

# Re -Assessing the School Factors Hindering the Application of Teacher Leadership in Improving School Performances

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to re-evaluate the school-related factors that are impeding the application of teacher leadership in an attempt to improve academic rural performance of learners. The study included 8 purposely chosen schools that used a qualitative case study design. In the data collection process, interviews, observations, and various documents were used as instruments. Previous studies on factors, as well as the theoretical frameworks of Distributed leadership theory and symbolic interactionism theory, were used to compare and contrast the study findings. The findings re-assured that teacher leadership practices even in rural schools compared to urban schools were hindered by the lack of cooperation and collaboration, lack of incentives and recognition and the lack of motivation and support. However, the study finds arising factors such as ; negative attitude, ignorance, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, time limitation, traditional leadership structure and lack of leadership skills as new hindering factors as contribution to the discourse of teacher leadership. These factors are personal oriented and less of structural oriented. As a result, while the study calls for a review of current policies to be geared toward psychological supports to motivate teachers and bring about a cultural mind shift that fosters awareness to allow teachers to exercise leadership and subsequently improve school performance.

**Keywords:** Teacher leadership, improved performances, rural areas

## 1. Introduction

The school performance has been linked to numerous factors including the school leadership. The development of teacher leadership varies across the entire world. Teacher leadership practice had increased in Latin America in recent years and has become a fundamental subject in the research and policy agenda (Flessa et al, 2018). Moreover, Smylie and Ecket (2018) disclose that teacher leadership had gained momentum in Europe and America (Grant, 2017). signified by the increased number of teacher leadership development programs. Besides, other studies indicated that countries such as Austria had also advanced in the concepts of teacher leadership in terms of practice, growth, and viability of teacher leadership in schools (Szeto & Cheng, 2018). In Qatar University for example reorganised its education system to offer teacher leadership development programs to teachers and school leaders (Nasser, 2017).

Thus, more practice of teacher leadership is observed in such states due to leadership development programs offered.

Literature on the other hand presents deficiency in practices and research on teacher leadership exists in Arab Emirates countries (Al-Taneiji & Ibrahim, 2017) and in Africa. As such, the dearth of teacher leadership practice prompted several Arab countries to launch reforms in their countries to advance their educational system (Alfadala, 2015). However, the top-down approach was used by the government to implement educational reform. Though educators and teachers were expected to execute educational changes, oftentimes they did not possess adequate knowledge and skills to attempt new approaches. Besides, a dearth of teacher leadership development in many countries constrains teacher leadership to take root (Nasser, 2017).

Studies have pointed out different factors that impede teacher leadership (Tapala et al., 2020). Tapala et al. (2020) pinpoint factors that can affect teacher leadership practices such as dearth of training and development, workload, lack of time, school culture, and deficiency of resources. Correspondingly, Kimbrel (2018) underscores some barriers to teacher leadership such as conditions in the schools, financial constraints, inadequate support to teacher leaders, time constraints, and teachers' attitudes. In addition, Avodov-Ungar (2018) accentuates that the main factors that deter teacher leadership were teacher resistance and inadequate support from the school administration. Likewise, it was indicated that the absence of clear directions makes teachers hesitant to take any initiative (Gunter, 2016). This implies that teachers are less likely to take any leadership roles unless there are unblemished organisational goals to be achieved.

Limited studies have been undertaken to re-assess the literature factors that hinder the application of teacher leadership in schools and most especially rural schools hence the study sought to answer what were the factors that hinder teacher leadership practices at schools.

### 3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach by using a Case study design. Hopkins and Hawking (2018) explains that a case study aims to explore and examine the current real-life occurrence via a broad contextual analysis of a restricted number of happenings and situations. The sampled three secondary schools from 8 schools in the region randomly to avoid biasness. A sample comprising 15 participants were purposively chosen. Data was collected from interviews, observation and documents. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach.

### 4. Findings and discussions

Table 1. Below shows the factors that hinder the application of teacher leadership and are presented into five main categories; school culture; school structure, principal leadership, teacher-related factors and others as discussed below.

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: The factors that hinder the application of teacher leadership.	<b>Sub-theme 1.1: School culture</b> Lack of support and collaboration
	<b>Sub-theme School structure</b> Traditional leadership structure Lack of incentives and recognition
	<b>Sub-theme 1.3: Principal leadership</b>

	Lack of leadership skills Lack of motivation and support
	<b>Sub-theme 1.4: Teacher-related factors</b> Negative attitudes Ignorance Lack of self-esteem and self-confidence
	<b>Sub-theme 1.5: Other factors</b> Time limitation

**Table 1: Factors that constrain teacher leadership practices in schools**

#### 4.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1 School culture

##### 4.1.1.2 Lack of support and collaboration

Lack of support and collaboration among teachers was identified as a factor that delayed the practice and emergence of teacher leadership at the case study school. The above views were confirmed by participant 15 who avowed that; *“some novice teachers do not cooperate with the school management as they decline to accept to perform tasks delegated to them citing that it is not part of their job descriptions”*. Moreover, lack of cooperation was mentioned by participants as a contributor to the low participation of teachers in the leadership of the school. Affirming the above narratives, participant 1 states that; *“teacher leadership at our school is hindered by lack of cooperation and also bias decision by SMT without consultation”*.

Contrary to the above findings, however, related, some participants divulged that lack of support from the SMT hinders teachers to assume leadership roles. The participants indicated that there was no trust between the SMT and teachers, thus making it difficult for the SMT to distribute leadership roles to teachers. To the above views, participant 5 confirms that; *“the SMT do not distribute leadership roles equally as they favour some teachers”*. Sharing similar views, participant 3 narrated that; *“teacher leadership can be prevented by lack of involvement of teachers in decision-making”*. She went on to say; *“if teachers are not involved, it might hinder teacher leadership. Furthermore, tension occurs, if there’s no connection between the teachers and the management in the school”*. , it became evident that lack of support and collaboration hamper teacher leadership practice. This finding corresponds with the earlier finding in the study by Sawalhi and Chaaban (2019) who found that the factor that inhibits teacher leadership includes unsupportive principal and staff members.

The finding indicated that lack of collaboration had led to minimal teacher leadership practices at the study school. In support of this claim, participant 27 narrated that; *“lack of cooperation among the teachers and learners and this can happen if there is no understanding or people are not well informed of the goal to be achieved”*. About the above views, participant 20 stated that; *“lack of cooperation and commitment hinder teacher leadership practice at the school”*. She went on to say that; *“sometimes there are situations that are too complicated and beyond our control and we have to make a decision that will not backfire and hence it can be difficult to make a decision”*.

The findings divulged that lack of cooperation among the staff members is the cause of low numbers of teachers who are willing to take up leadership roles. To strengthen this assertion, participant 30 avowed that; *“lack of teamwork or cooperation from some teachers as they require constant supervision to carry out such practices”*. In addition participant 16 divulged that; *“some colleagues that do not want to work together with others, some colleagues are difficult to work with and makes leadership role difficult task”*. Similarly, participant 18 highlighted that the; *“lack of teamwork and cooperation amongst colleagues can*

*be a big problem to teacher leadership practice*". Moreover, participant 19 affirmed that; *"one of the constraining factors at our school is division, when a team divides itself into two groups, they will not progress anywhere. This slows down leadership in the sense that teacher A would not carry out an activity if teacher C is involved or if teacher B is not involved. Other times one teacher might refuse to carry out a task assigned to him/her by the principal if they are not on good terms. Some teachers reject doing some things. Other teachers are absent when expected to be somewhere carrying a duty given to them"*. Sharing similar sentiments, participant 27 indicated that; *"lack of collaboration/team building at the school constrain teacher leadership practice among the teachers"*. Drawing from the data, it is apparent that collaboration is the cornerstone that leads to the success of teacher leadership at the school, however, if their teachers are unwilling to collaborate in assuming leadership roles, teacher leadership would remain in the embryonic stage. These findings harmonise the views of Avodov-Ungar (2018) which underscores that the main factors that deter teacher leadership are teacher resistance. This implies that teachers are less likely to take any leadership roles unless there are unblemished organisational goals to be achieved.

The findings indicated that a lack of support from management to the teachers or teachers to the management prohibits the emergence of teacher leadership practice. This was confirmed by participant 36 who indicated that; *"lack of support and encouragement from school administrators and teaching colleagues pose the biggest obstacles for teacher leadership"*. In addition, participant 32 asserted that; *"teachers do not get full support from the school management, thus prevent them from fully taking part in leadership roles"*. Concerning this, participant 39 averred that; *"teacher leadership at our school is also constrained by personal differences amongst the teachers, some may differ with others and may not be willing to pull in the same direction with others"*.

Another participant (32) stated that; *"teachers do not cooperate"*. Participants believe that for teacher leadership to emerge there should be support and collaboration among all members of the organisation. These findings correlate with the views in the study of, Sawalhi and Chaaban (2019) found that the factor that inhibits teacher leadership includes unsupportive principal and staff members.

#### **4.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: School structure**

##### **4.1.2.1 Traditional leadership structure.**

The findings depict that top-down leadership prohibits teacher leadership development at the school. The participants illustrated the existence of a traditional leadership structure at the study school which was evident by decisions made only by the principal and HODs who give instructions to teachers and learners without engaging them. The traditional leadership structure at schools diminishes the opportunities for teachers and learners to be involved in the decision-making process at the case study schools. This was confirmed by participant 8 avowed that; *"teacher leadership can be hindered by autocratic when people are not engaged"*. Moreover, participant 3 indicated that; *"we are rarely involved in the decision-making process at our school, most times we are just commanded on what to do by the school management"*. It contended that a lack of formal authority hinders teachers' ability to lead. Traditional leadership structure may cause teachers and learners to be less involved in decision-making because the decision-making power is centralised to the top management. This finding corroborates earlier findings by Sharar and Nawab (2020) found traditional hierarchical structure as a factor that hinders teacher leadership practices at schools. It has been established that a lack of formal authority hinders teachers' ability to lead. Traditional leadership structure may cause teachers to be less involved in decision-making because the decision-making power is centralised to the top management. Also, Tashi (2015) made a valid argument

that principals who vacillate to embroil teachers in decision-making considering their involvement a threat, retain hierarchy and status quo. The findings depict that top-down leadership prohibits teacher leadership development at the schools. The participants narrated that the traditional leadership structure at the schools diminishes the opportunities for teachers to be involved in the decision-making process at the case study schools.

#### **4.1.2.2 Lack of incentives and recognition**

Lack of incentives was cited as the contributing factor to the dearth of teacher leadership at the case study schools. A school that is not structured to provide incentives and recognition to teachers that assume leadership roles constrain teacher leadership practice. In support of this assertion, participant 16 maintained that the *“lack of incentive limit teachers to actively engage in leadership activities at the school”*. She went on to say that; *“apart from making themselves available, teachers receive no single cents for performing leadership tasks”*. With the above views, participant 17 asserted that; *“there is a lack of incentives for engaging in leadership activities”*. Participants believed that lack of incentive for extra work is a demotivating factor that contributes to teachers’ unwillingness to assume leadership tasks. These findings substantiate the views of Sinha and Hunuscin (2017) found teacher leadership can be prohibited by a lack of recognition of good achievements by the school management. Moreover, lack of collaboration was mentioned by participants as a contributor to the low participation of teachers in the leadership of the school. This finding corresponds with the earlier finding in the study by Sawalhi and Chaaban (2019) who found that the factor that inhibits teacher leadership includes unsupportive principal and staff members. Similar findings were also observed in the study of, Avodov-Ungar (2018) that discovered that the main factors that deter teacher leadership are teacher resistance and inadequate support from the school administrators.

#### **4.1.3 Sub-theme 1.3 Principal leadership**

##### **4.1.3.1 Lack of leadership skills**

The findings divulged that teachers lack the leadership skills to practice leadership roles which were attributed to the principal leadership. To strengthen this, participant 12 commented that; *“I have difficulty partaking in leadership activities because I lack leadership skills and the school management hardly allows us to lead”*. The above findings were cemented by participant 9 who said; *“most of the teachers lack leadership skills, if a person has limited experience, it creates fear and lack of confidence to engage on leadership tasks”*. This denotes if the school management does not provide an opportunity for teachers to lead, the teachers would never acquire knowledge and leadership skills and would find it hard to assume leadership roles. These findings substantiate earlier findings by Sharar and Nawab (2020) which found lack of teacher leadership ability as one of the factors that hinder teacher leadership practices at schools. The findings indicated a lack of leadership skills among teachers as a constraining factor to teacher leadership. This was confirmed by participant 32 said that; *“teachers lack skills to assume leadership roles at the school”*. In addition, another teacher (participant 37) indicated that; *“one of the reason teacher hesitate to accept leadership roles is lack of leadership, because teachers do not know what to do, he or she will give an excuse to avoid being given a task to do”*. About this, participant 44 said that; *“I have a meeting with teachers in my department, I always emphasised the importance of taking a lead in the school activities. One day a teacher said, it is not that we do not want to take a lead but due to lack of leadership*



*skills among us, we often hesitant to take lead*". The participant believed that a lack of leadership skills inhibits teachers in the case study school to participate in school leadership.

The findings divulged that teachers lack leadership skills to practice leadership roles. The findings reported that teachers have no adequate knowledge and skills to practice leadership roles. The findings indicated a lack of leadership skills among teachers as a constraining factor to teacher leadership. The findings revealed that teachers lack the skills to assume leadership roles at the schools. The participant believed that a lack of leadership skills inhibits teachers in the case study school to participate in school leadership. These findings substantiate earlier findings by Sharar and Nawab (2020) which found lack of teacher leadership ability as one of the factors that hinder teacher leadership practices at schools. Similarly, Sharar and Nawab (2020) indicate that leadership skills development for teachers is significant to enable them to develop their full leadership potential. Advocating similar sentiments Sawalhi and Chaaban (2019) accentuate that the absence of adequate knowledge and skills makes it difficult for teachers to assume leadership beyond their classroom.

#### **4.1.3.2 Lack of motivation and support**

The data revealed that lack of motivation at the case study schools contributes to minimal teacher leadership. To uphold this claim, participant 27 underscores that; *"lack of motivation inspire cause poor teacher leadership at the school"*. In support, participant 30 asserted that; *"some teachers lack motivation when allowed to carry out certain responsibilities without any remuneration attached to it, there are more monetary benefits than professional growth"*. Contrarily, lack of confidence and favouritism was also declared by the participants to contribute to low teacher leadership practice at the school. In support of this assertion, participant 27 asserted that; *"lack of confidence makes one feels like do not deserve to be in a leadership position"*. Moreover, participant 22 designated that; *"the practice of favouritism practice constrains teacher leadership"*. She went on to say; *"school administrators should stop an attitude of favouring some people"*. It became evident that lack of motivation, lack of confidence and favouritism can yield negative consequences for the manifestation of teacher leadership. These findings correspond with the views of Bockelman (2021) which adduces that lack of teachers' motivation can obstruct teacher leadership and impacts organisational learning and structures.

Findings disclosed that lack of support is one of the inhibitors to teacher leadership practices. This was cemented by participant 21 who narrated; *"Some of the causes of poor teacher leadership at our school include disunity among staff members, lack of parental involvement in the school affairs and lack of support from the community. Also, criticisms from colleagues discourage used to be engaged actively in leadership as not all stakeholders may like the way you are doing things"*. He went on to say that; *"some teachers are resistant to changes and they always want things to be done the same ways they have been happening"*. In support of the above view, participant 25 indicated that; *"lack of cooperation/teamwork among the colleagues or impatience from the colleagues makes it difficult for one to successfully have a positive influence on others"*.

With that participant 26 describes that; *"Some of the challenges experienced are like, not everyone wants to buy into your ideas/to follow what is being done, convincing your colleagues and or learners is not always easy and there is always favouritism among people in the school, it is just not easy. Sometimes it is caused when someone's ideas or initiations and all the effort she/he puts on the school-related activities are not recognised and he/she is not motivated in the area tasked to him/her"*. In addition, participant 18 said that; *"little involvement from everyone prohibits teacher leadership. Only a few individuals take part*

*in events*". Sharing a similar sentiment, participant 16 indicated that; *"lack of material support for teacher leadership constrain teachers to assume leadership roles"*. It is evident that if there is no lateral support either from the teachers to the management or from the management to the teachers, the emergence of teacher leadership remains minimal. These findings harmonise the earlier view by Kimbrel (2018) which underscores that one of the barriers to teacher leadership is inadequate support for teacher leaders. It can be argued that teachers who are provided with opportunities to assume leadership by the principal gain values and beliefs of democratic work for the benefit of the school. Drawing from the above findings and citations, it became evident that lack of support can hinder the emergence of teacher leadership in the school.

#### **4.1.4 Sub-theme 1.4 Teacher-related factors**

##### **4.1.4.1 Negative attitudes**

The finding indicated that negative attitudes among some staff members constrain teacher leadership at schools. These findings concur with the views of participant 15 who narrated that; *"the constraining factors to teacher leadership practice at our school is the attitude and personality of some teachers. Some teachers are negative toward the teaching profession, they are not committed and therefore do not put enough effort to help learners to achieve good results. The negative attitude prohibits teachers from supporting the leadership in school"*. He went on to say; *"negative attitudes may cause teachers to develop lazy attitudes, laziness among some teachers also affects teacher leadership because some teachers always want to be pushed to do their work"*. Participant 15 further remarked that; *"some teachers are unwilling to take up leadership activities at school, thus we assign the responsibilities to those who are willing to accept tasks"*. With similar sentiment, participant 14 also mentioned that; *"teachers are too negative, this makes them hardly assume leadership roles at school"*. It was reported that there is a culture of hesitation among the staff members to assume leadership activities at their schools. This was confirmed by participant 4 who said that; *"in most cases, some teachers do not help others"*. In agreement participant 7 avowed that; *"sometimes it is hard to work with some teachers because some teachers do not take others' advice, they do not accept positive criticism"*. Moreover, participant 13 added that; *"sometimes teachers are reluctant to participate in leadership roles because of the negative criticism from their colleagues"*. He further added that; *"once other teachers found that you have initiated or suggested some changes to improve the school standards instead of applauding for the idea, they would rather criticize you till you withdraw"*. The participants believed that the negative attitude of some teachers can discourage teachers to bring up good ideas. This finding corresponds with the findings by Sharar and Nawab (2020) which encapsulate that resistance from fellow teachers is the factor that constrains teacher leadership. Drawing from the above findings, it became evident that some teachers discourage others who had good working team spirit by creating tension and demoralising those that were willing to assume leadership roles, in the end, they tend to be resistant and dormant in leadership responsibilities.

This was confirmed by participant 29 who avowed that; *"one of the constraining factors is teachers' attitudes whereby leadership practice is only referred to some people to handle certain issues and problems. Other colleagues also believe their role is only to teach not directing or guiding other activities like extra-curricular"*. With the above view, findings made it evident that teachers' negative attitudes were a hindrance to teacher leadership in the case study school as participant 30 narrated that; *"negative attitudes among some teachers who only view leadership roles as the responsibilities or that of the principal or heads of the department"*. He went on to say; *"some teachers appear to be not trainable or*

*just not willing to learn new things, they see themselves as not moving anywhere. Moreover, sometimes teachers have low self-confidence while some do not collaborate with their colleagues. At some point, teachers fear committing errors while others are not willing to take the initiative. Teachers lack interest in assuming leadership roles and do not make themselves for leadership roles”.*

In support of the above assertion, participant 24 narrated that; *“negative attitudes from some colleagues especially when changes are happening, obstacle teacher leadership practice”.* She went on to say that; *“many of my fellow teachers do not assume leadership responsibilities at this school, they are afraid of making mistakes”.* It is evident from the findings that there is a deficiency of confidence among teachers and most of the time they decline to take up the challenges of leading initiatives. Participant 16 asserted that; *“some of the constraining factors are bad attitudes toward teachers, learners and the whole education system in general. Teachers are reluctant to regard themselves as leaders and always look for excuses to avoid taking up leadership roles”.* In support, participant 17 avowed that; *“some teachers’ attitudes make it difficult to lead the team, some fellow teachers are very difficult to work with”.*

Moreover, some teachers view themselves as classroom practitioners and are therefore hesitant to take up leadership tasks. Besides, participant 18 expounded that; *“lack of discipline amongst teachers can be a hindrance to teacher leadership practice”.* Participants indicated that as much as teachers fail to regard themselves as leaders and reject to adjust their mindset of being classroom practitioners, teacher leadership practices in schools are less likely to emerge and teachers themselves would be considered obstacles to teacher leadership as observed in the case study school. These findings substantiate the view of Kimbrel (2018) underscores one of the barriers to teacher leadership is teachers’ attitudes.

#### **4.1.4.2 Ignorance**

This was confirmed by participant 13 who indicated that; *“there is a lack of teacher leadership practice at our school because some teachers often think that it is not their responsibility to take leading roles because they are ordinal simple teachers and their responsibility is just teaching. Oftentimes, teachers may find learners outside or not properly dressed, they will not tell these learners to go in their classes or to dress properly with the notion that it is not their responsibility rather it is the job of the principal or the HODs”.*

Another participant (35) indicated that; *“most of us teachers think leadership is only for the management, thus when they are given a leadership role to perform they don’t take it seriously”.* Sharing a similar sentiment participant 45 narrated that; *“there is a lot of ignorance in our teachers when it comes to leadership, they are ever giving excuses when they are given tasks to perform”.* The researcher also observed some kind of ignorance among teachers especially when they are given tasks to lead the morning assembly, a teacher does not attend or come late to the assembly. Drawing from the data, it is clear that ignorance is one of the inhibitors to teacher leadership practice at the school.

#### **4.1.4.3 Lack of self-esteem and self-confidence.**

Participants identified a lack of self-esteem as an inhibitor to teacher leadership practice. This was confirmed by participant 29 who designated that; *“the most cases novice teachers lack the confidence to take up leadership in committees”.* In support, participant 31 affirmed that; *“there is a lack of confidence among the teachers which hinders full participation in the leadership of the school”.* Sharing similar sentiments, participant 42 designated that; *“some of the teachers at our school lack self-confidence, thus prevent them from fully engaging themselves in the school leadership”.* Drawing from the data, it became



clear that teachers at the case study school lack self-esteem and confidence, thus hindering them to take a lead in leadership roles.

#### 4.1.4. Sub-theme 1.5 other factors

##### 4.1.4.1 Time limitation

Time is identified as a major constraining factor in teacher leadership by many participants. The participants indicated in the interview that for a teacher to engage in leadership roles, there should be enough time. They further argue that there was no extra time provided to practice leadership roles mostly outside the classroom. The above claim was confirmed by participant 2 who indicated that; *“one of the main constraining factors to teacher leadership is inadequate time, for collaboration and leading in leadership activities”*. She went on to say; *“it is difficult to develop others, leading changes every day, to do that you are forced to keep up with the latest leadership strategies, it is also difficult to handle different perspectives as you will be working with a different individual. Managing a team also requires time and dedication, it is difficult to manage the team”*.

About the above views, one of the experienced teachers (5), emphasised that; *“insufficient time and as well as a lack of motivation for engaging in leadership activities due to personal reasons prohibit teacher leadership practice”*. Moreover, participant 13 elaborated that; *“teacher use their entire time on teaching, marking, disciplining learners, assessing learners, planning their lessons and setting tasks and projects”*. She further went on to say; *“this resulted in teachers with no more time to interact with other teachers”*. Furthermore, the finding further revealed that some teachers do not have enough time to take up leadership roles, and some teachers had timetables full to their capacity with no free period, despite that, they have to supervise the study, have to mark the learners’ books, plan their lessons and set assessment activities. These findings concur with earlier findings by Sawalhi and Chaaban (2019) and encapsulate the factors that constrain teacher leadership as a deficiency of time.

The findings disclosed that time was one constraining factor in the case study school and participants indicated that they did not have adequate time to assume extra leadership tasks. This was confirmed by participant 25 who affirmed that; *“time management brings difficulties as one has to balance school work with administrative tasks delegated to them”*. In support, participant 23 designated that; *“lack of time makes it difficulties for teachers to balance the wide range of learners’ needs, the classrooms are too overcrowded and all learners are unique in having the background, needs and learning styles”*. In addition to this, the observation findings signposted that time was one of the obstacles to teacher leadership practice in the case study school. In her support of the lack of time to engage in extra leadership duties, participant 22 stated that; *“lack of time to perform leadership roles is the constrain, so when there is not enough time to collaborate, learning and leading as well as not being serious engaging in leadership activities”*. She further argued that; *“teachers’ teaching load take up their entire time, so adding another extra duty would suffocate the teachers”*. In support of this assertion, participant 28 affirmed that; *“inadequate time for collaboration, learning and leading makes it difficult to be actively involved”*. She further narrated that; *“teachers’ workload is a lot and there is no time to perform other duties”*. It is evident from the findings that time was the obstacle to teacher leadership in the case study schools. Participants indicated that lack of time for teachers to undertake other tasks beyond their classroom and administration seems to be the main constraint to teacher leadership practices.

Participant 45 said that; *“teachers have less time for other activities or to accommodate other positions besides teaching”*. In addition, another teacher (38) indicated that; *“teachers have a lot of duties to*

*accomplish daily. Even when one wants to lead in a certain issue time is divided equally among different important duties in the school".* With similar sentiment, participant 37 said that; *"inadequate time for collaboration, learning and leading, as well as lack of incentive for engaging in leadership activities, have been shown empirically to impede the development of teacher leaders"*. In support, participant 33 narrated that; *"we have a lot to do at school, planning, teaching, administration, disciplining learners, supervising studies, attending a meeting, we just a lot to do, where will we get time to perform leadership roles?"* She asked.

The data from observation and the participants' responses revealed that teachers perform lots of work at school, thus they have little time left to engage in other activities. These findings correspond with the views of Tapala et al. (2020) which maintain that inadequate time for teachers hampers teacher leadership in schools.

## 5. Conclusion

The data revealed the factors that inhibit teacher leadership at the schools were lack of support and collaboration, traditional leadership structure, lack of incentives and support, lack of motivation and support, negative attitudes, ignorance, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence and time limitation. Lack of support and collaboration among teachers was identified as a factor that delayed the practice and emergence of teacher leadership at the case study schools.

The findings further alluded that teachers who are always isolated and less connected from other staff members are unlikely to accept other colleagues as leaders. This limits learning and nurturing skills for distributed leadership in managing school change. It has been foregrounded that the pressure of time, challenges of creating a relationship with colleagues, and resistance to change may also preclude teacher leadership due to lack of motivation.

## 6. Recommendations

The study suggests that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MOEAC) should actively involve teachers in discussions and policy-making processes, as they possess valuable expertise regarding contemporary challenges, obstacles, and realities within their schools. It is essential for the MOEAC to acknowledge and support teacher leadership as a viable model for school transformation. Integrating teacher leadership into school development plans can contribute significantly to positive changes in schools. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of the MOEAC recognizing and embracing the teacher leadership model to foster leadership development among educators. The high level of readiness among teachers for assuming leadership roles should be acknowledged, along with the presence of a healthy school culture conducive to teacher leadership. In summary, the study's key recommendations for the MOEAC include creating opportunities for teacher involvement in policy development, embracing and investing in teacher leadership, integrating teacher leadership into school development plans, and recognizing the readiness of teachers for leadership roles while fostering a supportive school culture.

## Area of further research

This study only investigated the factors that hinder the application of teacher leadership at three selected senior secondary schools in the Ohangwena region, the study recommends further research to examine the state of emotions in teacher leadership.

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