars. Sub-section three is an overview of the literature, which explains what teacher leadership can offer. Sub-section four discusses enabling and constraining factors of the literature, which is followed by a conclusion, which forms the last sub-section of teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership is not a new concept in the international literature, it has been the focus of research for a number of decades in United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia (see for example Troen and Boles, 1994; Smylie, 1995; Howey, 1998; Days and Harris, 2002; Harris and Lambert, 2003; Harris and Muijs, 2005; Muijs and Harris, 2007; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). In the context of South Africa, the literature on teacher leadership shows that researchers are becoming increasingly interested in researching on the topic (see for example the studies by Grant, 2008; Grant and Singh, 2009; Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley and Somaroo, 2010; Lawrence, 2010; Molefe, 2010; Nene, 2010; Gumede, 2010; Xulu, 2010). However, in the context of Namibia, teacher leadership is a new concept and, as a consequence, I was only able to find two Master of Education theses on teacher leadership (Hashikutuva, 2011; Nauyoma-Hamupembe 2012).

Although teacher leadership is not new in the international literature, at the moment there is no specific definition of teacher leadership because writers understand the concept differently in different contexts depending on the nature of the issue under study. Therefore, authors are competing in seeking for a clear definition (Foster, 1997, cited in Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson &

Hann, 2002, p. 17). In the context of the United States, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009, p. 6) define teacher leadership as “teachers leaders lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learner and leaders; influence others towards improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership”. The idea of teachers taking the lead within and beyond their classroom is also the idea of Grant (2008) who defines teacher leadership as:

a form of leadership beyond headship or formal position. It refers to teachers becoming aware of and taking up informal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond. It includes teachers working collaboratively with all stakeholders towards a shared and dynamic vision of their school with a culture of fairness, inclusion, mutual respect and trust (p. 186).

Furthermore, Martin (2007) defines a teacher leader “as a person, who leads by example, has credibility and expertise, is a problem solver, and relates well to others. These individuals may or may not have a formal leadership role in the school” (p. 18). In addition, teacher leadership means, “creating the conditions in which people work together and learn together, where they construct and refine meaning, leading to a shared purpose or set of goals”(Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 17). Moreover, Harris and Muijs (2005) put forward that teacher leadership “opens up the possibility of all teachers becoming leaders at various times” (p. 17). In other words, “all teachers can lead” (Barth, 1988, p. 40). Barth (1988) explains further, that teachers have in mind amazing leadership potential, but their leadership remains largely unused resource for improving schools. Therefore, he sees a school as “a community of leaders, a place whose very mission is to ensure that students, parents, teachers, and principals all become school leaders in some ways and at some times” (p. 40).

Now, I argue that the definitions above indicate that teacher leadership is a type of leadership exercised by all teachers through formal and informal roles where teachers influence each other, work together in teams and also with other people (for example parents) in the school environment for the purpose of developing their school and improve the performance of learners. Formal roles refer to positional roles with designation and informal roles can be described as leadership roles of teachers regardless of their positions or designation (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Grant, 2009). I discuss these roles in the next section.

### 2.5.1 Roles of teacher leadership

In this section, I discuss the roles of teacher leadership according to the international literature to have a general understanding, and then I link my discussion to the roles of teacher leadership according to Grant's (2008) model of teacher leadership in the context of South Africa. I believe that this model is useful for my study as it offers a way of capturing where teachers lead and what roles teachers take up in their classrooms and schools. Thus, I believe the model is applicable to a study on teacher leadership in the Namibian context.

According to Berliner (1983, cited in Muijs and Harris, 2003, p. 437) indicates that informal leadership comprises of classroom-related duties such as "planning, communicating goals, regulating activities and creating a pleasant workplace environment". Ash and Persall (2000) contrast the view of Berliner when state that formal leadership roles consist of responsibilities such as subject head or coordinator, or head of department, which frequently involves moving away from the classroom. This indicates that even level one teacher can take on leadership responsibilities beyond his or her classroom. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) warn that, teachers taking on leadership roles beyond their classrooms do not mean, ignoring their classroom duties, but it is a step ahead of practicing teacher leadership both inside and outside within their schools.

In addition, Day and Harris (2002) propose that teacher leadership concerns the translation of the ideals of school improvement into the practices of individual classrooms. They further, suggest that teacher leadership focuses upon participative leadership where all educators feel part of the change or development, as they are change agents and have a sense of ownership.

In the context of South Africa Grant, (2008) develop a model of teacher leadership representing roles of teachers. The model is known as Grant's (2008) model of teacher leadership. In this model, Grant (2008) suggests six roles of teachers, which can be found in four zones, and they are as follows: Role one is where teachers continues to teach and improve one's teaching in the classroom, which is in zone one. See also (Little, 1988; and Gehrke, 1991) in this regard. One may argue that this is formal role for teacher leadership because "it includes curriculum issues, assessment, teaching and learning, school vision building, networking and development of partnerships" (Grant, 2008, p. 93). The literature asserts that this role "involves teachers with specialized skills or strengths that guide others through a systematic process in a curricular topic,

instructional strategy, staff development, data interpretation, or technology issue” (Martin, 2007, p. 18).

Role two is providing curriculum development knowledge. See also (Gehrke, 1991; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Therefore, one can view this role as formal because it comprises of formal leadership roles that teachers undertake in the school such as team teaching, taking initiative in subject committee meetings and peer coaching (Muijs & Harris, 2007; Grant, 2008). In addition, Martin (2007) argues that formal roles can be assigned to teachers and assigned roles include department chair, team leaders, and peer coaches; these leaders are selected because of their area of knowledge or perspective.

Role three is leading in-service education and assisting other teachers therefore, it can be classified as informal role of teacher leaders because it involves peer coaching, mentoring role and building skills and confidence in others. See also Joyce and Showers (1982) who offer guidance to a programme creation for teachers in peer coaching.

Role four is participating in performance evaluation of teachers. This role can be regarded as informal role of teacher leaders because Grant (2008) suggests that educators in this role can take up leadership responsibilities such as informal peer assessment, moderation of assessment tasks and reflections on core and extracurricular activities. See also (Anderson and Shannon, 1988; Gehrke, 1991).

Role five is organizing and leading peer review of school practice, which can be classified as informal role of teacher leaders because it consists of teacher leadership indicators like whole school evaluation processes, mediating role, school practices including fundraising and policy development.

Role six is participating in school level decision-making. This role includes teacher leadership roles such as participative leadership where all teachers feel part of the change or development and have a sense of ownership and school-based planning and decision-making. It can be regarded as informal role of teacher leadership as well. See also (Devaney, 1987; Little, 1988; Gehrke, 1991) in this regard.

Having discussed roles of teacher leadership, and then in the next section I present benefits of teacher leadership as suggested by different writers.

### **2.5.2 Why teacher leadership?**

This section discusses two of the major benefits of teacher leadership as suggested in the literature and they are as follows: professional development and collaboration.

The first benefit of teacher leadership is professional development as a way of improving teachers' confidence. According to the thesaurus of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database, professional development refers to "activities to enhance professional career growth. Such activities may include individual development, continuing education, and in-service education, as well as curriculum writing, peer collaboration, study groups, and peer coaching or mentoring" (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2012). In line with this definition, the literature suggests skills that are linked to leadership role such as "leading groups and workshops, collaborative work, mentoring, teaching adults, action research, collaborating with others and writing bids needs to be incorporated into professional development to help teachers adapt to new roles involved" (Muijs and Harris, 2007, p. 114). In addition, Wohlstetter, Smyer and Mohrman (1994), as cited in Day and Harris (2002, p. 973) argue that professional development "is an ongoing success for every teacher in the school, as well as for the principal. Such schools work to build the capacity of the entire staff to help manage the school and develop a common knowledge best among all members". This indicates that professional development can "enhance teachers' confidence to lead" (Muijs and Harris, 2007, p. 123). For example, when teachers attend workshops they need to be given time to give feedback to the entire staff or to meet with other teachers teaching the same subject (s) in order to share additional skills and knowledge gained through the workshop. In so doing, I believe that this exercise can empower teachers to take on leadership roles and improve their confidence to lead because of professional development.

In the context of Namibia professional development is "connected to the work of teachers in the classroom and seeks to strengthen the teachers' subject knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge and technological pedagogical content knowledge or the use of various teaching and learning including the use of technology both modern and conventional (Namibia. MEC, 2011,

pp. 9-10). One can argue that professional development helps teachers to develop new knowledge and teaching skills to improve their own teaching in their classroom and reflect on their own teaching practice.

In addition, the international literature suggests that in order to sustain professional development, schools need to operate as professional learning communities or communities of practice (Hargreaves, 2002). The phrase professional learning communities in the literature implies commitment to teachers sharing learning and developing a culture that makes teacher leadership an expectation.

The second benefit of teacher leadership as cited in the literature is collaboration. A study by Hart (1995, p. 11) reveals that collaborative cultures enhance student and school outcomes because of teacher leadership. Another important point reported in the study is that teacher leadership enables schools to draw on teachers' expertise and experience as a school resource when teachers are working together. One can argue that collaboration offers teachers more power and give them a voice in matters related directly to teaching and learning. This is to suggest that "schools tap an underutilized resource" (Hart, 1995, p. 11). Gunter (2005, p. 53) argues that "collaboration gives recognition to leadership within interactions, and people can engage in concertively aligned conduct through anticipated or unanticipated activity that needs intervention and possible problem resolution". A study by Molefe (2010) conducted in one school in South Africa indicated that teachers were teaching in teams, supporting each other in terms of curriculum and choose textbooks and teaching materials in their grades. This means that collaborative culture was promoted and leadership was distributed among teachers. The literature also asserts that when leadership is distributed within a school "provides opportunities for teachers to innovate, develop and learn together" (Harris and Muijs, 2005, P. 41).).

Similarly, collaborative culture was evident in a study of Xulu (2010) in South Africa. Xulu attested that teacher leadership was promoted within the case study school because of the support teachers received from the School Management Team, the entire staff, the learners and the parents on many school activities (p. 51). Another study by Lawrence (2010) also found that "teachers collectively worked together to improve their teaching strategies and to coach children in different sports" (p. 73). All these activities required collaboration, which was evident in that school. Lastly, a study by Hashikutuva (2011) carried out in Namibia also states that

collaborative culture surfaced when teachers organized a funny day in order to raise fund for the school and all teachers participated. In other word, collaboration is about working together and share responsibilities. As Troen and Boles (2005, p. 1) claim that “sharing responsibilities empowers everyone in the process” and “break the isolation of teachers and engage them in collective efforts” (Lieberman, Saxl, and Miles, 1988, p. 153).

In conclusion, this section presented benefits of teacher leadership. In the next section, I discuss enabling and constraining factors of teacher leadership.

### **2.5.3 Enabling and constraining factors affecting teacher leadership**

In this section, I discuss factors that can either enable or constrain teacher leadership as suggested in the literature. First, I start with the principal as a key factor in the practice of teacher leadership. Next, I move to discuss the hierarchical school structure as another factor. Thereafter, I conclude my discussion by looking at time and a lack of confidence as the other two factors that can enable or constrain teacher leadership.

#### ***2.5.3.1 The principal as enabling or constraining factor***

It is broadly evident that principals are at the centre of various educational activities, which support (or not) teacher leadership in schools. For example, principals can support teacher leadership by communicating their vision to the school community, allowing teachers to participate in decision-making, encourage continuing professional development, which can enhance teacher self-confident to lead.

The literature reveals that the involvement of teachers in schools leadership is more likely to occur when “the principal openly articulates his or her vision at meetings, in conversations, in newsletters, in memos to the faculty (departments), and at community meetings” (Bart, 1988, p. 40). The study by Muijs and Harris (2007) suggests that a shared vision seems to be a key component of successful teacher leadership, evident when one teacher in their study indicate that “we are all very aware of where the school is going, we were consulted on the strategic plan, and we know we are responsible in our particular area to help the school meet its vision” (p. 123).

Moreover, it has been suggested that the principal can enable teacher leadership in a school by permitting teachers to take part in all school related matters. The literature shows that “if a

community of leaders is to be develop, tough and important problems must be handed over to teachers before, not after, the principal has decided on the solution” (Barth, 1988, P. 41). A recent study by Muijs and Harris (2007, p. 117) reveal that teachers were involved in a variety of initiatives such as revising the year plans and curriculum for each group, engaged in action research project to mention just a few. These initiatives made every teacher in the school feel part of the decision-making and it can support the emergence of teacher leadership.

Furthermore, principals can enable teacher leadership in the school by providing opportunities for professional growth. For example, in Namibia with the reform process teachers are expected to observe each other and give feedback, assess students, and participate in mentoring programmes (Namibia. MEC, 2011).

On the other hand, literature also suggests that principals can be one of the hindering factors to teacher leadership in schools when they are unwilling to relinquish power. Grant’s (2006) study in the context of South Africa found that:

the most powerful barrier to the take-up of the concept of teacher leader... is that many South African schools are still bureaucratically and hierarchically organized with principals who are autocratic and show negativity to teachers who attempt to take up a leading role outside the classroom (p. 526).

Similarly, a recent study by Hashikutuva (2011, p. 89) in three schools in Namibia, indicated that one principal of the three case study schools was autocratic, in a way that he took decisions alone without the input of teachers or heads of departments, but only to inform them on the decision that he has taken already. She clarified that “during the staff meeting, there were no discussions, and the principal only informed teachers what they must do” (p. 89).

The literature proposes that “it is against human nature to relinquish power when the person who does so will probably be held accountable for what others do with that power”(Barth, 1988, p. 40). One can argue that this might be the reason why principals are afraid to release power. It is evident from the literature that principals fear that they will be relegated to become operational managers if they allow teachers to take on leadership responsibilities (Troen & Boles, 1994, p. 2). As a result, of this fear then, principals could inhibit the good practice of teacher leadership in schools because teachers have no access to play a part in the leadership of the school.

### *2.5.3.2 School structures*

The school structure in this context can be referred to as a way in which power is organized or shared in organization (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008).

With this definition in mind, one can say that the leadership of the School Management Team (SMT) within the school can either enable or inhibit teacher leadership. A recent study by Harris and Muijs (2005, p. 9) in four schools in England, found that the School Management Teams created many opportunities for staff through certain structural arrangement (p. 93). Their study reported further that the schools "had regular meetings with the whole staff" (Harris and Muijs, 2005, p. 93) where teachers' contributions were considered. In addition, the schools also created space for the SMTs and the staff to meet together to plan new initiatives for building leadership ability in the school. These leadership practices in the four schools indicated that the school structures enhanced teacher leadership in their schools, because the structures created chances to share leadership roles and responsibilities with teachers across their schools. In other words, "teachers were motivated to remain in leadership roles when the organizational structures supported their efforts to make change" (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009, p. 93).

Another study by Muijs and Harris (2007) carried out in the three schools in United Kingdom revealed that structure supported teacher leadership in one of the case study schools. In this school, teachers got release time from the School Management Team to take up different leadership responsibilities within the school or beyond the school. For example, one teacher attended a meeting on behalf of the school and organized a staff meeting to give feedback to the staff upon return. Their study also made it known that other teachers engaged in various activities such as revising the year plans and curriculum for each group, taking action research which resulted in change in school policies and discussed curriculum, teaching and learning issues, planned and changed things when necessary (p. 117). This indicates that leadership dispersed throughout the school and teacher leadership was promoted as a result of structural support.

Moreover, a study by Grant (2008) found that the organizational structure encouraged teacher leadership, because the SMT "worked together with the majority of staff and all were involved in discussions about curriculum development" (p. 99). These three studies signify that the school

structures (SMTs) did a lot to promote the image of teachers as leaders beyond their classroom. Now I have a feeling that in this way structure can be regarded as enabling factor of teacher leadership.

However, structure can inhibit teacher leadership if SMTs are not willing to share leadership with teachers (Harris and Muijs, 2005).

A study by Muijs and Harris (2007, p. 124) reported that in second of their case study schools “not all senior managers were equally responsive to teacher initiative and extending involvement in decision making”. This is to mean, “leadership is viewed as the preserve of the few rather than the many” (Harris, 2003, p. 319). In addition, Harris (2003, p. 319) argues that such school structure “militates against teachers attaining autonomy and taking on leadership roles within the school” and this can limit the practice of teacher leadership in schools because teachers have no access to participate in the leadership of the school. This resistance of SMTs to change from authoritarian to non-authoritarian leadership can be viewed as top-down school structure and it is a dominant inhibiting factor to teacher leadership.

Similar elements of top-down hierarchical structures were evident in Grant’s (2006) study on the concept and practices of teacher leadership in South Africa. The study completed that the SMTs were unwilling to share leadership roles and responsibilities, because they “felt that those in higher authority knew better or did not support ideas of other teachers” (p. 526).

I presume that features of top-down hierarchical structure might be prevalent in some Namibian schools since the education coordination in the two neighbouring countries have experienced the same change process from apartheid to democracy, and it is possible that I will have similar barriers to the practice of leadership.

### *2.5.3.3 Time*

Time has been suggested to be a big constraining factor of teacher leadership (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson & Hargreaves, 2002; Harris and Muijs, 2005; Harris & Muijs 2007; Grant, 2008; Gumede, 2011). A study by Harris and Muijs (2005) found that teachers’ time was a key inhibiting factor of teacher leadership, because teachers were prepared and capable to “engage in activities outside of classroom teaching and administration” (p. 94). Another study by Muijs and

Harris (2007) reported that time was a constraining factor within the practice of teacher leadership, they state, “teachers spend the majority of their time in their classroom teaching and dealing with difficult learners and they have less time to do interesting initiatives and all the lovely things in the school” (p. 124). The literature asserts it that “adequate time could not be found in many situations to allow desired collaboration” (Howey, 1998, p. 30), because teachers’ first responsibility is to the students in their classes (Blegen and Kennedy, 2000). Lack of time as a challenge to teacher leadership was also found by National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007) when they pointed out “teachers sometimes do not have time for leadership activities” (p. 16).

Other studies in the context of South Africa also found that time were a constraining factor to the practice of teacher leadership. A study by Molefe (2010) reported that time was a hindering factor, when she stated that “teacher leaders did want to take leadership roles but due to a lack of time, they did not see tasks through and became discourage” (p. 85). Similarly, Gumede’s (2010) study showed that time was a barrier to teacher leadership. Her study put forward that teachers complained that they did not have time for other initiatives outside their classrooms, because they were involved with classroom responsibilities like teaching, preparing lessons, assessing learners and many more other (p. 80). Time as an inhibiting factor to the enactment of teacher leadership surfaced in a study of Lawrence (2010) also in South Africa. His study indicated that “teachers did not have time to fulfill their leadership roles as they were too embattled within administrative duties” (p. 82). Lastly, a study by Hashikutuva (2011) in Namibian context also showed that time was a barrier in one of the three schools. She wrote, “teachers at this school were over-occupied by school and classroom work, so they did not even have time for my interview sessions” (p. 78).

#### *2.5.3.4 Teachers’ confidence*

Another constraining factor is lack of confidence (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson & Hargreaves, 2002). Lack of confidence is another factor reported by Muijs and Harris (2007) in their study. They found that “some teachers were unwilling to take on leadership roles or offer feedback when consulted because some teachers intimidate others”. Their findings report that lack of experience for example young staff and older teachers was reported as being a constraining factor where they never asked before to take on leadership. Lack of confidence was also reported

to be another factor inhibited teacher leadership in one school in South Africa. Lawrence's (2010) study found that all the recognized leadership opportunities like being a subject head or spear heading big functions like the Golf Day, or the school Annual Awards Day were assigned to SMT to co-ordinate them, while teachers were left to run small practices like fundraising for spring day or mother's day. As a result, teachers did lack confidence to lead, because they needed to build their confidence as leaders by engaged in bigger projects at school. As one teacher, commented the "the SMT are already in formal positions of leadership, they need to help us to grow by sharing their knowledge to gain confidence to be leaders" (p. 86).

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a review of the literature of teacher leadership. The chapter discussed Leadership and Management as the basis where teacher leadership is built and the difference between Leadership and Management as the two important concepts needed in an organization to prosper, because the words complement each other. The chapter also presented the evolution of leadership (which equates leadership to a person) as a historical background for teacher leadership, (which views leadership as a shared practice), the focus for the study. Thereafter, the chapter discussed distributed leadership as a theory framing the study. Lastly, the chapter discussed teacher leadership theory the focus of the study by defining the concept of teacher leadership, explaining the necessity of teacher leadership, outlining the roles of teacher leadership as well as the discussion on factors enabling and constraining teacher leadership.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the research process. First, the chapter outlines the research aim and questions of the study. Second, it presents the research paradigm in which the research was located. Third, it discusses the case study as the approach that I chose to use in my study as well as the research site, sampling of the school and participants. Fourth, the chapter describes the instruments used to collect data and how I analysed data. Fifth, the chapter concludes by discussing ethical issues, validity and positionality, which are also important aspects of the research process.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS**

The aim of this study was to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership as an organizational phenomenon in a case study school.

To achieve my aim, this study was guided by the following three main questions:

4. How is the concept teacher leadership understood?
5. Where do teachers lead and what leadership roles do they take up?
6. What factors enable and constrain teacher leadership in the case study school?

### **3.3. RESEARCH ORIENTATION**

This research was qualitative in nature and it is situated in the interpretivist research paradigm with its emphasis on experience and interpretation. In the interpretive paradigm, “human beings through experience of the world and other people, construct their own realities and make their own meanings, that includes how they respond to phenomenon and how they feel”(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 22). In line with this thinking, I studied human beings, school teachers, in their natural settings. Similarly, Taylor and Bogdan (1998) explain that the interpretivist researcher “is committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor’s own perspective and examining how the world is experienced. The important reality is what people perceive it to be” (p. 3). In addition, interpretive research also suggests that “knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people’s intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self- understanding” (Henning, Rensburg & Smit, 2004, p. 20). Moreover, Henning (2004, p. 5) describes qualitative research as a “research form or strategy that allows for a different view of the theme that is studied and in which the participants have a more open-ended way of giving their views and demonstrating their actions”. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) share the same idea with Henning (2004) by describing qualitative research as a method of “understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it”(p .7). Therefore, I used multiple sources of evidence, so as to derive meaning from realities of the participants. Next, I discuss a case study as the approach that I employed.

### **3.4 A CASE STUDY APPROACH**

To accomplish my research goal I carried out a qualitative case study. Yin (2003) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 10). Teacher leadership is a contemporary phenomenon in Namibia. Since my

research focused on both participants' understandings of the concept as well as observations of the practices of teacher leadership within their school, I believe I studied the phenomenon within its 'real-life' context. According to Merriam (1998), a case study is a unit (something that you study), a process (something that you do) and a product (something that you make). Therefore, my case was the phenomenon of teacher leadership in the case study school. In addition, a case study observes an effect in real context, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects (Cohen, et al., 2007). Similarly, Creswell (2003) states that a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system: in this case, a single school. Thus, my study was a descriptive case study as it presented a description of teacher leadership in practice within one school. Moreover, Stake (2000, p. 435) states that "case studies have become one of the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry". Given that my study was qualitative in nature, using a case study enabled me to do an in-depth intensive inquiry into how teacher leadership was understood and carried out by teachers. Furthermore, my case study had some ethnographic tendencies such as examining a single case in depth (over one month period) by using observation and interviews. Rule and John (2011) describe the ethnographic case study as "an examination of a single case in depth through participant observation supported by an interview" (p. 8). Next, I present the research design which includes research site, sampling of the school as well as sampling of participants.

### **3.5 SETTING UP THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.5.1 Research Site**

The research study was conducted at Sandra Kapango primary school (the name is pseudonym) in the Kavango region in Namibia. This school is a public school, which is located in an urban area of Rundu town in Kavango, just about three kilometers away from the heart of the town. The school offers education to learners from the first grade to the seventh grade. This school has 21 permanent classrooms, an ablution block and other resources such as water, electricity, a school fence, a large playground, photocopy machines, a library and a computer laboratory. It can be said therefore that the school was moderately resourced. The school had an enrolment of

between 900-1199 learners per annum. In other words, it is a large school. The school charges school fees of between N\$151-N\$200 per learner per year. At the time of my study, there were 27 educators at this school: the principal, one head of department and 25 teachers. It can be seen that the school had a fairly large teaching staff. There were 18 female teachers and 7 male teachers. The principal of this school was a middle-aged woman who served in that position for 14 years. The head of department was also a woman who fell in the age range between 41 to 51 and served 13 years in that position. The majority of teachers were aged between 21 and 51 years of age. The group mainly consisted of qualified teachers holding a three-year teaching qualification. The majority of the educators were permanently employed by the state, while two of the 25 teachers were temporarily employed by the school on a twelve-month calendar period. The bulk of the teachers had between 5 and 16 years of teaching experience. The school has only three support staff. These included one female secretary who dealt with the school finances and administrative work and two female cleaners. The majority of the teaching staff was female. The school had an effective School board, which represented both teachers and parents of the school. Next, I move on to discuss how I selected the school where the study was conducted.

### **3.5.2 Sampling of the school and my positionality**

McMillan & Schumacker (2001) as cited in Maree (2010, p. 34) argue that “it is essential to select research sites that are suitable and feasible”. Sampling of the school was convenience sampling because the school was near to my house. This view corresponds with the description of convenience sampling given by Cohen, et al., (2011) that:

Convenience sampling involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained or those who happen to be available and accessible at the time. The researcher simply chooses the sample from those whom they have easy access (pp. 155-156).

The benefit for this choice was that I was able to get into the school easily because the school accepted me with trust and I felt at home. As a researcher, I also work in the case study school as a head of department for seven years. At the time of the study, I was on study leave as a full time student. The challenge for this choice was that teachers in the case study school might have acted and said things differently because they knew me and they knew that I observed them. However,

I overcame this problem through the use of a range of data collection instruments and also because I used observation as a primary data gathering tool.

Another challenge for this choice might be that there were possibilities that the primary participants, particularly the three teachers might have felt threatened to disclose some information concerning the school management team in providing enough space for teacher leadership to flourish. It might be believed that I used my position to influence data collection in my school. This possible threat was addressed by associating with them in staff room and not being in my office at all times. The reason was for the participants to see that I was a researcher and that the research exercise was quite different from my official duties as a head of department. Maxwell (2012) suggests that “the relationships that the researcher creates with participants in the research are real phenomenon; they shape the context within the research is conducted, and have a profound influence on the research and its results” (p. 100). To make them feel relaxed, I conducted the interviews in the cluster office that was not my office. Before the interview, I reminded them of the intention of the study to assured them that I was not assessing their competencies. During the individual interviews, I was conscious of looking at the interviewee when he or she was answering any of the questions and nodded my head to prevent any bias arising from my reaction to what he or she said. Again, I told them to ask me to repeat or clarify any question that they did not understand. Lastly, I assured the participants that the information collected from the interview sessions would be in no way be used for any other purposes. In the next section, I present how I chose the participants for my research.

### **3.5.3 Sampling of participants**

I used purposive sampling to select the principal and the three teachers, the primary participants, for the study in the case study school. Maxwell (2008, p. 235) argues that purposive sampling “is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices”. The reason for including the principal in my study was to access the viewpoint of a person in a managerial position on teacher leadership and, in particular the enabling and constraining factors in the case study school.

The three teacher participants were selected on the basis of their teaching experience, that is, less experienced and more experienced teachers. By less experienced teachers, I mean teachers who have served in the teaching profession from one year up to five years and by more experienced teachers I refer to teachers who have been in the teaching profession for many years (i.e. six years and upwards). I asked the school principal to help me identify less experienced and more experienced teachers.

A sample of three teachers (that is, one less experienced and two more experienced) was used in my research to see whether this factor made a difference to the leadership experiences of teachers in any way. I also used all the case study schoolteachers as my secondary participants in the study to get the whole view of the school on the concept of teacher leadership as well as their perceptions about leadership roles teachers took up in the school. In the next session, I present different data collection tools I used to gather information for my study.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

I used four different tools to collect data for my study. These included documents analysis, observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The underlying reason for using different tools is to strengthen validity of the data collected through triangulation. Here I use triangulation to mean “comparing many sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomena” (Coleman & Briggs, 2002, p. 69).

#### **3.6.1 Document analysis**

Maree (2010) explains that “when you use documents as a data gathering technique you will focus on all types of written communications that may shed light on the phenomenon that you are investigating” (p 82). I obtained data from a range of documents such as the ‘Job Description for the Principal’, ‘Job Description for Teachers’, ‘Core Duties of a Subject Head’, School Development Plan, Plan of Action for Academic Improvement, Duty allocation for teachers, School organogram, Drafted agenda, Invitation letters, Master time table, Minutes of staff meetings and department meetings (science). However, I failed to get minutes of different school

committees meetings because the school did not avail them to me. According to Maree (2010, p. 82), documents as I have listed above are referred to as “primary data sources or unpublished data sources because they are original documents”. Thus, these documents gave me insight into where teachers lead and what leadership roles they take up. Hakim (1993) as cited in Gray (2004, p. 267) argues that one of the distinct advantages of using documents is that “they are non-reactive. This means that information may sometimes be inaccurate or incomplete; at least it is not usually manipulated by the producer of the data in the knowledge that material is going to be studied”. The data from the aforementioned documents provided me with an initial understanding of the possible leadership practices of teachers in the school.

### **3.6.2 Observation (Appendix 1)**

Forster (1996) describes observation “as a way to see the social world from an insider’s point of view, the researcher often participates him/herself in that world” (p. 6). Similarly, Cohen, et al. (2007) describe observation as “a research process that offers an investigator the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations. They further add that the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in situ rather than relying on second-hand accounts” (p. 396). This simply means that observation supplemented my data collection process and enriched my findings. I observed three morning briefing meetings to see the leadership initiatives teachers’ displayed and their involvement in the school level decision-making process. I also observed a teacher-parent day. On this day, I observed the interaction between teachers and parents when parents checked their children’s books and teachers took the lead in their classroom by explaining the performance and behaviour of children to their parents. Moreover, during learners’ assembly in the morning I observed who made announcements, while during a soccer tournament day I looked at the involvement of teachers in sport. Gillham (2000) contends that “the overpowering validity of observation is that it is the most direct way of obtaining data. It is not what people have written on the topic; it is not what they say they do. It is what they actually do” (p. 46).

### 3.6.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used as the third data collection method. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) describe a questionnaire as “a series of questions set out on paper and to be answered on paper rather than verbally” (p. 261). McMillan and Schumacher (2001) explain further that there are two types of questions used in questionnaires. For example, they explain that there are “open-ended questions where the respondent has control over what they wish to say and how they wish to say it, while close-ended questions where both the type and quality of response are controlled to some degree by the researcher” (p. 13). Since I wanted fixed responses to save participants’ time, I adopted closed-ended questions which, according Cohen, et al. (2011), “prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose; enable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample and are quick to complete and quicker to code up and analyze than word-based data” (p. 382).

I used questionnaires to get teachers opinions on the concept and the practice of teacher leadership in their school (Appendix 2). As Fogelman and Comber (2007) contend, the questionnaire is “used to obtain factual information, attitudinal information or a mixture of both” (p. 127). The questionnaire had two sections, A (questions related to biographical information) and B (questions related to teacher leadership). Statements in section A required participants to respond to each of the items such as gender, age, formal qualifications, nature of employment, employer and years of teaching experience by placing a cross in the box next to the option applicable to him or her. Statements in section B required a choice of agreement on a number scale represented by strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Section B was further divided into three sections: B1 was structured as answers to Research Question 1, B2 as answers to Research Question 2 while B3 was structured as answers to Research question 3.

I distributed the questionnaires to all teachers including student teachers in the school during a staff morning briefing. Thereafter, I explained the purpose of my research and I asked the participants to complete the questionnaires. For the sake of ensuring confidentiality, I requested the participants not write their names on the questionnaires.

Out of 24 questionnaires that were distributed, 21 were completed and returned and the return rate was 88%. Thus, the sample was made up of 21 teachers, 14 being female and seven being male. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) claim that “typically, the majority of people who receive questionnaires don’t return them-in other words, there may be a low return rate-and the people who do not return them are not necessarily representative of the originally selected sample” (p. 185). However, in my study I had a different experience because my return rate indicated a powerful representation. Furthermore, the completion of the questionnaires was on a voluntary basis, I regarded the three non-returns of the questionnaires to mean that those teachers who did not complete the questionnaires did not want to participate in the research study.

#### **3.6.4 Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are used “to explore an issue or topic in depth and questions are not, generally, pre-planned” (Gray, 2004, p. 217). The benefit of using semi-structured interviews “is that it defines the lines of inquiry while allowing for probing and clarification as it allows the researcher control over the line of questioning” (Creswell, 2003, p. 187). I used semi-structured interviews (Appendix 3) to interview the principal and the three teachers. Therefore, four individual interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted in English. The reason was to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of teacher leadership. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) argue that “the hallmark of in-depth qualitative interviewing is learning how people construct their realities-how they view, defines, and experience the world” (p. 101). The conversations were recorded using a voice recorder with the permission of the participants and the interviews were transcribed directly afterwards. The data from interviews in conjunction with other methods served as a framework to triangulate with questionnaires, document analysis and observations.

The purpose of the interview was introduced to each participant at the beginning of the interview. The interview questions mainly focused on the concept of teacher leadership and the distribution of leadership in the case study school to build on the observation, specifically the staff morning briefings, where I asked the primary participants to elaborate more on who makes decisions in their school. This was strength of the interview. At the end of each interview, I thanked each participant for his or her participation and contribution. In the next section, I discuss how I analyse data.

### 3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

I analysed my data in a quantitative and a qualitative way. As a quantitative measure, I analysed questionnaire data manually, by counting each respondent's answer and tallied them to determine the percentage for each response. The questionnaire data was manually analysed, because the number of participants was relatively small (21 only) and I had only 36 statements to analyse. As Kumar (2005) states, "data can be analysed manually, if the number of respondents is reasonably small, and there are not many variables to analyse" (p. 244).

Then I moved to the qualitative data analysis to provide rich and detailed descriptions of the concept and practice of teacher leadership in the case study school.

Merriam (1998) describes qualitative data analysis as the process of making sense out of the data. She argues that making sense out of data involves "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read" (p. 179). Simply put, data analysis means the process of making meaning which constitute the findings of a study. My data analysis started immediately after the first set of data was collected and was an ongoing exercise until all data was collected. I read the first interview transcript, the second until the last transcript. As I read up through the first transcript, I asked myself whether the data answered my research questions. Where I found the data answered any of my research questions, I indicated RQ1, RQ2, or RQ3 (RQ stood for Research Question). I repeated this process with all the other transcripts. After I have worked through all the transcripts in this manner, I went through them again to make notes based on my research aim and the meanings my participants made. I then grouped all comments and notes that had something in common together. Then I proceeded to the next set of data, that is, documents analysis and observation notes and I did it in exactly the same way as just I explained above. Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) indicate that "data analysis involves reading through your data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting)".

Thereafter, I analyzed data using the zones and roles of teacher leadership (Grant, 2008, p. 93) as my analytical tool (Figure 1). I highlighted the important data with different colours as I coded

them. Coding is “nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so you can retrieve specific pieces of the data” (Merriam, 2001, p. 164).

I summarized records from documents analysis, observations and questionnaires to complement the data from the interviews. I compared the data from the four tools to develop categories or themes by looking at the patterns of similarities and differences. The data was triangulated to produce a rich and textured picture of the phenomenon of teacher leadership in the case study school. Now, I move to present ethical issues.

Figure 1

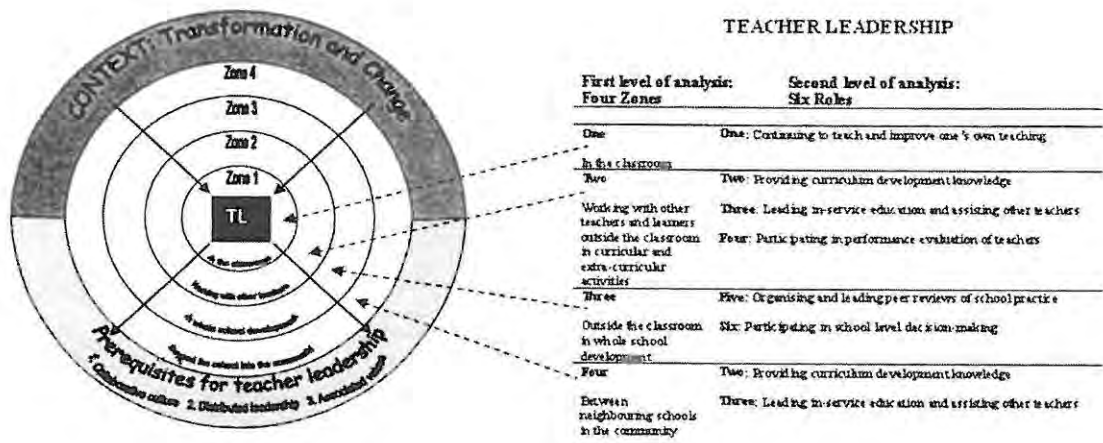


Figure 1: Model of teacher leadership with zones and roles (Grant, 2008b, p. 93)

### **3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES**

My research was carried out in an ethical manner. According to Kumar (2005), ethics or ethical behaviour means, “in accordance with principles of conduct that are considered correct, especially those of a given profession or group” (p. 210). In other words ethics “concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research” (Mouton, 2001, p. 238). As a researcher, I followed the right procedure of conducting a research.

I wrote consent letters to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education (Appendix 4), the Director of Education, and the principal of the case study school to seek permission for my study. The research started after permission from the authorities was granted (Appendix 5). I wrote consent letters (Appendix 6) to all the participants to inform them of the purpose of the study in order to allow them to make informed decisions on their participation in the study. I informed my participants of their right to withdraw, since participation was on a voluntary basis. As Leedy and Ormrod (2005) suggest:

participants should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating. Furthermore, they should be told that, if they agree to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and any participation in a study should be strictly voluntary (p. 101).

Lastly, confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed because I did not use their names instead I used codes, for example, the principal (P) and the three teachers (T1, T2 and T3). Maree (2010, pp. 41-42) argues that “an essential ethical aspect is the issue of the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study and the protection of the participants’ identities”. The following section discusses validity.

### **3.9 VALIDITY**

Coleman and Briggs (2002) suggest that the concept of validity be used to judge “whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon which it is intended to describe” (p. 65). To

strengthen validity, I triangulated the information collected from across the four data collection tools. To avoid subjective interpretation of data, I employed member checking to verify accuracy of the responses from participants. Maxwell (2008) calls member checking respondent validation and describes it as “systematically soliciting feedback about one’s data and conclusion from the people you are studying” (p. 224). I went back to participants with data transcriptions of all interviews for them to check the accuracy of the raw data collected. Bassey (1999, p. 75) claims that validity is “the extent to which a research fact or finding is what it is claimed to be”. Data collection instruments are kept in a safe place for a period of time and retrieve them when needed. Next, I conclude this chapter.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the readers with research methodology and methods used for my study. This study was done in a form of a case study of one school in Ncuncuni circuit in Kavango region. Given the fact that it was a case study, I am confident that I gathered in-depth, rich data to answer my research questions. Purposive and convenience sampling were used in the selection of the school and the participants. Furthermore, I used different instruments to collect the data, these included, documents analysis, observations, questionnaires and semi-structured individual interviews. These methods were used to explore the concept and the practice of teacher leadership in the case study school and investigated the leadership roles teachers were engaged into as well as factors that promoted or hindered the practice of teacher leadership. The use of various methods helped me to triangulate the data gathered to strengthen my research and enhance the validity of my study.

Two levels of data analysis were used and discussed, firstly, quantitative data was manually analysed by counting and tallied the responses. Secondly, I used Grant’s (2008) teacher leadership model of zones and roles to analyse the qualitative data collected. Ethical protocols were also discussed, which included the need to guarantee that the information the participants supplied was confidentially treated. Furthermore I tried to overcome the issues of power by

acknowledge my own subject position in the research process. I now move to Chapter four, which presents the findings of my study.



- Individual Interview II.
- Observation (Staff briefings & School observation) OSB1, OSB2 & OSB3; SO.
- Questionnaires Q.
- Documents: D
  - National policy:
    - Job Description for a Principal (Namibia, MEC, 2008)
    - Job Description for a Teacher (Namibia, MEC, 2008)
    - Core duties of a Subject Head (Namibia, MEC, 2008)
    - School Development Plan (Namibia, MEC, 2008)
    - Plan of Action for Academic Improvement (Namibia, MEC, 2008)
  - School documents:
    - Minutes of the staff meetings D1
    - Minutes of the subject meeting D2
    - Duty allocation for teachers D3
    - Organogram D4
    - Invitation letters D5
    - Draft agenda D6
    - Master time table D7

Now I move on to present the overarching idea of participants in the study on the concept teacher leadership as it emerged from the data.

#### **4.2 CONCEPTUALIZING TEACHER LEADERSHIP: TEACHERS LEAD IN AND BEYOND THE CLASSROOM**

When participants were asked about their understanding of the concept teacher leadership, there were a variety of responses; mainly the participants felt that a teacher could be a leader both in and beyond the classroom.

The majority of participants in the case study school understood the concept of teacher leadership as a shared or group activity within their school. In support of my argument, it emerged from the questionnaire data that the majority of teachers (86%) in the case study school believed that *“all educators could take up leadership in their school”* (Q8). In addition, the data also made it known that the majority of teachers (86%) were of the opinion that *“they could lead, that not only people in positions of authority who should lead”* (Q9). It became apparent that it was not only the School Management Team (SMT) who led in the study school, *“but teachers also led various school committees such as assembly, disciplinary committee, time table committee, class visits committee, school councilors committee, admission register committee, welfare committee, netball and athletics”* (D3, Duty allocation of teachers, 2012). This finding, I believe, concurs with Ash and Persall (2000) who claim that *“there are numerous leadership possibilities and many leaders within the school and leadership is not role-specific”* (p. 16). Spillane (2006) calls this the leaders-plus perspective where the work of all individuals who contribute in the practice of leadership is acknowledged and valued (p. 3). Similarly, Coleman (2005) argues that *“leadership may be identified with one person, for example a principal, but it is exercised by other at different levels of the organization”* (p. 7).

There was much data that focused on leadership in the classroom. For example, T1 understood teacher leadership as:

*Everybody is a leader, so a teacher is a leader in a class, in a specific classroom tasked to him or her, and a teacher have to transform that leadership within the class, first. Then from there then to lead from outside the classroom, so in general a teacher leadership must be everywhere* (II, p. 4).

Similarly, the school principal understood teacher as a leader inside the classroom with expert knowledge and she stated that:

*being a teacher automatically you are a leader, you are leading all along starting from your subjects, you are leading in your subject, you are the head, you are spearheading whatever is wrong or what is right. So you share with others, is what I understand to be a teacher and at the same time a leader* (II, p. 5).

In addition, T2 had the same understanding of the concept teacher leadership as T1 and P that teachers lead inside the classroom. She explained that a teacher leader is *“someone who always leads a group of people and it might also like me I am also a leader since I am a teacher when I*

*am in front of the kids I am a leader*"(II, p. 1). However, T2 expanded her definition that teacher leadership could also happen beyond the classroom when she went on to talk about mentoring that *"there are also other work that I am doing, I am a mentor. It means I am also leading the student teachers and I am also mentor for the new teachers who are coming to school for the first time* (II, p. 1).

However, T3 differed a little bit from the views of the first two teachers and the principal and she viewed leadership as having certain values. Thus, T3 explained that leadership is *"someone who supervises, who guides"* (II, p. 1). She continued that, therefore, *"teachers are leaders, be at work, and be at home, in the community, they remain leaders. They remain leaders in a way that at school we have learners who need our guidance, who need our support for them to grow up to become the acceptable citizen of the country"* (II, T3, p. 6). This conceptual understanding of teacher leadership has a focus on citizenship, which is based on a set of values. On the issues of values, the principal commented that *"leadership for me is just like taking a responsibility, taking care of it and spearhead it, without someone telling you to do it"* (II, p. 1). In line with this view, Udjombala (2002) defines leadership as a "process whereby one person does something of his or her own volition, neither because it is required nor because of fear of the consequences of non-compliance" (p. 7).

In summary, the data presented above indicated that although teachers in the study understood teacher leadership in a range of different ways, the whole view of the school was that teachers lead both in and outside the classroom walls. This finding is in line with the definition of teacher leadership by Grant (2008) who defines teacher leadership as a type of leadership which is not located in the principal. It refers to teachers regardless of their position taking up informal leadership responsibilities both in the classroom and beyond (p. 186).

Now I move on to talk about the practice of teacher leadership in response to research question two: where do teachers lead and what leadership roles do they take up in a Namibian urban primary school? To do this I present the data according to the four zones of teacher leadership in Grant's model (2008). For ease of reading, I hereafter refer to Grant's model as 'the model'.

## 4.3 WHERE AND HOW IS TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTISED

### 4.3.1 In the zone of the classroom (Zone 1, Role 1)

The data indicated that the zone of the classroom was where the majority of teacher leadership was practiced in the case study school. According to the data, teachers in the study reflected on their teaching, set classroom rules for their learners and they usually or often updated themselves with new developments in their subjects through workshops.

Namibian national policy, as expressed in the 'Job Description for Teachers' (2008, p. 1), indicates that a teacher in the context of Namibia should "reflect productive involvement through his or her role and position during a lesson or activity". In line with this policy, it emerged from the data that the majority (71%) of the teachers "*reflected critically on their own classroom teaching*" (Q12). This finding can be linked to a study by Molefe (2010) carried out in South Africa, which reported that the majority of teachers (90%) were of the opinion that they were reflective practitioners because most of them felt that they specialized in classroom teaching and learning (p. 61).

National policy as articulated in the 'Job Description for Teachers' (2008, p. 2), also indicates that a teacher should "establishing and maintaining standards of learner behaviour and discipline required to provide an orderly and productive learning environment in the classroom". In support of this document, it emanated from the data that just more than half of teachers (52%) "*set standards for pupil behaviour in their school, particularly in their classroom*" (Q22). Setting standards for learners' behaviour helps teachers to maintain classroom discipline and create good relationship with learners. As T3 explained, "*we guide learners in many areas, for example you may find them fighting in the classroom then you stop them, you talk to them that this is not right, if you do this you may be punished, so they will stop*" (II, p. 6). Extending this idea, it emerged from the data that a disciplinary committee was headed up by teachers as T1 commented that "*there was a teacher within disciplinary committee going after morning briefing from one class to the next to find out what is the problem for those learners who are not coming for study*" (II, p. 3). A further example of teacher leadership was evident "*when teacher leaders for one study group put all learners together in front of the school hall to hear from them why they did not*

*come for study the previous day before punishing them*" (SO, 12/07/2012). The punishment here involved a number of stages of a disciplinary process, which teachers should follow in order to discipline a learner in a state school (Namibia. MEC, 2001, p. 31). These stages include talking to a learner first which a group of teachers in the case study school did and give a creative punishment depending to the nature of the behavioral problem. In this regard, learners were given a portion of the schoolyard to clean. Prinsloo and Gasa (2011) argue that "teachers are free to address concerns of learners within a problem-solving framework" (p. 490). This indicates a good example of learners support done by teachers in the case study school in relation to establishing standards of learners' behaviors in the school.

Within zone one and in relation to professional development, National policy as captured in the 'Job Description for Teachers' (2008, p. 1), outlines that a teacher should "work at own professional development and participate in programmes organized to further enhance own knowledge and skills with regards to subject/ phase teaching". In alignment with this policy, it was evident that just over half of teachers (52%) in the case study school stated that "*they keep up to date with developments in teaching practices and learning areas*" (Q25). In a similar vein, to keep abreast with new developments there were examples of teachers participating in their learning as the principal commented that:

*teachers have to learn every day because learning is lifelong is not just for a while. Curriculums are changing, if teachers are not trained if they are not going for workshops they remain the same and this affects learners, learners will fail because they are not going along* (II, p. 5).

Offering an example of a professional development workshop which some of her teachers attended, the principal commented: "*for example this year there was a workshop for social studies at the circuit office all teachers teaching social studies in the school attended*" (P. p. 3). Furthermore, T3 commented on workshops that:

*when teachers comeback from workshops normally what we do we (staff) ask that specific teacher to share with other colleagues in the staff room, specifically to tell us what happened, what they learnt. For me I think it is good if they share with us, because you don't know any time if that teacher is not there, is not difficult for the other teachers those who heard the information to help out even for a day or two* (p. 3).

The findings of this study within zone one indicated that teacher leadership was practiced in the case study school and it showed that teacher leadership was restricted. However, I was a little disappointed with the findings because I was unable to access sufficient data to get a real picture of teacher leadership within this first zone. In retrospect, it was a weakness of my study that I did not observe teachers in their classrooms. Instead, I relied on the perceptions of teachers to source data in this zone. However, given that this was a half-thesis, it was beyond the scope of the study to include more observation. Thus, it is quite likely that there was far more teacher leadership in the zone of the classroom than I found in my study and I say this fairly confidently because teacher leadership was apparent in the other zones as well. While, there was evidence of teacher leadership inside their classroom in the case study school, educators also expanded their leadership beyond their classrooms, as the next section shows.

#### **4.3.2 Teachers leading colleagues in curricular and extra-curricular activities (Zone 2)**

Harris and Lambert (2003) state that teacher leadership is not a type of leadership that is confined only to the classroom. In my study, there was satisfactory evidence of teacher leading beyond the classroom walls where they engaged in two of the three roles in zone two according to the model; providing curriculum development knowledge (role 2) and leading in-service education and assisting colleagues (role 3). However, there was little evidence in zone two of the role of teacher participating in performance evaluation of teachers (role 4).

##### *4.3.2.1 Providing curriculum development knowledge (Role 2)*

In this role of curriculum provision, there were two examples of teacher leadership found in my study. These included leading in joint curriculum provision as well as in extra-curricular activities.

##### *Leading in joint curriculum provision*

Joint curriculum provision is whereby teachers, for example, teaching the same subject or phase meet as a team to discuss the curriculum, teaching and learning issues, plan and change things when necessary (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 101). Namibian policy, such as ‘Set of Job Descriptions’ recorded in the ‘Job Description of Teachers’ (2008, p. 1) indicates that a teacher is required to “develop schemes of work that reflects appropriate subject syllabus content cover

over a period of a school year". In line with this policy, from the questionnaire data it emerged that less than half of teachers (29%) in the case study school were of the opinion that "*they provided curriculum knowledge to other colleagues*" (Q16). This is a surprising and somewhat disappointing finding. However, the qualitative data shed more light on the take up of this curriculum provision role. For example, one of my primary teacher participants worked beyond her classroom with fellow grade three teachers to plan the scheme of work into topics for their school. Data indicated that T3 was a class teacher in Grade 3, who taught all subjects (class teaching) and she reflected that:

*I came up with something like the scheme of work, the year plan, so, I thought it could be better if we separate them into topics. Topics that will be covered from first term to second term, one knows where to start and where to end for the first and the third term, just like that, but then I spoke to my colleagues (my fellow Grade three teachers) at first then we brought it to the principal and the principal said it is fine, you can do it. It is a good idea as long as you work together (II, T3, p. 2).*

Another example of curriculum provision emerged when I observed grade one teachers developing teaching materials. My notes reflect the following: "*I observed that all three teachers teaching grade one came together in the staff room at half past eleven, after their learners went home, in order to develop their teaching materials for the topic called family tree*" (SO, 18/07/2012).

This indicated that T3 worked with colleagues outside her classroom in an attempt to provide curriculum knowledge. In this regard joint curriculum development was also promoted.

As an additional example from qualitative data, T2 led a colleague in a subject meeting, which was one of the indicators of teacher leadership of this role. Namibian policy, such as 'Set of Job Descriptions' documented in the 'Core Duties of a Subject Head' (2008, p. 1), outlines that "a subject head should provide assistance to the subject teachers in the subjects". In accordance with this policy T2, a subject head for Natural Science and Health Education in the study school, commented that "*about subject head, if you see that in your department there are lots of complaints, then you just inform teachers to meet when they are all free and talk about what can you do, and how the problem can be solved*" (II, p. 4). As a further example of this role, T2 conducted a Science department subject meeting in term one. Data showed that the subject head together with her colleague in this meeting discussed issues faced by them in teaching Science in

the grades 5-7 and they suggested possible solutions to their problems. The minutes of the meeting stated that *“at the beginning of the year learners had problems with spelling and expressing themselves in grade 5 to 6”* (D2, Minutes of the subject meeting, pp. 1-2). This was an example of a collegial culture (Harris & Muijs, 2005), because the subject head worked together with her colleagues to improve spelling and pronunciations of new words in science. According to these minutes, Science teachers in this subject meeting suggested possible solutions to the issue of spelling in Science such as *“to give learners pre-activity, asks each learner to explain what they learned and give them spelling activity before starting a lesson and to read the pronunciations of words on the chalkboard”* (D2, Minutes of the subject meeting, p. 2). This was a good example of the case study teachers debating teaching methodology and taking the lead in curricular in science. As I indicated in my opening statement, while teachers led in the role of curriculum provision in the case study school, they also led in the extra-curricular programme. I move on now to discuss this form of teacher leadership.

#### *Leading in extra-curricular activities*

There was a fair amount of evidence to indicate that teachers in the case study school coordinated the extra-curricular sporting codes included soccer, athletics, netball, volleyball, hockey, culture and choir (D3, Duty allocation for teacher, 2012). This suggests that co-curricular activities accommodated all learners in the school, regardless of their learning abilities. However, because I relied on my primary participants for data, soccer was the best example of teacher leadership that emerged in the case study. National policy, as stipulated in the ‘Job Description for Teachers’ (2008, p. 2), indicates that a teacher should *“supervise learners in extra-mural activities and motivate them to participate”*. From the participant responses in the study, it emerged that the majority of teachers (86%) *“co-ordinate aspects of extra-mural activities often or always in the school”* (Q20). In addition, T1 explained different sport codes that were in the school and how he led soccer as a convener in one occasion. He said:

*there is a leader in each committee, for example in sport committee, so we have three different sport codes that are running at our school. We have athletics, we have soccer and we have netball. So all those committees are having a leader, but there are members again in those committees* (II, p. 2).

In support of this data, the school principal commented that “we have different committees. You have a teacher, let me say is a Mathematics teacher (referred to T1) is a teacher but he is also doing sport in the afternoons, those are other things which they (teachers) are doing” (II, p. 2).

Moreover, T1 was a member of “sports committee and he was also a leader of soccer in the school” (II, p. 2). He explained that

*there other times when we normally sit for example sport when we normally tasks different teachers on different tasks. They normally support in terms of them involving not only in discussion, but they have to go and do it in practice. So the involvement of everybody is too high (II, T1, p. 8).*

The involvement of teachers in soccer was evidenced during school observation on one Saturday:

*when soccer committee led by T1 organised school tournament whereby all learners especially boys in the grades 1-7 participated. Each class paid N\$30.00 to take part and register class teachers were responsible of collecting the money their learners paid in each class. It also became apparent that class teachers encouraged their learners to pay in order to participate in the tournament. (SO, 20/07/2012).*

This indicated that teachers in the study worked together as a team to organize this internal sports day, which also showed a good involvement of teachers in sport. As the data further suggested:

*class teachers were also responsible of selecting their class teams. In this tournament learners played against themselves in their grades for example 7A vs 6A; 7B vs 6A; 7C vs 6C; 5A vs 4A; 5B vs 4B...1C vs 2A. A fascinating point, I observed on this day was that all register class teachers came to give support to their learners by coaching them to play good football and win (SO, 21/07/2012).*

This was an indication that teachers in the case study school were engaged in the coordination of extra-curricular activities and took the lead in soccer. Next, I move to role three within zone two where teacher leaders led in-service education and assisted other teachers and were also involved in the role of mentoring.

#### **4.3.2.2 Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers (Zone 2, Role 3)**

In this role, there was a limited leading of service education and the indicator of teacher leadership as evidenced in my study was the mentoring role of teacher leaders (including induction). Mentoring was a regional imperative that began in 2011 in Kavango where workshops were conducted throughout the region for the purposes of training mentors to

mentor new teachers. Mentoring, I understand, is a way of giving advice and helping newly appointed teachers in the school. Anderson and Shannon (1988) define mentoring as “a nurturing process in which a more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less experienced person for the purpose of personal development” (p. 40).

This role helps new teachers link what they learnt at colleges or universities to the practical situation of the school environment. Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995) suggest that mentoring provide a place for “preparing beginning teachers in a ways that integrate their teacher education experience with a structured internship under the guidance of an expert teaching faculty that is both school-and university-based” (p. 95).

The data from teacher questionnaires in my study disclosed that less than half of teachers (43%) in the school “gave in-service training to colleagues” (TQ15). Fortunately, for me, two of my three primary teacher participants were mentors. TL 2 explained, “*I am a mentor leading the student teachers and the new teachers who are coming to school for the first time*” (II, p. 1). She went on to describe a condition in which she worked as a mentor like this: “*I am the mentor, so when students are having problems I am the one to solve it. It is only when it is too big for me is when I take it to her (principal) and then she will solve it.*” (II, T2, p. 4). She added to this point by saying that “*actually mentoring is not a lot, but only when it comes to the writing, for example, let me say we observe the first term. So when we observed we only used our book, but now in the letter their saying no it should be on a form, so you have to file it*” (II, T2, pp. 4-5).

TL 3 also worked as a mentor to novice teachers in the school. She started from the orientation process when new teachers are toured around the school that comes in the school for the first time. She explained:

*mentoring is like every year or most of the time we receive new teachers at school and those are people who are not exposed what happens at the school and they do not know the school ground, the places at school where they can find principal's office, the toilets, so we have to tour them around the school* (II, TL 3, p. 3).

Then she moved on to describe a situation where she worked as a mentor by responding in this way:

*if they have any problem or teaching they can still come to us and ask to help them. It can be registers, it can be continuous assessment form, and it can be preparation, so we are just there to help them out. We observe them how they do their teaching, how they manage their class, the atmosphere of the class and then they are also allowed to observe other teachers, just to see how others do it (II, TL 3, p. 3).*

T3 also pointed out that *“it is not necessary that we should be giving them feedback. It is only if there is an area that needs improvements then we can focus on that one. We call them, guide them, what needs to be corrected if everything is fine and we don't have to go back to give them feedback again”* (II, TL 3, p. 3). These findings are in line with Gehrke's (1991) claims that *“mentors are required to work with beginners”* (p. 2). She contends that *“mentors must be able to provide not only good role modeling, but also offer the kinds of help necessary to establish the beginners as competent professional”* (p. 2). Mentoring was also a strong feature of Molefe's (2010) South African case study of teacher leadership. I now turn to role four within zone two, to talk about performance evaluation of teachers.

#### *4.3.2.3 Participating in performance evaluation of teachers (Zone 2, Role 4)*

In this role, there was partial participation of teachers in teacher evaluation. The indicator of teacher leadership evidenced in my study was the moderation of assessment tasks, which was limited to head of departments and subject heads.

National policy, as recorded in the 'Job Description of Heads of Department and Core Duties of Subject Heads' (2008, pp. 1&4), indicates that it is only head of departments and subject heads who should *“monitor the quality and standards of continuous assessment marks and tasks at least once per term”*. From the participant responses, it emerged that just less than half of teachers (48%) claimed to *“have participated often or always in the performance evaluation of their colleagues”* (Q18). From the questionnaire data and document analysis, I got a sense that teacher leadership in role four was almost absent, because this role was delegated (authorized) only to head of departments and subject heads by the principal. I did not have any data to support this quantitative data because the head of department in the case study school was not in my sample. For the subject head who was part of my sample in the study did not talk about her participation in the performance evaluation of colleagues in the school during the individual interview.

In summary, findings of teachers leading colleagues in curricular and extra-curricular activities (i. e. in zone two), showed that there was a reasonable amount of teacher leadership in roles two and three. Although, teacher leadership existed in these two roles of this zone in the study, there was little to comment on role four within this zone because the practice of teacher leadership decreased to almost nothing. This finding points to emergent form of teacher leadership (Harris & Muijs, 2005). It was emergent because teachers in these two roles demonstrated collegiality in the take-up of leadership roles which is one of the criteria of emergent teacher leadership. Harris and Muijs (2005) suggest that emergent teacher leadership is evident when the school has a collegial culture, teachers get support from management, lead initiatives but less likely to initiate decisions as it was evident in the data presented above (p. 109). I now turn to zone three, where a different picture surfaced.

#### **4.3.3 Teachers leading in whole school development (Zone 3)**

In this section, I present the findings of the practice of teacher leadership beyond the classroom into the zone where teacher leaders lead in whole school development. In my study, there was much evidence in zone three of the role of teachers participating in school level decision-making (role 6). In direct contrast, there was a dearth of evidence for teachers leading peer reviews of school practice (role 5). Because there was strong evidence of teacher leadership in relation to school level decision making, I present this discussion first.

##### ***4.3.3.1 Participation in school level decision-making (Z3R6)***

In my study, data suggested that teachers in the case study school felt that they were consulted by the SMT on school level decision making. This was evidenced because, from the responses, it emerged that the majority of teachers (71%) in the case study school claimed to *“have participated in the school decision-making process”* (Q14). As T3 commented *“all of us we participate in decision making, so when they (SMT) bring it up, it is going to be like the decision of the whole staff, how do you see it. Is it ok or something like that or there are changes that need to be made then things can be done”* (II, p. 1). Along similar lines, the principal attested that *“mostly there is no specific person who takes a decision, we discuss and then we take a decision as a group or a team”* (II, P, p. 1). Little (1988) suggests that sharing decision can keep

an entire school roughly heading in the same direction (p. 85). The school principal added that “*we are making everybody to be part of the management to lead others*” (II, P, p. 4).

There was evidence in the data to show that teachers fully participated in school level decision-making process through a process of ‘rotational management’. In support of this claim, the data indicated that an extremely high percent (100%) of participants in the case study school believed that “*the School Management Team allowed them to participate in school level decision-making process*” (Q31). In support of this thinking, T1 explained the newly introduced system that fully involved all teachers in school level decision-making in the case study school like this:

*this year we have what we call as ‘Rotational management’ whereby four teachers are co-opted to act as management members for a period of two weeks before another group takes over. Most of the teachers are involving in the management, they know how to run a school and what decision to be taken, and so they know now, no, this is why they took this decision* (II, T1, p. 5).

My analysis of policy documents revealed that this concept of ‘rotational management’ was not in the policy documents neither could I access any literature on the concept in the Namibian context. It seems that the concept has emerged out of practice but it was a good example of teacher leadership. It is my opinion that ‘*rotational management*’, which allowed the full participation of teachers in school level decision making in the case study school is in line with Devaney’s (1987) claims that “individual teachers need to have school wide experiences and to gain a sense of being part of a community” (p. 29). This was evident during my first observation of the staff morning briefing. In this meeting, 25 teachers attended the morning briefing meeting and my first impression thereof was that “*a head of department chaired the meeting, instead of the principal*” (OSB1, 12/07/2012). It also became apparent during the second observation of the staff morning briefing when “*one teacher (level one teacher) chaired the meeting*” (OSB3, 20/07/2012). It seemed from the data that ‘*Rotational management*’ was seen as a strategy the School Management Team used to distribute leadership in the case study school. These findings can be connected to the study of Harris (2004) in 10 schools in the United Kingdom where principals used different ways of distributing leadership, which included the involvement of teachers in decision-making and rotation of leadership responsibilities in order to distribute leadership within their schools (p. 18). In addition, it showed “sharing decision making power

with staff” (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, as cited in Day and Harris, 2002, p. 957). In so doing, collaboration was encouraged. As Day and Harris (2002) suggest, “collaboration represents a horizontal rather than hierarchical power distribution within the school and is at the heart of teacher leadership” (p. 962).

In further support of my claim that teachers were fully involved in decision-making, I observed that all teachers participated in decision-making. For example, T3 suggested that “*remedial teaching should start immediately in order to help learners with learning difficulties, and all other teachers who were present in the meeting including the SMT supported this idea*” (OSB1, 12/07/2012). However, teachers did not want a fixed timetable for remedial teaching coming from the management and instead “*decided unanimously that each teacher to draw up his or her own remedial teaching timetable on his or her own convenient time*” (OSB1, 12/07/2012).

As a further example to support the claim I am making, T2 supported the view of T3 and described a situation where teachers participated in a school level decision-making process as follows:

*admission committee (which consisted of the principal as a chairperson and three teachers) sat and they looked at their problems they were facing, so then they came up with some suggestions how to deal with that, but still they came back again to ask other teachers what do you think, then you tell them* (II, p).

In support of this data, during the third observation of a staff morning briefing, I also observed situations where teachers took decisions together. In the meeting T2 suggested that “*extra classes should start to help slow learners, again all teachers were in support of the idea*” (OSB3, 20/07/2012). During the observation I became well aware that T2 was also responsible for examinations in the grade 4 and she requested “*teachers who did not set their question papers should do so to give the secretary ample time for her to type and duplicate the question papers*” (OSB3, 20/07/2012) and all teachers agreed to do it. This indicated that most decisions were made by consensus, because all teachers participated in school decision making. The data presented above clearly indicated that there was quite a bit of real participation in decision-making in the case study school. While there was enough evidence in this role to persuade me of the existence of teacher leadership in the zone of whole school development, there was a

minimal evidence of teacher leading peer reviews of school practice (role 5) in this zone. This is where I turn now.

National policy such as ‘National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia’ recorded in the ‘School Development Plan’ (2008, p. 9), indicates that “the principal, management and teachers are required to do a school self-evaluation and review a school development plan annually in October”. In line with ‘School Development Plan’ the majority of teachers (57%) in the case study school claimed to have “*organized and led reviews of the school year plan*” (Q13). Apart from the questionnaire data where participants indicated that they organised and led reviews of the school year plan, I did not observe teachers leading reviews of the school year plan in the study school and the interview data also did not provide me with anything data in this regard. This likely indicated minimal teacher leadership in this role.

To conclude this section, findings of this study within the zone of whole school development indicated that teacher leadership was practiced in the case study school and it showed successful teacher leadership in terms of shared decision-making. Harris and Muijs (2005) suggest that successful teacher leadership has the following criteria: shared vision; involvement of teachers in decision-making; initiating decision-making and amount of involvement, high levels of trust and support from the principal and good communication of teachers and School Management Team. Successful teacher leadership was evident in Harris and Muijs (2005) study conducted in United Kingdom in one of the three schools in the study. Data indicates that “most staff felt that decision making was shared not just between the head and middle managers, but between head, middle managers and teachers” (Harris and Muijs, 2005, p. 101).

In my study, there were examples of a higher involvement of teachers in decision-making through ‘rotational management’, initiations of decision-making and good communication of teachers and SMTs as data above indicated. Next, I move on to the fourth zone of the model, which deals with educators leading across neighbouring schools into the community.

#### **4.3.4 Teacher leadership beyond the school into the community (Zone 4)**

In the case study school there was satisfactory evidence to indicate the existence of teacher leadership in zone four. This was primarily evidenced in the role of teachers providing

curriculum development knowledge into the community (role two). However, there was minimal evidence of teachers leading in-service education and assisting other teachers in neighbouring schools (role three).

National policy such as ‘School Development Plan’ (2008, p. 16), indicates that schools should “give regular feedback to parents on learners’ academic performance and behaviour”. In line with this policy it emerged from the questionnaire data that just less than half (48%) of teachers “provided curriculum development knowledge in the community” (Q17). This indicated that a fairly reasonable statistic of teachers in the study provided curriculum knowledge in the community and this included the two teachers who served on the School Board. A School board, in the Namibian context, is a board which consists of parents, teachers and a principal in case of a primary school to run the affairs and promote the development of the school and learners of the school (Namibia, MEC, 2001, p. 15). In line with this definition, data indicated that teachers in the case study school served as School Board Members. For example, one of the documents I analysed indicated that teachers “came together with the parents on the School Board and the principal to draft an agenda for parent meeting. Moreover, the agenda showed that teachers’ school board members were also given tasks to present such as learners discipline, performance and study sessions in the afternoon during the parent meeting” (D6, Drafted agenda, 13/03/2012).

It also became apparent that teachers led in the community when the school invited parents to attend a parent-teacher meeting (D5, Invitation letter, 16/07/2012). The purpose of this day was to inform parents about their roles in supporting their children at home with schoolwork and motivation. National policy, as expressed in ‘School Development Plan’ (2008, p. 16), outlines that it is a responsibility of a school to “take every opportunity available to establish links with the community”. In line with this document, I observed that “parents visited register class teachers in their classrooms in the afternoon to check their children’s books and teachers had the opportunity to update parent on their children’s performance and behaviour” (SO, 19/07/2012). In addition, T3 described a situation where she led in the community like this:

*There was a parent who came, he had something that he did not know how to go about it. He needed some clarity from teachers and he came to school, so he got me there and then he asked me because he had a form that he needed to complete. He wanted to start a project in the community and he asked for ideas and some of the answers he*

*may write. I tried to help him. We completed the form together, I gave some of the necessary information that he needed, and he went there and he submitted the form. And that is why I would say that I also played the role in the community (II, p. 6).*

This quote was a good example of the case study teacher assisting a parent from the community and taking the lead in providing curriculum development knowledge into the community (role 2) within zone four.

To move on, there was insufficient evidence to show how teachers led in-service education and assisted colleagues in other schools (role 3) within zone four in the study school, because other data sets like the interview and observation did not provide me with any data in this regard. Therefore, I relied on the questionnaire data. National policy, as recorded in 'School Development Plan' (2008, p. 17), suggests that "the school should create an effective learning environment by developing links with other schools, clusters and the wider community in order to share expertise, equipments and experience". Against this backdrop, it emerged from the participant responses that less than a half of teachers (38%) in the case study school "*did coordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities beyond their school*" (Q21). Since this was the only data I had access to, it seemed that little teacher leadership happened in terms of teachers leading in-service education and assisting other teachers in the case study school. This finding corresponds with the case study research of Molefe (2010) and the survey research of Grant, et al. (2010) on the South African context that teacher leadership was not evident in zone 4, particularly role three.

In summary, the study found that teachers in the case study school practiced teacher leadership across the entire four zones but the degree of teacher leadership in each zone varied. In zones two and three, teacher leadership was strong. In zone one, given the lack of observations data, one was not sure of the strength of teacher leadership in zone one, however given that zones two and three were strong it was likely that zone one was also strong. Finally, zone four indicates a moderate level of teacher leadership. This finding points to emergent form of teacher leadership (Harris and Muijs, 2005). In emergent teacher leadership "consultation is very wide-ranging, but teacher involvement in decision making tends to be somewhat limited" (Harris and Muijs, 2005, p. 109). Next, is for me to look at the factors that enabled the take-up of teacher leadership in the case study school.

## 4.4 FACTORS ENHANCING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

There was evidence of a supportive culture as well as ongoing professional development as enhancing factors to the take up of teacher leadership in the case study school.

### 4.4.1 A supportive culture

Harris and Muijs (2005) suggest that a supportive culture can actively encourage teachers to take up leadership responsibilities within their school (p. 96). Data from the questionnaires indicated that just over half of teachers (52%) in the case study school were of the opinion that “*the SMT had trust in their ability to lead*” (Q27). Namibian national policy, as articulated in the ‘Job Description for Principals’ (2008, p. 1), indicates that the principal should “*ensure that workloads are equitably distributed among the staff*”. This was evident in one staff morning briefing, “*where each teacher gave feedback to the entire staff on how parents expressed their happiness when they saw the good performance of their children and the quantity of work teachers gave to learners and how the work was marked*” (OSB3, 20/07/2012). In addition, it was also evidenced that the SMT created a supportive culture. As T1 commented:

*normally we use to get more support from the school, for example in terms of finance. So there were times that every committee were given task to do their proposal budget that are supposed to be hand in to the finance committee, for that particular committee to run. So there is also some other scenario when maybe this committee fails somewhere or they got stuck somewhere, so they have to come to the management to get support for them to be assisted (II, p. 3).*

T3 responded by giving an example of the playground committee in which she was involved. She explained that:

*there was a time we really needed people to help out and then those people had to be given something at least to say thanks and then the committee couldn't afford anything on our own. We put the idea to the staff and talk about it and then they said, no it is ok you can get, and then we use the bags of maize meals which was in the storeroom to pay for those people. Money were also given to people who helping out watering the garden all those are our responsibilities, especially during the holidays, so the school helps out (II, p. 4).*

She also described another condition where she was adequately assisted in her role as a mentor. She explained:

*those new teachers needed files and needed documents any documents. Therefore, the files we were given from the storeroom, we were given 16 files to distribute to them and the principal gave a document so that I can go make copies and distribute. So in that way we can say that the school is also helping (II, P. 5).*

A further example of a supportive culture became apparent during one morning assembly. During this assembly, a novice teacher was invited by the principal to take a lead when learners gathered in front of the administration block. My observation notes reflected that “*the principal handed over the announcement book to a new teacher and asked him to make the announcements to learners.* (SO, 23/07/2012). Data revealed that while the school had a supportive culture, it also supported the ongoing professional development of its teachers.

#### **4.4.2 Ongoing professional development**

The school supported ongoing professional development by allowing teachers to attend workshops in order for them to keep abreast of new developments for the benefits of the school. Data indicated that there were examples of ongoing professional development in the case study school, for example as discussed in section 4.3.1. I would like to repeat the quotes here for ease of reading. The principal commented on professional development that:

*teachers have to learn every day because learning is lifelong is not just for a while. Curriculums are changing, if teachers are not trained if they are not going for workshops they remain the same and this affects learners, learners will fail because they are not going along (II, p. 5).*

While T3 talked about how feedback in relation to staff development was shared among the staff members like this:

*when teachers comeback from workshops normally what we do we (staff) ask that specific teacher to share with other colleagues in the staff room, specifically to tell us what happened, what they learnt. For me I think it is good if they share with us, because you don't know any time if that teacher is not there, is not difficult for the other teachers those who heard the information to help out even for a day or two (p. 3).*

From these examples given, I can conclude that the support the SMT gave to teachers in the case study school encouraged educators to “innovate and lead” (Muijs and Harris, 2007, p. 118). In so

doing, teacher leadership was promoted. In the next section I discuss factors that inhibited teacher leadership in the school.

#### 4.5 FACTORS CONSTRAINING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Although there was evidence of teacher leadership in the case study school, there were some barriers experienced in the school as teachers attempted to lead successfully. In this section, I present two main barriers to the practice of teacher leadership that emanated in my study in response to the third research question. These are a top-down hierarchical structure and time.

##### 4.5.1 A top-down hierarchical structure

The data revealed that a top-down hierarchical structure was still prevalent in the case study school which constrained the practice of teacher leadership. Although I mentioned earlier that teachers were consulted when decisions were made, it emerged that not all staff were happy with the consultation process. In this regard, T2 commented that:

*what I have seen decisions always come from the management. Why I am saying like that is sometimes our management will come with a decision, which they want to make, then they will ask us what do you think about it? You can give our comments how we want it, but at the end of the day the one which they brought is the one they will take (II, p. 1).*

She added that:

*if you are always coming with a decision and you decide already, means even though teachers are having an opinion to give they will not. You can stand there and ask them, they know what they can say, but they will be quiet because they know at the end of it they just go back to their own (II, T2, pp. 3-4).*

T3 shared the same view with T2 when she stated that “sometimes you come up with comments, but then the principal or the head of departments they should come up with the final decision” (II, p. 2). This quote validates Grant’s (2006) claims that those in higher authority feel that they know better or do not support ideas of other teachers (p. 526). Furthermore, T1 described a situation where the SMT took a decision on behalf of teachers like this, “we have various committees in the school and in each committee there is a leader selected by the management”

(II, p. 6). This indicated that the SMT at times did not trust teachers as T2 pointed out that *“I am thinking that they don’t trust the decision teachers are initiating, that is why they always take their own decisions, because they can defend themselves when the inspector will come”* (II, p. 6). In addition, this was evidence during my observation when one teacher who chaired the meeting asked the staff:

*what time do you think will be best for learners to exhibit their projects for teachers to make comments and choose the best ones, since our learners are going to participate tomorrow in the science fair competition at the circuit level? An HOD who acted as a principal remarked, last period because we do not want classes to be disturbed* (OSB, 20/07/2012).

Furthermore, a top-down hierarchical structure as a barrier to the practice of teacher leadership was evident in the minutes of the staff meeting *“where the principal made long announcements to teachers with no indications of debates and discussions how decisions were reached in this meeting”* (D1, Minutes of the staff meeting, p. 2). This can be linked to Hashikutuva’s (2011) finding that one of her Namibian case study principals during a staff meeting, only made an announcement without any room for discussions, and teachers were only informed what they must do (p. 89).

My findings showed that although there was the impression that many decisions were taken together, at times the School Management Team used its power of authority to control teachers’ decisions.

#### **4.5.2 Time**

Time was another barrier to teacher leadership in the case study school. I experienced this during the process of data collection at the case study school because teachers I interviewed complained that it was not easy for them to manage their time and other responsibilities that were attached to the practice of teacher leadership. As T1 commented:

*to be honest with you, the only obstacle there is time. If you can take a look on the subject allocation, so we teachers we suppose to teach 75% plus periods in a week. Now if this teacher may run this particular committee within the school hours, so which simply mean the subject will also be affected. I think the most important problem that our teachers face is time* (II, P. 3).

Namibian national policy, as recorded in the 'School Development Plan' (2008, p. 9) requires that "a teacher should teach 90%+ of the total periods". In line with this policy document, it became apparent that teachers in the case study school had teaching periods per week starting from 33 out of 39 and upwards (D7, Master timetable, 2012). In addition, the data showed that T2 also complained about time. She remarked that:

*when you are mentoring, it is a lot of work, sometimes you miss your classes and you don't know when you miss that lesson, sometimes you prepare and you are so happy to go and teach, but then you have to leave your teaching and go to the mentoring that is there only challenge which is there (II, p. 5).*

Furthermore, T3 stressed that:

*tuck shop with teachers is a bit of disturbance, because teachers have a lot of things to do like: preparations, marking, teaching and adding on tuck shop is another burden. So if maybe the school could just look for someone who will be appointed just for the tuck shop, so that, that person can have time to go to town and buy stock if it is finished so we have to go buy and bring it to the tuck shop (II, p. 8).*

This finding can be linked to a study of Gumede (2010) carried out in South Africa where time was seen as a barrier to teacher leadership. Her study found that "teachers complained that they did not have time for other initiatives outside their classrooms, because they were involved with classroom responsibilities like teaching, preparing lessons, assessing learners and many more other" (p. 80).

In similar vein, time was also reported as being a constraining factor within the practice of teacher leadership in a study of Muijs and Harris (2007) in the United Kingdom in one of the case study schools. They found that "teachers spent the majority of their time in their classroom teaching and they had less time to do lovely things in the school" (p. 124).

In summary, the two barriers mentioned above as data suggested hampered the practice of teacher leadership in the case study school.

#### 4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented and discussed how teacher leadership was understood and practiced in the case study school. The study found that teacher leadership was understood as being in and

beyond the classroom walls. The study also found that teacher leadership existed in all the four zones these included how teachers led inside the classroom, how they led beyond their classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Further, it also included how teachers led outside their classroom in whole school development, for instance in matters related to participation in school level decision making and peer reviews of school practice. Finally, it found that teachers led beyond their school into the community. However, the take-up of teacher leadership varied from zone to zone in the degree of their existence. The existence of teacher leadership in zones two and three was strong. While in zone one, one could be hesitant of the strength of teacher leadership, given the lack of observations data inside the classrooms. However, given that zones two and three were strong it was likely that zone one was also strong. Moreover, the take up of teacher leadership in zone four was fair.

The chapter further attempted to investigate factors that promoted teacher leadership like a supportive culture and ongoing professional development that were the only two factors found in the study. Although teachers experienced a supportive culture and ongoing professional development in the case study school, factors that hindered the practice of teacher leadership were evident such as the School Management Team who used its power to control teachers' decisions. Again, the study found that a lack of time was also a barrier to the practice of teacher leadership because teachers already had full teaching programmes that impeded teachers from taking leadership roles in the school. I believe that these findings answered the three research questions that guided this study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study by pulling the main threads from Chapter Four and discussing these in relation to the literature. The chapter also discusses the recommendations for future research as well as for practice. Finally, the chapter presents the potential value of the study and concludes the thesis.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As this study indicated, the data collected provided answers to three questions:

1. How is the concept teacher leadership understood?
2. Where do teachers lead and what leadership roles do they take up?
3. What factors enable and constrain teacher leadership in the case study school?

In response to the **first research question**, my study found that although the participants in the study understood teacher leadership in a range of different ways, the whole view of the participants, irrespective of their age, experience and qualification, was that teachers lead both in and outside the classroom walls. This finding is in line with the research of Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) who are of the view that teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom. In addition, this finding confirms Hashikutuva's (2011) study of teacher leadership in Namibia in two of the three case studies where teachers understood teacher leadership as teachers who lead inside and outside the classroom. This finding is in direct contrast to the third of Hashikutuva's

schools as well as a study of Nauyoma-Hamupembe (2012) in the Namibian context on teacher leadership where teachers understood the concept narrowly that teachers lead mainly inside the classroom.

My findings in response to the **second research question** and based on questionnaire and interview data, indicated that teachers reflected critically on their own classroom teaching, set standards for pupil behaviour in their classroom as well as across the school. In addition, there was also evidence that teachers in the case study school kept up to date with developments in teaching practices and learning areas by attending professional development workshops. Based on these findings within the zone of the classroom (*zone 1*) it can be said that teachers in the school took the needs of learners into account. These are teachers who, according to Coleman (2005, p. 16) are “leaders who take into consideration the needs of others rather than their personal needs”.

Also in response to the second research question my findings further indicated that some teachers worked jointly with other teachers to draw a scheme of work for grade three, develop teaching materials for grade one and debate teaching methodology in a science subject meeting, in an attempt to lead colleagues beyond their classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (*zone two*). In this regard, teachers empowered each other in dealing with curriculum development issues. Moreover, the findings of my study showed that members of the soccer committee consulted other teachers in order for these teachers to select learners in their classrooms to participate in a soccer tournament day, which the committee organized. This is an example of teacher collaboration with colleagues in extra-curricular activities to promote teamwork. In addition, my finding also indicated that there were teachers in the study who engaged in the role of mentoring new teachers and student teachers.

I believe that my findings confirm the findings of Grant and Singh who found that in zone two “teachers leaders (leaders) had relative freedom to interact with other teachers (followers) in the practice of leadership in relation to curriculum and matters of teaching and learning (the situation)” (2009, p. 298).

Again, in response to the second research question, my findings indicated that teachers in the case study school participated in the many school decision-making processes (*zone three*). The

findings confirmed that the SMT supported teachers to initiate decisions, debate different school matters in the staff morning briefings before decisions were taken by consensus. The SMT also invited all teachers to join them as part of the SMT on a rotational basis for a period of two weeks and, during this period, each teacher had a chance to chair a staff morning briefing.

Moreover, in relation to the second research question, my finding indicated that there was evidence of the role of teachers providing curriculum development knowledge into the community (*zone four*) where teachers interacted with parents and led into the community, for example on a parent-teacher day and during a parents' meeting. As a result, good relationships between teachers and parents existed.

In response to the **third research question**, my findings indicated that there were factors that *enhanced* teacher leadership in the case study school. It was evidenced that a culture of collaboration existed in the case study school where teachers worked together and helped each other to accomplish certain tasks. A collaborative culture existed because the SMT encouraged teachers to take up leadership roles and lead initiatives, for example in the role of teachers leading colleagues beyond their classrooms in curricular and extra-curricular activities. There was also evidence of a supportive culture where teachers worked collaboratively with the SMT and shared ideas in morning briefings. Furthermore, my findings indicated that teachers felt that the SMT trusted their ability to lead. Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (1988) contend that "engaging in open supportive communication is part of building trust" (p. 154). This was evidenced in the case study school, for example, the SMT gave each teacher a chance in the staff morning briefing to report to the entire staff on how parents expressed their happiness when they came to check their children's books. These findings are in line with the research of Harris and Muijs (2005) who are of the opinion that a supportive culture, strong leadership (i. e. support from SMT) and high levels of teachers and involvement can enhance teacher leadership" (pp. 95- 96).

However, while there were good examples of the practice of teacher leadership in my study as mentioned above, my findings indicated that there were some *barriers* to the promotion of teacher leadership, which also gave a response to the third research question. The SMT sometimes used a top-down approach where teachers participated in school level decision making in zone three. As discussed earlier, teachers interacted with the SMT whereby teachers were allowed to initiate decisions, but the SMT at times used its power of authority to control the

initiated decisions of teachers by making final decisions. These findings confirm the research of Harris and Muijs (2005) who found that “decision making is seen as emanating either from the head or from teacher or middle managers, depending on specific circumstances and decisions” (p. 101).

A Lack of time also emerged as another barrier to teacher leadership. My study found that teachers did not want to do things that interfered with their teaching workload. Time was also suggested as an impediment to teacher leadership in the research studies of Nauyoma-Hamupembe (2012), Hashikutuva (2011), Gumede (2010), and Molefe (2010). Therefore, I am in agreement with Harris (2004) who suggests that it is important for teachers to be allocated time to work together and lead activities that will develop the school. This calls for the SMT to give time to teachers to practice leadership roles. Now I move on to talk about successful teacher leadership as a category which best describes this case study school.

### 5.3 SUCCESSFUL TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOL

The categorizations of teacher leadership by Harris and Muijs (2005) as successful, emergent and restricted are particularly useful for my study. Harris and Muijs (2005) describe **successful** teacher leadership as having these criteria: shared vision, involvement of teachers in decision-making, initiating decision making and amount of involvement, a collaborative and teamwork culture, high levels of trust and support from the principal, good communication of teachers and SMTs, respect and care and the involvement of learners in leadership roles (pp. 101-103). According to Harris and Muijs (2005), teacher leadership is **emergent** when the school has a collegial culture, shared vision as a result of consultations, support from management at all levels, teachers lead new initiatives, clear line of management structures and internal promotion (pp. 108-110). For Harris and Muijs (2005), **restricted** teacher leadership is evident when the school has a lack of involvement in leadership at the whole school level of all educators, lack of the involvement in decision making of all teachers, lack of role definition, lack of support from the principal, lack of good communication between SMTs and staff members as well as lack of shared vision (pp. 115-116).

Using these categorisations, I categorized my case study school as one which demonstrated successful teacher leadership. The case study school epitomized successful teacher leadership in the sense that teachers worked collaboratively as a team in zone two as my findings indicated. It can also be said that it was successful because a shared vision was evidenced in the case study school, particularly in zone three, where teachers were involved in school wide decision-making processes. They initiated decisions which made them believe that the SMT respected and cared about them. It was also successful in a way that there was a high level of trust and support which the SMT demonstrated by allowing teachers to take up the leadership roles. This was evident, particularly in the role of mentoring as well as in the role of teachers providing development knowledge into the community where decisions were taken together with the parents during a parents meeting. Lastly, it was successful because good communication between teachers and SMT was evidenced whereby SMTs and staff members met regularly in staff morning briefings as the findings showed. Therefore, I am confident to say that the school practiced successful teacher leadership.

Moreover, the context of this case study school was an enabling one which contributed to teachers practicing teacher leadership successfully. This indicated that the case study school had a unique structure and culture in the sense that the SMTs invited teachers to join them as part of the management team on a rotational basis. This culture motivated teachers to take up leadership roles across the school that resulted in successful teacher leadership. This view is in line with the research of Grant (2008) who found that “the context of each school together with its unique structure and culture impacted on how the take-up of teacher leadership occurs” (p. 99). It can be said that the case study school embraced a collegial culture and rejected a culture of isolation which could have prevented teachers working together with their colleagues and the SMTs. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, (2000, p. 187) stress that “cultures of isolationism, common in schools, inhibit the work of teacher leaders with their teaching colleagues, as do they associated norms of egalitarianism, privacy, politeness and contrived collegiality”. It stands to reason then that the successful development of teacher leadership in the case study school was supported by the SMT; in this regard the SMT acted as leaders of leaders (Barth, 2001). Since the SMTs and teachers worked together in whole school development and in matters related to curriculum provision as well as leading into the community as the findings revealed, this was a clear indication that collaboration and teamwork was at the heart of this school. This indicated that the

practice of teacher leadership was influenced by the culture and structure of this school. In this regard, I believe that structure and culture had an impact on teacher leadership being successful in this case study school. Successful teacher leadership implies that there was a distribution on leadership in the case study school and I discuss this in the next section.

#### **5.4 DISPERSED DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

As discussed in Chapter Two, teacher leadership is one manifestation of distributed leadership in practice. Distributed leadership emphasizes that leadership can be located in the position of the principal but can also be spread over many people who work in a school at various levels. To remind the reader, Gunter (2005) uses three characterizations of distributed leadership and they are as follows: authorized, dispersed and democratic distributed leadership. My study was an example of dispersed distributed leadership. Dispersed distributed leadership refers to a process where numerous leadership practices in an organization happen without the formal working of a hierarchy (Gunter, 2005, p. 52). As discussed in section 5.2, the SMT interacted with teachers in the practice of teacher leadership across the whole school through a ‘rotational management’ system. This interaction of SMTs and teachers enabled teacher leadership to emerge unlike in a top-down approach. This indicated that the SMT in the school did not work in a hierarchical form of relations, but rather they worked together at the same level with all teachers. Therefore, this practice can be described as dispersed distributed leadership (Gunter, 2005). Dispersed distributed leadership was also evident from the findings, where teachers led in joint curriculum provision as well as leading extra-curricular activities. This indicated a dispersed form of distributed leadership in a way that the SMT of this case study school relinquished some of their power and allowed teachers to participate in leadership roles across the whole school. Furthermore, the participation of teachers in the many school decision-making processes (i. e. zone three) created opportunities for teacher leadership to emerge and teachers were given the platform to exercise leadership roles. This example indicated that the school used a more inclusive leadership style and adopted a dispersed distributed leadership practice (Gunter, 2005). In addition, the engagement of teachers and parents in debates and discussions during parents

meeting before decisions were taken, further indicated that power was shared and teacher leadership emerged in the school which was a good example of dispersed distributed leadership.

Thus, I argue that the case study school is an example of successful teacher leadership within a dispersed distributed leadership framing. However, the major difference between my study and that of the Harris and Muijs case study in the UK was that the teachers in my case study practiced teacher leadership without really being familiar with the concept of ‘teacher leadership’ itself. They practiced teacher leadership intuitively. This is interesting and potentially powerful for the practice of teacher leadership in this Namibian case study school. Teachers intuitively practiced leadership across the various zones of the school. Imagine the possibilities for agency and transformation were teachers to have more knowledge of the concept and more awareness of its power of and potential for change. Knowledge is power and the more teachers develop knowledge of teacher leadership, the more successful they are likely to be. This is in line with the suggestion of Grant that “teachers, principal and schools need time to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for distributed leadership and teacher leadership to become a reality” (2006, p. 529).

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF MY STUDY**

This study was a qualitative case study of one school in Namibia with my participants the teachers in this school. As a result, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other schools. Given that my study was qualitative in nature, using a case study enabled me to do an in-depth intensive inquiry into how teacher leadership was understood and carried out by teachers. Furthermore, my case study had some ethnographic tendencies such as examining a single case in-depth by using observation and interviews. Moreover, the use of different tools such as document analysis, observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in my study strengthened the validity of the data collected through triangulation. My study had three limitations as discussed below.

Firstly, using only the principal and three teachers as my primary participants was a limitation of my study because it prevented me from getting more views of teachers of how teacher leadership was understood and how it was practiced, particularly in the zone of the classroom where, in retrospect, I needed to do more observations. If another study is to be done, I would increase the number of my primary participants to at least seven and do more observations to get a real picture of teacher leadership within this first zone. Moreover, a sample of three teachers was selected based on their experience. However, their experience did not have any impact on my findings because everyone talked about what he or she was doing in the school and the term teacher leadership was new to all of them. There was no real difference between the leadership opportunities for the novice teachers and the experienced teachers.

Secondly, I conducted my questionnaires in the morning during the staff morning briefing. Five minutes were given to me to explain to teachers the purpose of the questionnaire and how to complete them. While I was explaining, the principal kept on reminding me about time and, because of the ethical protocol as well as my approval letter that stated that I should not disturb teaching and learning, I could not go further. As a consequence, this might have led to participants not understanding or misinterpreting some of the questions. Therefore, the process I embarked on with the use of questionnaires to collect data was also a weakness of my study. When analyzing my data, I realized that the survey data sometimes contradicted what I saw in practice. I believe that this contradiction might have been due to a lack of sufficient time for the participants to complete the questionnaire process properly. They were under pressure to complete the questionnaires and perhaps did not understand the questions and were unable to ask me any questions. If another study is to be conducted using questionnaires, I might request for more time to explain all the statements to the participants before they complete the questionnaires.

Thirdly, a further limitation of the study was that of doing the research in my own school. I had a sense that, at times, the three teachers sometimes might have withheld information from me thinking that I knew more information about the school than them, since I was a member of the School Management Team in the case study school. I think it might have been better if I had carried this study out at another school. Next, I discuss recommendations for future research.

## 5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

At the moment, research shows that there are only two Namibians who have done research into teacher leadership, with my study the third. This indicates that research into teacher leadership in Namibia is still at an initial stage and is an under researched phenomenon. Moreover, all the three studies are case studies which cannot be generalized to other schools, therefore, more research needs to be carried out on the concept and practice of teacher leadership in Namibia. With this in mind, the following recommendations are made for further research into the concept and practice of teacher leadership in Namibia.

The findings of my study indicated that teacher leadership was understood as a teacher being a leader both inside and outside the classroom. This understanding could be influenced by the culture and setting of the school, as I indicated in my earlier discussions. This shows that further qualitative research needs to be conducted on a larger scale to explore the concept and practice of teacher leadership in both rural and urban schools for purposes of comparison.

As I indicated in section 4.3.1, teacher leadership within the zone of the classroom in my study was weak due to the lack of classroom observation, a weakness of my research design. Therefore, there is a need to conduct further research to look inside the classroom and observe how teacher leadership is practiced to get a real picture of teacher leadership in zone one.

It was evident that the take up of teacher leadership in zone four of the role of teachers leading in service education and assisting other teachers in neighbouring schools was minimal. Therefore, qualitative research needs to be conducted on a large-scale to examine factors that are hindering teachers in the take up of this role.

As discussed in section 4.3.3.1, my analysis of policy documents revealed that the concept of 'rotational management' was not in the policy documents and neither could I access any literature on the concept in the Namibian context and internationally. It seems that the concept has emerged out of practice but it is a good example of teacher leadership. Therefore, this constitutes an area of further research.

Lastly, Namibian national policy such as the ‘National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia’ as documented in the ‘School Development Plan’ (2008, p. 9), indicates that “the principal, management and teachers to do a school self-evaluation and review a school development plan annually”. This is in relation to the role of teachers taking the lead in organizing and leading reviews of the school year plan (see section 4.3.3.1). Research needs to be carried out to investigate factors preventing teachers from organizing and leading the reviews of the reviews of the school year plan so that we better understand the organizational barriers to teacher leadership pertaining to this role.

As indicated in section 4.3.2, mentoring was a regional imperative of Kavango that began in 2011 to train mentors in schools on how to help novice teachers. Therefore, there is an opportunity to carry out qualitative research on a larger scale to examine how mentors work as teacher leaders in schools.

The next section discusses the recommendations for teacher leadership practice in Namibia.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN NAMIBIA**

The aim of this section is to suggest recommendations for the promotion of teacher leadership in Namibia.

As I indicated in section 1.3, the term teacher leadership was introduced to me in the interview I attended in Okahandja in Namibia for the Masters of Education Degree programme in Educational Leadership and Management in November 2011. Teachers in my study also did not know of the term, therefore, there is likely a need for the Ministry of Education to introduce the concept of teacher leadership in its teaching programmes at the levels of undergraduate and postgraduate study where the advantages and disadvantages of the concept can be debated.

As indicated in section 4.3.2.3, less than half of the teachers in my study claimed to have participated in the performance evaluation of their colleagues. This was perhaps a consequence of the national policy, as recorded in the ‘Job description of Heads of Department and Core

Duties of Subject Heads’. ‘Core Duties of Subject Head’ outlines that “the subject head should monitor and moderate the standard of continuous assessment tasks and assignments, at least once per term” (2008, p. 1). This policy contradicts another Namibian policy called ‘Education for All: National Planning of Action’ (2002) which suggests that leadership in schools should be distributed between and among all the educators in the institution. In line with this policy, it is now time that principals implement this policy and distribute leadership in a way that will enable the emergence of teacher leadership. I suggest there is possibly a need for in service training for principals, to let them understand the importance of distributing leadership equally among the staff members to avoid overloading a few teachers in their schools. Next, I present the potential value of the study.

## **5.8 POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE STUDY**

Kelly (2011) suggests that findings, whether small or big, rich or impoverished, make meaning and contribute to the knowledge or discipline under which the study was conducted. In line with this view, the findings of my study made meaning and contributed to the existing knowledge of teacher leadership in Namibia. With this small contribution, my study has increased the number of case studies on teacher leadership done in Namibia to three. Therefore, my research is of potential value and was worth doing in the sense that it made a small contribution towards the knowledge about teacher leadership contextualized within the Namibian schooling system. I further believe that my study is of potential value in the sense that it might be useful to all stakeholders such as teachers and researchers in the field of education who show a keen interest in leadership, particularly the notion of distributed leadership. The next section concludes the thesis.

## 5.7 CONCLUSION

Based on empirical evidence, my study showed that teacher leadership was understood as leadership by teachers both inside and outside the classroom walls. This finding points to the definition of teacher leadership by Grant (2008) that teachers, regardless of their position, can take up informal leadership responsibilities both in the classroom and beyond. Furthermore, the take up of teacher leadership in all the four zones suggested that leadership was an organizational phenomenon (Harris and Lambert, 2003) in the case study school. Lastly, the findings of my study indicated that a culture of collaboration and teamwork was supported by the SMT, which encouraged teachers to take up leadership roles in the case study school. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) argue that “teachers are responsible for the support of teacher leadership [because] the [sleeping] giant cannot be awakened without teacher leaders inviting others to join together in a community of leaders” (p. 13). I hope that this quotation and the findings of my study can become a catalyst for further research on the phenomenon of teacher leadership within a distributed leadership framework in Namibia.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

DATE OF OBSERVATION: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**PARTICIPANTS:**

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#### WHO IS THE INITIATOR?

Principal

Heads of Departments

Teachers

#### WHO DOMINATE THE DISCUSSION?

Principal

Head of Departments

Teachers

#### TEACHERS ATTITUDE TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING: (Indicate the teacher)

Lack of commitment

Resistance/barrier

Lack of confidence

Full participation

Encouraging

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

Encouraging

Dismissive

Resistance

**THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE SMT: (Indicate SMT member)**

Autocratic

Democratic

Distribute

Transactional

Transformational

Other (Indicate)

**THE SMT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SHARED DECISION MAKING:**

Supportive

Discourages

Context driven

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

---

**IS DECISION MAKING MORE**

Authorized

Emergent

Dispersed

Democratic

**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN MORE:**

Restricted

Emergent

Successful

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

Opinions/suggestions are dismissed

Opinions/suggestions are restricted

Principal's attitude (accountability)

Hierarchical structure of school

Lack of trust by principal/SMT

Lack of confidence by teachers

Lack of skills

Time constraints

Workload

Lack of Initiative to participation

**DID THE FINAL DECISION TAKE IN TO CONSIDERATION THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DURING THE DISCUSSION**

Yes

No

Partially

**WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION?**

Principal

SMT

Teachers

Consensus

## APPENDIX 2: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

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

#### A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male	Female	
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2. Age

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

Below M+3	M+3	M+4	M+5 and above	
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4. Nature of employment

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

5. Employer

State	NGO
-------	-----

6. Years of teaching experience

0-5 yrs	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16+yrs
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**B. TEACHERS LEADERSHIP SURVEY**

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

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

**B. 1**

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

**B.2**

<b>Which of the following tasks are you involved with</b>	4	3	2	1
11. I take initiatives without being delegated duties				
12. I reflect critically on my own classroom teaching.				
13. I organize and lead reviews of the school year plan				
14. I participate in-school decision making.				
15. I give in-service training to colleagues.				

16. I provide curriculum development knowledge to my colleagues				
17. I provide curriculum development knowledge to teachers in other schools				
18. I participate in performance evaluation of teachers				
19. I choose textbooks and instructional materials for my grade/learning area				
20. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities in my school.				
21. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities beyond my school.				
22. I set standard for pupil behaviour in my school				
23. I design staff development programmes for my school.				
24. I co-ordinate cluster meetings for my learning area.				
25. I keep up to date with developments in teaching practices and learning area.				
26. I set the duty roster for my colleagues				

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

**B. 3**

<b>My school is a place where</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
27. The SMT has trust in my ability to lead.				
28. Teachers resist leadership from other teachers.				
29. Teachers are allowed to try out new ideas.				
30. The SMT (School Management Team) values teacher's opinions.				
31. The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision-making				
32. Only the SMT takes important decisions				
33. Only the SMT takes initiative in the school.				
34. Adequate opportunities are created for the staff to develop professionally.				
35. Team work is encouraged.				
36. Men are given more leadership roles than women.				

### APPENDIX 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Date-----Time-----

1. Talk to me about leadership. What does the word leadership mean to you?
2. Who is responsible for making decisions in your school?
3. Do teachers initiate decisions in this school? Give examples where teachers initiated decisions. When last did it happen?
4. Do teachers have areas of responsibilities in the school, alongside their subjects they teach? Give examples of these responsibilities.
5. Does the school support teachers who take up leadership roles in the school? How does the school support them? Give examples.
6. In your opinion, what do you think can prevent teachers in taking up leadership roles in the school?
7. To conclude, what do you understand by teachers as leaders?

Thank you for your time and effort.

## APPENDIX 4: LETTER FROM SUPERVISORS



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P O Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140  
Tel: +27 (0)46 603 8383/4  
Fax: +27 (0)46 622 8028  
Email: education@ru.ac.za

19 June 2012  
Mr Alfred Ilukena  
The Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Education  
Windhoek  
NAMIBIA

Dear Mr Ilukena

### Permission to conduct research in Namibia

I am writing to obtain your permission for Mr Thomas Zokka (student number 07X5056) to conduct research in schools in Namibia. He is a registered Masters student at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa in the field of Educational Leadership and Management under our supervision. He has reached the point where he is ready to conduct his research. He wants to investigate teacher leadership in secondary schools.

Mr Zokka will need access to documents, to observe the school in action to get a sense of its climate and culture, and to interview selected teachers and the principal. He deserves all the assistance he can get for this project. Teacher leadership is a contentious and important issue in education in Namibia and the rest of Southern Africa but as yet under-researched. Mr Zokka has done well so far in his coursework and we have every confidence that he will produce a good study.

Thank you in anticipation for your permission and support. If you have any queries please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely

Handwritten signature of Prof. Hennie van der Mescht.

Handwritten signature of Dr. Callie Grant.

(Prof) Hennie van der Mescht and Dr Callie Grant (Supervisors)

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
RHODES UNIVERSITY  
P.O. BOX 94  
GRAHAMSTOWN  
6140

## APPENDIX 5: LETTER FROM DIRECTOR



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA  
KAVANGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

Tel. (066) 255 8111  
Fax (066) 255 8213/255 89120/255 89222

Private Bag 2134  
RUNDU

Enquiries: **Alfons M. Dikuua**  
Email: [dikuua@kavango.namania.net](mailto:dikuua@kavango.namania.net)

Our Ref.:  
Date: Friday, 06 July 2012

Your Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

The Principal  
Sandra Kapango Primary School  
Ncuncuni Circuit

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY  
AT SANDRA KAPANGO PRIMARY SCHOOL IN KAVANGO REGION**

Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted to Mr. Zokka to carry out a research study at Sandra Kapango Primary School

**NB:** Teaching and learning process should **NOT** be disturbed in the process.

Yours faithfully

  
Alfons M. Dikuua  
DIRECTOR



Cc. Inspector of Education: Ncuncuni Circuit

AD/mr

## APPENDIX 6: INVITATION TO TEACHERS TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

Enq: T. K. Zokka  
Cell: +264 812693954  
Email: tzokka@yahoo.com

11 Hills View  
Grahamstown  
South Africa  
20<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Dear Mr/Ms.....

### **Invitation to take part in the research study**

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

.....

Thomas K Zokka (Researcher)

## Declaration

I ..... (full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and the nature of this research project.

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

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Date