

# Exploring the Application of Teacher Leadership Practices in Namibia

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## Abstract

The significance for teacher leadership has received great attention, however its application received minimal attention, hence this study explored the application of teacher leadership practices at secondary schools in Namibia. Using a qualitative research approach, the study interviewed forty-five (45) participants who were chosen purposively selected from three (3) secondary schools in Namibia. Key findings revealed that teachers practice leadership roles across six spheres of Kentucky's teacher leadership model. In Sphere One: teachers lead in the classroom, in Sphere Two: teachers lead through modelling and coaching. Further, in Sphere Three: teachers lead groups and teams; in Sphere Four: teachers lead to increase teachers' voice and influence, in Sphere Five: teachers leading to professionalise teaching and in Sphere Six: teachers lead to connect the school to the entire community or world. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) provides leadership opportunities for teachers through contemporary tailor-made leadership development programmes to enable teachers to inform the education system productively. In addition, incentives and recognition should be maximised to acknowledge and motivate both formal and informal teacher leadership practices for improved quality of educational leadership.

**Keywords:** Teacher leadership, distributed leadership, teacher, students, performance

## 1. Introduction

Empirical evidence has strongly established the correlation between teacher leadership and students' achievement (Shen et al., 2020). However, an absence of teacher leadership practice has been observed in schools worldwide (Harris & Jones, 2019; Van der Vyver et al., 2021). Vast comprehensive studies conducted in South Africa on teacher leadership practices disclose that teachers leadership is restricted in most schools, citing, the practice of a bureaucratic approach that is linked to the hierarchal and autocratic approach of the past apartheid regime as a cause (Grant, 2017; Van der Vyver et al., 2021). Furthermore, studies by Hamatwi (2015) and Ndakolo (2018) indicate that teacher leadership is also minimal in Namibia due to autocratic and hierarchical approaches in schools.

Despite various policies being introduced in Namibia after independence, there seems to be a lack of adjustment to the current leadership practices to transform the education system. Leadership in schools in Namibia is still based on a top-down bureaucratic approach (Ndakolo, 2018). Regrettably, informal teacher leaders are not fully recognised in Namibian schools as they are only confined to the classroom setting (Hamatwi, 2015). Teacher leadership development allows full involvement of teaching staff in the decision-making process and some extent eliminates the bureaucratic top-down leadership approach. Besides, teacher leadership appears to be a minimally studied concept in the Namibia setting (Hamatwi,

2015; Ndakolo, 2018). Thus, more were unknown regarding the application and development of teacher leadership in Namibia. Therefore, this comprehensive research explored teacher leadership and its application thereof. The purpose of the study was to explore the application of teacher leadership in three selected secondary schools in the Ohangwena region. This study sought to answer the following question: What were the ways teachers participate in leadership activities at the selected senior secondary schools? Integral to this, the paper also discussed the methodology and findings and discussions. Finally, the paper made conclusions and recommendations from the study.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Theoretical framework**

This study adopted distributed leadership theory. Distributed leadership is defined as an approach where organizational members are given opportunities to participate in the school's decision-making at various levels (Liu et al., 2021). This theory was appropriate for this study to understand how leadership roles are distributed to teachers in schools.

### **2.2 Teacher leadership practice**

Literature has established that teacher leadership can be executed through a variety of formal and informal roles in an organisation (Campbell et al., 2015). They further pointed out seven key dimensions of teacher leadership practice, namely; “coordination and management, school or cluster curriculum work, professional development of colleagues, participation in school change, parent and community involvement, contribution to the profession, and pre-service teacher education” (p. 266). Besides, Pang and Mlao (2017) indicated that teacher leadership practices can emanate in three ways; (1) support professional learning through accomplishing roles such as phase head, subject head, head of departments, and committee chairperson. This involves teachers performing administrative work to enable the effectiveness of the school operations and functions. (2) Teachers lead in curriculum development outside the classroom such as inducting and mentoring new teachers, coaching, and leading in peer planning. (3) Teachers facilitate collaboration by leading professional development programs and acting as role models to cultivate a culture of collaboration that can lead to school reform and improvement. Bond (2015) also underscores the roles of teacher leaders as; they act as professional developers; operate as mentors to other teachers; act as servant leaders to special students; promote curriculum reform and act as capacity school reformers. Teacher leadership practices are performed in numerous ways such as formal and informal roles. Formal teacher leadership roles include making school decisions for disciplinary policy, teacher evaluation, data analysis, and parental communication while informal teacher leaders roles include a decision on instructions content, collaborating with teachers, modelling effective instruction, providing resources, and advocating for teachers' behalf (Cheung et al, 2021).

Moreover, Fairman and Mackenzie (2015) indicated that teacher leadership practices can be summed up into three leadership functions, (1) leading through professional development such as inducting new teachers, coordinating activities, training others, coaching and mentoring others, and curriculum developer, (2) leading through informal tasks such as facilitating and coordinating school activities toward attaining the academic targets and objectives, and (3) leading through collaborative work such as coordinate committees, lead school academic committees and engage the business community and outside organisations. Furthermore, Shah and Zhang (2020) also outline teacher roles as; they act as department chairs, mentors, coaches, curriculum reformers, instructional leaders, and subject coordinators, enhancing

teaching and learning in the classroom, acting as peer coaching, leading new teams, setting up actions group and assist in the development of school curricula and coordinate school performance analysis and set school targets. They further posit that building and maintaining a professional culture, sense of social cohesion and professional trust among teachers, participating in major decision-making in the school, providing curriculum orientation and training to others, acting as curriculum coordinators, subject specialists, mentors, and teacher trainers and induct and mentor new teachers and influence changes and reforms.

Besides, Friesen and Brown (2020) postulate four teacher leaders’ roles namely, leading teachers’ learning, mobilising resources, facilitating understanding of school authority, and expanding professional work. In her study, done in South Africa, Grant (2017) affirms that teacher leadership practice occurs in four zones such as; (1) in the classroom, (2) outside the classroom working with teachers and learners in curricular and extracurricular, (3) outside the classroom in the whole school development activities and (4) lead between neighbouring schools in the community. It can be deduced that teacher leaders perform different leadership roles and responsibilities for school improvement.

### 2.3 Teacher Leadership Model

To guide the collection of data and their analysis, this study employs Kentucky Teacher Leadership Framework (2015) as an analytical framework. The framework includes six dimensions. The first sphere, leading from the Classroom, is about developing the capacities of students and themselves. The second sphere is leading through Modeling and Coaching. Its dimensions encompass mentoring new teachers, coaching to strengthen classroom practice, or sharing expertise in implementing new instructional models. The third sphere, Leading Groups and Teams is about contributing to positive school change to improve student learning. The fourth sphere is leading to Increase Teacher Voice and Influence. Its dimensions comprise participating in a school or district leadership team that supports and monitors program implementation; recommending changes in policy and practice; or helping to create career pathways for teachers as leaders who remain in the classroom. The fifth sphere, leading to professionalise Teaching includes reforming educational systems to create greater opportunities for teachers to learn and lead beyond the local level. The sixth sphere is leading to Connect to the Larger Community or World which refers to expanding the world of the classroom beyond the school.



Figure 1: Kentucky’s teacher leadership framework

This framework comprises all the pertinent scopes of teacher leadership and offers a broad view of exploring teacher leadership in schools. This framework is appropriate to be applied to understand how this teacher leadership develops in Namibia

### 3. Research Methodology

The study used qualitative research to collect data from a sample of 45 participants in three secondary schools in the Ohangwena region. The research participants were selected using a purposive sampling method. Data were collected using individual face to face interview, observation method and document analysis. The study used thematic analysis method to analyse the data. The data generated were analysed as follows, first, the data were transcribed. Second, the data were read again and again followed by the third step of coding the data looking for some similar ideas of the responses with specific reference to the analytical framework then categories and sub-categories were developed and from there, broader themes were developed from those categories. The analytical framework employed for this study guided the process of data analysis as the emerging codes, categories and themes were constantly related to the six spheres and the dimensions listed in the framework.

### 4. Findings and discussions

In relation to the study purpose and the theoretical framework, this section presents and discusses findings on teachers’ views of their practices as teacher leaders in their respective schools. The analysis of data revealed that, in one or another way, teachers were involved or perceived their role in six spheres of teacher leadership underscored in the theoretical framework.

Table 1 shows how the results of this study are divided into one major theme and six sub-themes.

<b>Theme 1:</b> Application of teacher leadership practices in terms of spheres.	<b>Sub-theme 1.1:</b> Leading from the classroom
	<b>Sub-theme 1.2:</b> Leading through modelling and coaching.
	<b>Sub-theme 1.3:</b> Leading Groups and Teams.
	<b>Sub-theme 1.4:</b> Leading to an increase in teachers’ voice and influence
	<b>Sub-theme 1.5:</b> Leading to professionalise teaching
	<b>Sub-theme 1.6:</b> Leading to connect to the larger community or world.

#### 4.1 The application of teacher leadership at the secondary schools

The findings indicate that teachers assume leadership roles in six (6) spheres of Kentucky's (2015) teacher leadership framework as discussed below.

##### 4.1.1 Leading from the classroom

The participants indicated that each teacher engaged in the decision-making process in his or her classroom. In support of this claim, Participant T4C further said: *"The authority is within the class teacher to decide which learners to assign tasks and responsibilities of being a class captain, cleaning the*

*classroom, submitting or collecting the books from the office.* The participants revealed that they are actively involved in leadership activities in the classroom. The above narratives were affirmed by the data from the observation and document analysis notes that established that teachers take the lead from the classrooms by engaging in educational decisions that reflect best practices. Participants established that teachers utilise more collaborative and learner-centred approaches by applying their creativity during teaching. The findings further revealed that teachers lead from the classroom when participating in daily instructional programmes to respond to students' needs. Participant T5B stated: *"Teachers lead from the classroom through giving activities to the learners, design teaching and learning materials to use during the lesson presentation"*. The responses from the participants demonstrate that teachers daily structure their classroom instructions to accommodate all learners and meet learners' educational needs.

The findings further established that teachers model positive learning and leadership behaviours for students. The fundamental responsibility of teachers in the classroom is to maintain quality discipline among pupils, and a favourable learning environment that empowers every pupil to attain their potential. The above assertion was affirmed by T8A who emphasised: *"Teachers had a major task in maintaining discipline in the classroom and ensuring inclusive favourable education environment"*. The participants indicated that for conducive classroom instruction to take place, teachers have to maintain discipline and control. Drawing on the findings, teachers model positive learners' conduct by applying various discipline mechanisms to maximise learning and academic performance. The data collected from observation and interviews show that teachers model positive behaviours for students through coaching and mentoring.

The findings also divulged that teachers reflect their teaching practices by evaluating learners' performances. In addition, data collected through document analysis showed that teachers evaluate their teaching presentation afterwards to ascertain the level of their success and weakness and advocated certain approaches for improvement. From the participants' views, teacher leaders assist as mentors and instructors of other teachers, share learning resources with other teachers, and also mentor others. The findings established that the core determinant of improvement is reflection. Thus, teachers have the prerogative to perform continuous reflections to improve both their teaching practice and performance.

The participants divulged that teachers take a lead in the classroom and beyond to increase their understanding and upgrade their qualifications. The findings illustrated that the teachers do not only consider the significance of gaining the latest knowledge but also engage in different activities to acquire new understandings. Such understanding and engaging teachers beyond their classroom are opposing the prevailing practices of teachers in Namibia who desire to operate within their classrooms. As the participant proposes, obtaining reading resources from the internet designates that the teachers utilise information technology and e-resources to enhance their knowledge and skills, for example, behaviours a classroom teacher may not exhibit. Participant T2B testified to improve his understanding by learning from different educational materials to upgrade his qualification to the master's level. She said: *"I read various resource materials other than subject textbooks to improve my knowledge of the content to be presented to the learners"*. The findings established that teacher leadership enables teachers to expand their knowledge, skills, and understanding through participating in different courses. This denotes that engaging teachers in school leadership makes them acquire relevant skills to upgrade their teaching pedagogies for better achievement.

#### 4.1.2 Leading through modelling and coaching

According to the participants, teachers lead as mentors to new teachers. Participant H1A established that: *"New teachers are allocated to experienced teachers to be guided on academic and non-academic aspects"*. Moreover, the majority of the teachers acknowledge the importance of mentoring programmes in their schools citing that it helps teachers to enhance their classroom practices and enrich their understanding of all aspects of the education system. The citations above harmonise the earlier findings of Lallier and Brown (2021) who advocate that the idea of mentoring is important for learners' good performance. As narrated by the positional leader (principal) and supported by the teachers, the mentoring programme helps new teachers to learn new teaching techniques. By allocating novice teachers to experienced teachers for mentoring purposes, it enables experienced teachers to practice leadership by assisting others with academic and non-academic issues. Drawing on the above data, it became evident that the established induction programme guide and assist teachers to improve their classroom practices. The findings further revealed that the teachers act as a coach to guide learners on academic and social life issues. The findings also uncovered that teachers lead by example to influence learners to become better self-disciplined. Inferring on participants' points of view, it is established that teachers exercise leadership roles by coaching learners in academic and non-academic activities for better achievements. Participant T11C stated: *"Teachers take leadership roles in the classroom by guiding and coaching learners on how to tackle their school work"*. As narrated by the participants, the researcher underscored that if adequate coaching is absent, improvement hardly emerged. Thus, teacher leadership avails opportunities for teachers to coach others and learners to enhance organisational performance and increase their leadership skills.

Participants also indicated that teachers perform peer planning, and teaching, and create teaching materials and activities together. The findings divulged that teachers share expertise to increase learning and implement new approaches. Participants indicate that sharing knowledge and experience helps in implementing new approaches. One of the experienced teachers (T12A) affirmed the above assertion: *"We assist each other by sharing subject knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, and teaching resources"*. From the participants' responses, the researcher established that teachers who share best practices lead to quality teaching and learning. Participants indicated that teachers assume leadership roles by sharing their expertise, and knowledge, introducing new ideas and initiatives, and assisting other teachers to perform their duties. Participants indicated that the path to a new instructional model is knowledge and skills. Thus, sharing of expertise opens the doors for improvement. As the participants narrated, the researcher established that sharing expertise among teachers enables teacher leaders to take a lead in bringing new initiatives that are aimed at improving classroom practice.

#### 4.1.3 Leading Groups and Teams

The findings established that teachers play a vital part to lead many school activities including maintaining school buildings and furniture. With the above view, Participant T5B narrated that: *"I monitor the teaching and learning as a subject head, through class visits and checking of learners' written work"*. Findings from the observation further revealed that teachers perform different duties apart from classroom instructions. The extra duties the teacher performs may not necessarily involve leading the groups. However, in the process of assuming those leadership roles, the teachers may interact with other staff members or coordinate meetings and maintenance projects that are being taken. Leading co-curricular

activities were also examples cited by the participants during the interview. The participants indicated that when the teachers are involved in the school leadership, the goals would be easier achieved. Teachers need to be engaged to lead school initiatives to achieve school transformation and development.

The findings revealed that teachers collaborate with parents and the community to enhance teaching and learning. Drawing on the participants' narratives, teachers involve the parents and community to assist in the school activities. The participants provided evidence to strengthen their views as follows. Participant PC averred that: *"The parents are incorporated in the school's programmes, for instance, parents direct parents meetings and also volunteer to spearhead cleaning campaigns at the school"*. As narrated by the participants, the researcher deduced that the parent community and stakeholders can assist to take up some school projects and activities. Thus, teacher leadership avails opportunities for teacher leaders to take the lead in engaging the parent community to help the school to achieve its objectives.

The findings from document analysis and interviews divulged that the teachers lead through school committees. Findings from document analysis revealed that there are many committees established such as school board, school management, disciplinary committee, learner support, financial committee, public relations, and maintenance committees amongst others. The findings further revealed that each teacher is a member of more than one committee. This was supported by the participant PA who underscored as follows: *"Teachers perform leadership roles through heading committees or participating in committee activities"*. From the participants' responses, the researcher affirmed that the principal allows teaching staff to participate in the school decision-making process by sharing ideas during committee meetings. The findings established that teachers lead others in groups and teams to improve their leadership skills and classroom instructions. As participants, the researcher inferred that teachers need to encourage others to participate in workgroups. This would help them to gain more knowledge and improve classroom instruction and for school transformation and development.

Both observation and interview data revealed that teachers work collaboratively by sharing responsibilities to improve instructional activities and enhanced teamwork. Participants designate that teachers are given equal opportunity in the school to assume leadership roles through the delegation of tasks and responsibilities. The participants indicated that teachers work collaboratively to improve instructional activities. During the interview, participants (teachers) revealed that the principal encourages teachers to collaborate and take part in decision-making processes. This was done as a way to motivate teachers to assume leadership roles. Like Campbell et al. (2015), the researcher discovered that teachers develop their leadership skills if they are accorded opportunities to take charge of school activities through collaboration with other staff members and a form of significant leadership development. When positional leaders encourage teachers to participate in school leadership, they actively collaborate to accomplish the given task. The findings established that collaboration is a fundamental aspect of teacher leadership. Participants indicated that teachers need to collaborate with the SMT or vice versa for success to be realized. As evident from the participating schools, the school with a culture of collaboration makes the SMT and teachers operate in a conducive environment.

#### **4.1.4 Leading to an increase in teachers' voice and influence**

Participants established that teachers take the lead in supporting and monitoring the implementation of schools' programmes. Teachers are members of different committees that enable them to lead and participate in various groups. The findings revealed that teachers lead various leadership teams within and beyond their schools. This helps teachers make a positive contribution to the programme's development

and implementation. This was cemented by Participant T8B who narrated that: *"Teachers are encouraged to make decisions and be involved to lead different committees at the school level, cluster level, and circuit level"*. The findings established that teachers lead by organising workshops and meetings in the school and beyond. This helps them to enhance their knowledge and leadership skills. Participants believe that facilitating school or circuit activities enable teachers to acquire the needed skills and elevate their leadership and organising skills. Participants established that teachers propose and coordinate changes and practice in the policy. This enables teachers to assume leadership roles and gain better leadership skills and allows them to make contributions to policy changes within and beyond the school. The findings established that teacher leadership avails opportunities for teachers to engage in various committees to recommend changes in policy and programmes. Participants indicated that if teachers who reside at the bottom of the hierarchy are consulted, they can make a positive policy change. Teachers need to be actively involved in policy changes to enable them to effect changes and involving them in policy discussions enhances their leadership skills.

Findings revealed that teachers who are confined in the classroom are offered the opportunity to take leadership roles beyond their classroom by chairing school committees. This was observed in the evidence provided by the participants. Participant PB said: *"I assist teachers through CPD, allocation of responsibilities to teachers to act as subject heads or chairperson of various committees"*.

Participants indicated that it is significant for the school management to design paths for teachers who are confined in the classroom to improve their knowledge. Findings revealed that school management creates the career pathway for teachers as leaders by assigning leadership roles. Participants believed that teachers who are confined to the classroom can never improve if they do not get involved in other roles beyond their classroom. This means that teachers need to go out to be exposed to new experiences. Participant T6B indicated that: *"SMT helps teachers to build their capacity in increasing learners' learning and achievement and to engage teachers in the school decision-making process to enable the school to achieve its goal"*. The findings established that teacher leaders take the lead in various programmes to create pathways for teachers who are confined to the classroom to gain leadership skills and other opportunities. Participants indicated that if the SMT engages all the teachers, this allows all teachers to fully assume leadership roles. Drawing on the data, it is clear that the SMT assist teachers to create career pathway by engaging them in various programmes and leadership groups.

#### **4.1.5 Leading to professionalise teaching**

Participants indicated that involving teachers in the national task force can help professionalise the teaching. This means that teachers are engaged to provide their views and contribute to the system changes. Findings established that teachers participate in a task force to foster changes within and beyond their school. This was cemented by participant PA who narrated: *"I was a member of the task that was responsible for the education transforming summit. We engage the community members in the region to get their inputs"*. This is an indication that teachers are also involved in the national consultation team to transform the education system. The participants established that when teachers are provided with opportunities to effect changes, it increases their moral values and leadership skills. The researcher underscores that involving teachers at the regional or national team level enables them to identify challenges that they face daily. Drawing on the above data, it became evident that some teachers serve in



the regional and national task teams to bring about changes in the educational system and also gain leadership skills.

The findings divulged that teachers participate in a regional teacher leadership network by being members of committees at the regional level. Participants established that teachers are involved in the teacher leadership network, both at the regional and national levels. This means that teachers are allowed to contribute to the network of leaders for system growth and development. The findings established that teachers participate in regional and national leadership teams to improve the education system. In support of this claim, Participant (T7B) claimed: *"I serve as a secretary in the trade union at the regional level, due to this I regard myself as a leader because I represent my fellow teachers in this committee.* Participants indicated that teachers were leaders as they participate in the decision-making process at trade union meetings. The findings established that when teachers taking part in a national-level leadership network can upgrade their leadership potential and enable them to increase their classroom practices. Participants underscored that teachers participate in the leadership network to upgrade their leadership knowledge and skills". Reflecting on the above data, it can be deduced that when teachers participate in activities beyond their schools, it enables them to share their experience with other staff members at skills, which can enhance the school's growth and performance.

The participants indicated that teachers get an opportunity to advise institutions of higher learning on the best approach to prepare student teachers through recommendation letters of student teachers who conduct teaching practice at their schools. Teachers contribute to the preparation of student teachers and the development of university programmes. The findings revealed that teachers make a significant contribution to the development of the curriculum of the institution of high learning by providing their inputs and contributions during career fairs to foster system changes. This was supported by Participant T6B asserted: *"When student-teacher come for school-based studies at our school, they are allocated to subject teachers as their mentors. At the end of their school-based study, a mentor teacher writes an evaluation of the students with recommendations on how teachers can be prepared"*. The finding indicates that teachers attend activities at institutions of higher learning where they get an opportunity to make their contributions. This was confirmed by Participant T10C who pointed out: *"I attended a career fair at UNAM last year. At the end of the event, we were given an evaluation form, to indicate our inputs to advise UNAM on how student teachers need to be prepared, this allowed us to state the best strategies as we are at the grassroots and we know the challenges teachers will face upon completing their studies"*.

The findings indicated that through teacher leadership teachers get opportunities to engage involved in contributing to the preparation of student teachers in institutions of higher learning. Participants indicated that giving opportunities to teachers to make their contributions enables the institutions of higher learning to design the curriculum that responds to the market needs. This is because the teachers are at the grassroots and fully understand the learning needs of learners. Participants underlined that the challenges faced in the education system can only be solved when the causes of the challenges are addressed at the university level. This would enable student teachers from the university to be ready to confront challenges they may face during their classroom instruction process. Drawing on the above data, it is evident that teacher leadership avails opportunities for teachers to make their inputs for the best curriculum development at institutions of higher learning and this upgrades their leadership skills.

#### 4.1.6 Leading to connect to the larger community or world

Participants in the interview designated teachers to involve the community in school activities and projects. Positional leaders (Principals, HoDs) and other teachers involve the business community and other stakeholders with financial assistance and also assist the schools to run their daily activities. With the support of the positional leaders, teachers lead school initiatives by engaging the community to accomplish school programmes. Teachers also influence different stakeholders to participate in school activities. This was affirmed by the principal (PA) who mentioned: *"We always mobilise the community through parent meetings to support the school's projects. Currently, the school has a project for the school wall that is near completion. We wrote letters to business people to support the school and we received positive responses toward this project from our business community. Even the school bus that the school bought two years ago, the fund was raised through parents' and business community's assistance"*. The findings established that engaging the business community enables the school to realise its intended goals. Participants believed that the business community should be engaged to help out. This is because the business community assists schools to achieve their financial obligation and implement their projects. The researcher underscores that teacher leadership allows teachers to influence the community and lead school projects. Drawing on the above data, it is evident that teacher leadership paved the way for teachers to engage businesses and other different companies to improve teaching and learning and for school growth and development.

Interview data revealed that some teachers participate in the leadership in co-curricular or extra-curricular programmes beyond the school and discuss social issues that affect learners with the community members. This illustrates that teachers connect their school to the outside world through collaborating in meetings or working groups beyond their school. The finding revealed that teachers connect the school with the broader community by organising events for school growth and development. The above findings were affirmed by participant T9A who responded that: *"I volunteered to participate in the community activities and also accompany learners to the sport or perform the community activities"*.

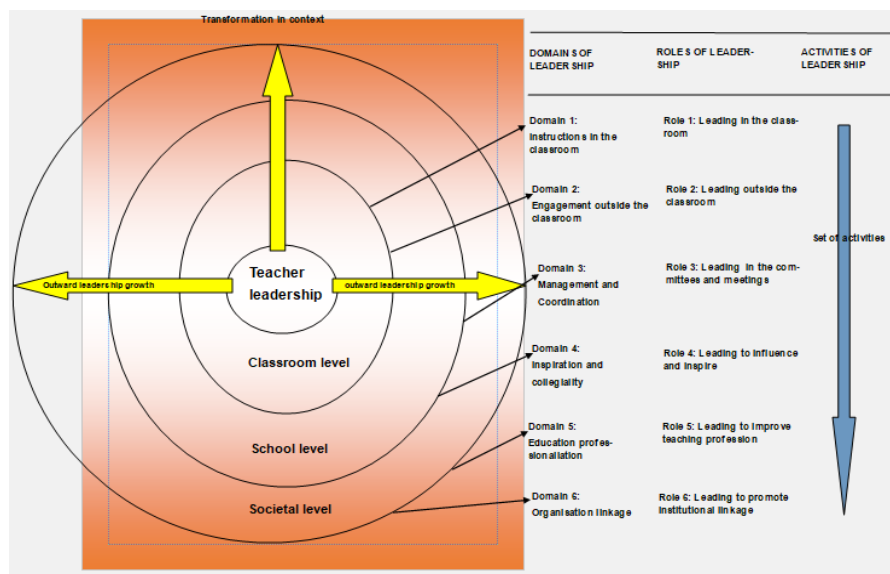
The findings established that teachers take the initiative to connect the school to the outside world. This is done to seek assistance and help the school to reach its goals. Participants indicated that in this way teachers are given opportunities to practice their leadership skills by engaging stakeholders beyond the school. When teachers organise outreach programmes enable the teacher to gain experience and acquire more knowledge on various matters. Drawing on the above data, it can be inferred that teachers use their leadership skills to connect the school to the world for school growth and development.

The interview data revealed that the schools obtain resources from the community to enhance teaching and learning. The schools depend on the community for teaching and learning resources and other materials. The school is nothing without the community. Thus, positional leaders and ordinal teachers engage in community mobilisation for assistance from the community. The findings reveal that teachers influence the parent community and others to bring resources into the classroom from the community to enhance their performance. To strengthen this assertion, the Head of the Department (H1A) asserted that: *"The community is a rich library resource for the school. The community provides the school with various resources that are used during classroom instructions"*. He went on to say; *"teachers collect the teaching and learning resources from the community when they are not available at school"*. The findings established that teacher leaders take opportunities to lobby the community for material support. The participants indicated that the school programmes cannot be fulfilled if there are shortage of resources.

Thus, teacher leaders exercise their leadership skills to mobilise the community to avail financial and material resources to the school. Participants underscore that through teacher leadership, teachers engage and influence the community to assist the school in realising its goal. Drawing on the above data, it became apparent that teacher leaders exercise their leadership skills to influence the community members to avail resources in the classroom for quality teaching and learning.

#### 4.2 The emerged transformative teacher leadership model

With the recognition that leadership is not confined to only formal positions, the focus on the teacher as a leader is gaining momentum. It had been discovered that when teachers act as leaders, there is a huge possibility to build a strong model for school transformation and growth. The research study carried out on teacher leadership has discovered different leadership roles and practices which teachers perform such as leading in the classroom, inducting and mentoring other teachers, establishing professional development networks, and collaboration. The transformative teacher leadership model has been developed from the participants' practices.



**Figure 2: Transformative teacher leadership model**

Model manifests the propositions that teacher leadership occurs at three levels, each level has two domains with relative leadership roles and responsibilities, leadership growth from inner domains to outward domains and as the leadership grows outwards the depth of leadership increases with leadership level. The model also comprises domains, roles, and activities of teacher leadership. In Domain One: Teacher leadership occurs in the classroom as teachers perform leadership activities such as facilitate and control classroom instructions, and classroom management, maintains learners' discipline and carries out assessment and evaluation of learners' performance. In this domain, a teacher's key focus is role one which is leading in the classroom, with the purpose to enhance classroom instructions. In Domain Two: Teachers lead beyond the classroom as they collaborate with others, teachers spearhead school projects and programmes and share knowledge and expertise with other teachers and learners. In this domain, teachers perform role two which is leading outside the classroom. In Domain Three: Teachers get involved in the management and coordination of the school's activities. In this domain, teachers take charge of committees

and meetings. Within this domain, teachers participate in the decision-making process and get involved in curricular and extra-curricular tasks. In this domain, teachers perform role three which is leading in committees and meetings. In Domain Four: Teachers lead influence and inspire. Teachers initiate and advocate for policy changes and maximise career programmes for teacher leaders who remain in the classroom among others. Teachers perform role four which is leading to influence and inspire. In Domain Five: Teachers improve the teaching profession. Within this domain, teachers lead to foster education system transformation and initiate and participate in teacher leadership networks at schools. Teachers perform role five which is leading to improving the teaching profession. In Domain Six: Teachers can expand their leadership beyond the school and lead in the community. Within this domain, teachers participate in tasks at the cluster circuit, regional and national levels. In the last domain, the teacher performs role six which is leading to promoting institutional linkage.

## 5. Conclusion

This study fills a substantial gap in the existing literature linked to teacher leadership in Namibia. Even though teacher leadership has been greatly advocated in literature in developed country, our prior understanding was minimal. The study demonstrated that in schools where this study was carried out, teacher leadership practices were not as clear as they were observed in developed countries. At the study schools, the leadership roles and responsibilities of teachers were mostly confined to the classroom settings. However, some teachers have extended their roles outside the classrooms and begun assuming some vital roles of teacher leadership such as leading in the classroom, leading outside the classroom, leading committees and meetings, leading influence and inspiring, leading to improve the teaching profession and leading to promote institutional linkages.

Moreover, the researcher acknowledges that only if teachers become leaders, the possibility of transforming schools can never be realised. This study divulged that the notion of teacher leadership at the setting where the study was conducted is still in the early stage. The participants practised partly and minimal leadership roles. One possible reason for this is that the idea of teacher leadership is reasonably new to the schools that participated in the study. Even though the notion of teacher leadership is acknowledged by scholars and experts, teachers need to get to understand the notion of teacher leadership in its reality. It could be the minimal conceptualisation of teacher leadership that causes teachers to be hesitant to perform significant and vigorous leadership roles in their schools.

Through undertaking this study, the researcher realised that School Management Team (SMT) needs to recognise both formal and informal teacher leaders for school transformation. Therefore, regardless of being chosen as teacher leaders by other teachers or by the school principal, the teachers who participated in this study did not view themselves as leaders. Moreover, teacher leadership is considered the prerequisite for teachers in a formal leadership position. The researcher discovered that in reality, these teachers exhibit the value of teacher leadership by being involved in the decision-making process and leading collaborative teams, despite being classroom teachers with no formal leadership positions.

## 6. Recommendations

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) should introduce and promote resource materials for teacher leadership in schools, acknowledge both formal and informal teacher leadership, develop and promote leadership development programmes for teacher leadership practices, review contemporary policies to allow for democratic leadership practices and supports teacher

leadership practices in schools. The development of teacher leadership practices in schools in Namibia requires support from the MoEAC, school principals and teachers themselves through developing appropriate policies, resource materials and practice. The study recommends that the MoEAC provides leadership opportunities for teachers through contemporary tailor-made leadership development programmes to enable teachers to inform the education system productively. In addition, incentives and recognition should be maximised to acknowledge and motivate both formal and informal teacher leadership practices for improved quality of educational leadership. Lastly, schools should apply the transformative teacher leadership model developed in this study to improve teacher leadership practices in schools.

### Area of further research

This study only investigated the application of teacher leadership at three selected senior secondary schools in the Ohangwena region, the study recommends further research to explore the relationships between the principal's leadership approach and the occurrence of teacher leadership in the schools.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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