DEVELOPING VOICE AND LEADERSHIP AMONGST A GROUP OF CLASS CAPTAINS: AN INTERVENTIONIST STUDY IN A RURAL COMBINED SCHOOL, NAMIBIA

A full thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

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JACOBINA TAUKONDJELE NEHUNGA

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Declaration

I, Jacobina Taukondjele Nehunga,(**Student No:15N8823**) hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, written in my own words, and that where I have drawn on the words or ideas of others; these have been acknowledged according to Rhodes University 2015 Referencing Guide. I also would like to declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for any Degree or Examination in any other University.
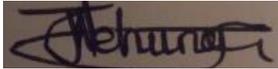
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Abstract

The notion that leadership can be reduced to that of a formal position such as principalship has become problematic in school leadership research and practice, globally and also in Namibia. It appears that when leadership is concentrated only at the level of a principal within schools, teachers and learners within the same school experience a lack of opportunities to contribute to leadership practices, thus losing a sense of ownership. Supporting a distributed leadership perspective and embracing transformative leadership, this study investigated how learner voice and learner leadership (see for example Mitra and Gross, 2009) can be developed within a group of class captains in a combined school in rural Namibia. Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) underpinned the study which is located within a critical paradigm. Findings of the study were captured into two phases whereby phase one generated contextual profiling findings through the adoption of qualitative methods such as questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and two other participatory methods of mapping and transect walks. Phase two findings were captured through expansive learning actions in Change Laboratory Workshops. Observation notes, video recording and photographs and informal discussions were used as data sources during this phase. Both inductive and abductive analysis were employed.

The findings revealed that a few enabling conditions to class captainship practice existed, but generally there was limited participation of class captains in school leadership. Class captains were seen as merely class representatives and their leadership was confined to a classroom level in the school. They performed more managerial tasks than leadership. It was also revealed that class captainship is not a documented practice in Namibia and it lacks support. Against this backdrop, during phase two of the study, seven contradictions were identified and two contradictions were prioritised for resolution during the Change Laboratory Workshops. Some of the resolutions included the development of a school based guiding document for class captains; an establishment of a class captainship club; and the promotion of a yearly election campaign of class captains. The study recommends more interventionist studies to be conducted on class captainship in order to see the practice documented in terms of policy in Namibia, perhaps in the near future.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my Late Mother **Kashiningwa Mansueta ya Lustikus ya Mule well known as "Ongolo ya kamundilo"**. She was my biological mother who did not just give me the gift of life but made sure that I was raised to be successful in all endeavours of life. Mother, I wish you could still be alive to see how I have grown and succeeded academically. I remember in grade two that you would awaken me to teach me basic numeracy and the alphabet even though you were not well educated. You gave me an educational foundation that kept me going up to the level of this Master's degree. Thank you so much mum, may your soul continue to rest in eternal peace, I will always cherish your unconditional love!

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List of Acronyms

CHAT   - Cultural Historical Activity Theory

CL/CLWs - Change Laboratory/Change Laboratory Workshops

CPD   - Continuing Professional Development

ELM   - Educational Leadership and Management

HOD   - Head of Department

LRC   - Learner Representative Council

MEAC   - Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

MOE   - Ministry of Education

PAAI   - Plan of Action for Academic Improvement

SB   - School Board

SDP   - School Development Plan

SMT   - School Management Team

SSE   - School Self-Evaluation

ZPD   **-** Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY: SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Introduction

While acknowledging the Namibian educational policies that have been put in place, particularly with reference to the call of democratic school leadership practices, I was awakened by Smyth (2006a) who calls on courageous forms of leadership that are inclusive of learners. As strongly argued by Smyth (2006a), learners represent a 'standpoint or positional lens' from which many school challenges can be understood. This means that if learners are not granted an active role in school leadership, particularly in decision-making, a key component in school transformation is missing (Smyth, 2006b).

This is an interventionist study conducted with the aim of exploring opportunities to develop learner voice and learner leadership amongst a group of class captains in Tuwilika combined school (pseudonym), Omusati region, Namibia. It is imperative to introduce the reader to the concepts of learner voice and learner leadership, though detailed descriptions will form part of the next chapter. These two concepts do not have distinct definitions in educational leadership literature and they are defined differently by different scholars. For example, Mitra (2006) defines learner voice as "the many ways in which learners can actively participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers" (p. 315). Similarly, Fielding (2004) describes learner voice as several activities, dialogue, discussions, actions and reflections that concern not only learners but their school and communities. The concept of learner leadership is defined by Rudduck and Flutter (2000) as interactions and relationships that exist between learners, peer leaders and other members of the school to bring about transformation. This study's impetus is to explore ways of affording class captains an active role in school leadership, particularly in decision-making processes.

This chapter introduces the reader to the background and contextual factors that motivated this study. It continues to introduce the reader to the rationale and significance of the study. Furthermore, I present my research objectives and questions. I then present the methodology and research design employed to generate and analyse data before I conclude the chapter with an outline of this thesis.

1.2 The Orientation of the Study

This section discusses the background and contextual factors within the African and Namibian education context in general, that has motivated my study on class captainship leadership practices.

Namibia, just like many of the African countries, has emerged from a history of colonialism where their education system was segregated along racial lines and prejudice (Pomuti & Weber, 2012). It was until the pre-independence era that the system of apartheid continued to dominate the country and served to discriminate further on the basis of race, class, and gender. Shilongo (2004) describes this system as:

> A system segregated along racial and ethnic lines with different educational systems and administrations developed based on race. Whites, blacks, and coloureds all had separate schools that were administered by racially-based Education Departments. (p. 1)

Similarly, Pomuti and Weber (2012) posit that apartheid education was characterised "by racial inequality, undemocratic participation, low levels of bureaucratic accountability and transparency, top-down policy implementation with power largely centralised to protect white privilege" (p. 2). In its simplest form, educating the elite in a positivistic system that was based on apartheid and racism was the order of the day. School leadership was primarily a means of strict control practiced by some individuals over others (Grant, 2017). This was even more visible as some learners' representatives for instance at the school or classroom level became "watchdogs" for the school management, a situation that is still prevalent in schools (Angula & Lewis, 1997). This practice benefited a handful of people and deprived the majority of better living standards. It also affected leadership practices in most educational institutions which resulted in a number of daunting challenges, not only in the running of schools but also in their effective leadership and management.

However, after Namibia gained independence in 1990, positive reforms were made a matter of priority to address some of these inequalities created during the apartheid era. Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution made freedom of speech and access to education mandatory and it became a law in the constitution (Namibian Constitution, 1990). In addition, the National policy document "Towards Education for All" also came into being. This policy document clearly outlines the goals of Namibian education and the key focus areas identified are access, equity, equality and democracy (Namibia, Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993). Moreover, it also advocates for "broad participation in decision-making and clear accountability for all stakeholders in education" (Namibia. MEC, 2003, p. 4). The study conducted by Shekupakela-Nelulu (2008) reveals that, since 1990, democratic participation has been encouraged in private and public institutions. In educational institutions, particularly schools, democratic participation entails participation in leadership by every member of the school (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008). This view on leadership emphasises what Harris (2003) puts forward; that leadership is a collective activity whereby anybody at any level can participate. For this study, prominence is given to the participation of class captains in leadership at school.

Even though democratic participation is deemed to be one of the foundation blocks of Namibian education and advocated by various policies, in many educational institutions, particularly in the school where I am currently employed as an educator, democratic participation of learners is still limited. I, like other Namibian scholars (Amadhila, 2018; Kalimbo, 2018; Vaino, 2018), observed that democratic participation in schools is hindered by managerial leadership practices which promote autocratic control and non- participatory decision-making processes in schools (Grant, 2017). Through this style of leadership, learners are deprived of the freedom to actively engage in the affairs of their school. As put by Shields (2006), "a managerial approach to education leadership has hindered the creation of spaces in which all children may bring the totality of their lived experience to the educational experiences of schooling" (p. 63). This situation fuels an unequal and unjust society for learners in schools (Grant, 2017).

In an attempt to involve learners in school leadership, The Namibian Ministry of Education (MoE) in section 60 (1) in the Education Act 16 of 2001 (Namibia. MEC, 2001), makes provision for the establishment of the Learner Representative Council (LRC), previously called 'Prefects' before

independence (DaSilva, 2018; Haipa, 2018; Kalimbo, 2018). During the apartheid era, 'prefects' were not democratically elected and they were considered to be the servants of school management rather than being representatives of learners, a situation which is still prevalent within the LRC's leadership structure in many Namibian schools (Uushona, 2012). Numerous recent studies conducted on the LRC in Namibia, revealed that the LRC's role is merely managerial in the schools; there is a lack of opportunities to develop the 'voice' of learners and a lack of support from their school community regarding their leadership development (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008; Uushona, 2012; Amadhila, 2018; Kapuire, 2018; Vaino, 2018).

Unlike the LRC, a formally recognised learner leadership structure in terms of the Education Act 16 of 2001 (Uushona, 2012), class captainship is another common, although unlegislated, learner leadership practice that has been practiced even before independence in most Namibian schools (Kalimbo, 2018). Class captainship entails learners that are elected to represent other learners at a classroom level (Kalimbo, 2018). In reviewing learner leadership literature in South Africa and Namibia, I found out that more recent studies were conducted on LRC leadership (Mncube, 2001; Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008; Uushona, 2012; Strydom, 2016; Amadhila, 2018; DaSilva, 2018) and only one study on class captainship leadership was conducted in Namibia (Kalimbo, 2018). Findings in Kalimbo's (2018) study revealed that limited opportunities were afforded to class captains to develop their leadership as learner leaders. Stemming from my position as a class teacher, I observed that class captains as learner leaders are well-positioned to bring about "authentic transformation" (Shields, 2006) in the school. I personally view class captains as entry-level learner leaders in the school, who immerse themselves in the lived experiences of the majority of learners in the classrooms and they are the true witnesses of school life.

The next section discusses what gave rise for me to conduct this study on class captainship and why I thought the focus on the development of their voice and leadership was worth exploring within the Namibian education context.

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

A study on voice and leadership development of class captains was motivated by several factors ranging from scholarly, professional and personal experiences.

Firstly, my interest to conduct this interventionist study stems from my scholarly stance. During my BEd Honours degree (ELM) with Rhodes University, I realised that leadership can be developed in learners when afforded with opportunities (Nehunga, 2016). The impetus of the study was to explore leadership opportunities available for class captains to develop their voice and leadership. This is because I have observed a gap in the literature concerning this practice. The only recent study conducted by Kalimbo (2018) in a Namibian secondary school found that class captains have limited leadership opportunities. This study is unique because it intends to explore opportunities to develop class captain's voice and leadership, as well as the relationship that might exist between class captains and other leaders in the school. This study hopefully broadens the scope of knowledge in an area which is under-researched in Namibia. Moreover, the study intends to fill the gap in the literature by contributing to the existing body of knowledge within the field of educational leadership and management.

Secondly, I am motivated to conduct this study because of my current position as a class teacher of grade 9 children at my school. Being a class teacher, I work directly with the class captains on a daily basis. I observe that class captains are faced with numerous challenges when it comes to executing their roles. Most of the roles performed by class captains are merely managerial roles, thus I was interested to explore possible leadership opportunities available for class captains in the school. Moreover, I am aware that there is a lack of documents or policies to guide class captainship practices in the Namibian education context. Therefore, I was curious to explore ways on how to promote and improve the practice in this regard within our Namibian education context.

Thirdly, my own experiences as a class captain during my schooling persuaded me to conduct this study. In most of the grades I attended, I was a class captain. Becoming a class captain was influenced by my performance. Whether I wanted to or not, I was always selected to become a class captain. Being a class captain, I was left to work on my own without any guidance. This situation becomes a salient aspect to me as I wanted to explore ways to improve this practice.

Finally, I am hoping that the generative potential of this study could inform policy-makers, educational planners, parents, teachers, and learners on another important learner leadership

practice common in Namibian schools. The findings for this study might be used in principal, teacher, parent and learner workshops countrywide to improve school leadership practices.

1.4 Goals and Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was *to investigate how learner voice and learner leadership can be developed amongst class captains in the school*. To alert the reader, vice-class captains were also included; however, they are discussed under one umbrella which is class captains.

To address this, the goals were:

1) To explore the participation of class captains in the current school leadership structure;
2) To establish the relationship between class captains and other leadership structures in the school such as LRCs;
3) To enhance and transform the leadership practice for class captains through Change Laboratory Workshops.

The overarching research question for this study was: *How can voice and leadership be developed within a group of class captains in a Namibian combined school?* The study was designed as a two-phase study, whereby phase one aimed at exploring the current participation of class captains in leadership at the school, while phase two aimed at intervening in class captains' leadership practices which could possibly develop their voice and leadership.

Phase one was guided by the following research questions:

1) *How are the concepts of learner voice and learner leadership understood at the school?*
2) *How does class captainship relate to other leadership structures at the school?*
3) *What are the conditions enabling and hindering class captains' participation in leadership at the school?*

Phase two: An intervention phase was driven by the following research questions:

4) *How can the expansive learning cycle help to surface the inner contradictions within the class captain's activity for transformation?*

5) *How did the change laboratory method contribute to the development of voice and leadership amongst class captains?*

1.5 Conceptual Framework

This study is informed by transformative leadership theories (see, for example, Shields, 2006). Theories of this nature provided me with a conceptual lens to question and understand the current leadership practices of class captains. The questioning and analysis offered by these leadership theories may expose conditions enabling or hindering class captains' leadership practices (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) within the case study school context. Theoretically, the study is underpinned by Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which resonates and aligns well with transformative leadership since both offers critical lenses to bring about change. CHAT, in particular, offers conceptual tools such as expansive learning; double stimulations, ascending from the abstract to the concrete; contradictions, as well as transformative agency. Moreover, CHAT offers an analytical model – of relevance for this study is the second generation of this theory. All of the above-mentioned conceptual tools enabled me and the participants to build an understanding of developing voice and leadership amongst class captains. This was made possible through uncovering contradictions to bring about transformation.

1.6 Methodology

This was an interventionist study undertaken within a critical orientation. The critical stance aligns well with the interventionist nature of this study. This is because both critical and interventionist research aims to bring about change (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The study is designed as a qualitative case study. A qualitative design offers a deeper analysis of the social context in which class captainship was practiced, taking account of how the practice has been performed over time, as well as other factors surrounding it. The case study method helped me to obtain an in-depth understanding of class captainship leadership practice within the case study school leadership context (Yin, 2009). During phase one, data was generated using qualitative methods such as document analysis, questionnaires, interviews, mapping, and transect walks, while phase

two data was generated through a formative change laboratory method (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Data was analysed both inductively and abductively during both phases.

Acknowledging the need for ethics, I first obtained ethical clearance from Rhodes University in order to conduct the proposed study. I was also granted permission by the Director of the Omusati region, the gatekeeper for the case study school. That was not enough; I also obtained permission from the case study school through the principal's office before I conducted my study. Overall, ethical protocols were observed and I was reflexive throughout my research process. I now provide the synopsis of the entire study in the next section.

1.7 The Thesis Structure

Six chapters constitute this study. **Chapter One** discussed the background and contextual factors underpinning the study. The rationale and purpose of the study were explained in this chapter to inform the reader of the driving forces that led to a need to conduct this study. I continued to provide a brief explanation of the research orientation and methodology, in order for the reader to be aware of how data was collected and analysed. Furthermore, the research goals and questions were discussed to alert the reader on what the study aimed to achieve, as well as the questions that the study intended to answer. Finally, the synopsis of the rest of the chapters in the study was presented.

Chapter Two discusses the literature that informed my study. I review literature both locally and internationally. In this chapter, I provide literature on the field of educational leadership and management where this study is located. I discuss how the field has evolved historically, taking into account the main arguments of the field. The concepts of leadership and management are interrogated. The concept of leadership, which is the main focus of my study, is privileged throughout the chapter. I begin by discussing the traditional leadership theories and then contemporary views, taking into account distributed and transformative leadership theories which are the theoretical tenets informing my study. Learner voice and learner leadership emanating from a distributed leadership perspective are also elaborated upon.

Furthermore, the chapter discusses CHAT as a theoretical framework that underpinned my study. In this section, I discuss the origins of CHAT and its methodology, the relevance of CHAT to my study, as well as the critiques of CHAT, before I move on to the research design and methodology chapter.

Chapter Three discusses the research design and methodology. I present the research orientation, design, and methods employed to conduct the study. I move on to describe the research site, participants and sampling procedures. I continue to describe the data generation methods and tools employed in this study for phases one and two. Data analysis is also elaborated upon. I finally address the issue of researcher positionality, trustworthiness, limitations, and ethics.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings of phase one of the study which is the contextual profiling data. I discuss findings inductively analysed under themes. Data for my first three research questions are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Five is borne out of Chapter Four which discusses the contextual profiling findings. In this chapter, the presentation and discussion of findings are centered on surfacing contradictions revealed in Chapter Four as challenges that possibly hamper leadership development.

Chapter Six is the concluding chapter that summarises the key findings presented in Chapter Four and Five. In this chapter, I highlight the implications of the theoretical orientation employed for the study, as well as the possible contributions of this study. Furthermore, I highlight the limitations encountered in the process of conducting this study. I then elaborate on some recommendations for practice and finally, the chapter concludes with my personal reflections.

In the next chapter, I present a review of the literature relevant to the study, as well as the theoretical orientation for my study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CENTRAL THEORETICAL IDEAS AND CONCEPTS GUIDING THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on Educational Leadership and Management (ELM), the field in which my study is located. The review of literature is crucial for the reader to be aware of recent and current thinking in the field, as well as to understand why it is worth conducting a study on learner voice and learner leadership development. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the literature on the history of ELM as a field, taking into account how the field has evolved, as well as where we currently stand in terms of the knowledge base of the field.

The key field concepts of management and leadership will be discussed. It is important to discuss how these concepts are related since they are often used interchangeably (Bush, 2008) in everyday speech and in running different educational institutions. It is important to note at the outset, that the concept of leadership will be given more attention than management since the study focuses more on the voice and leadership development of class captains. Hence, the discussion of leadership will be privileged throughout the chapter.

Secondly, different leadership theories will be discussed in order to give the reader an overview of how leadership has been viewed by different scholars over time. These different leadership theories can provide distinctive but undimensional perspectives on school leadership (Bush, 2008). Hence, it is necessary to discuss them in this section for the reader to be aware of how the concept of leadership has been constructed over time, taking into account both traditional and contemporary views of leadership.

Thirdly, and central to this study, is literature on the key concept of learner leadership and learner voice, as well as leadership development, given that learner leadership is the focus of this study. By discussing these concepts, the reader will understand how they fit into this interventionist study.

Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion on Culturally Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), the theory underpinning my study. CHAT as a practice-based theory provides conceptual and analytical tools toward understanding the voice and leadership development amongst class captains.

My attention now turns to a brief discussion on the historical overview of the ELM field.

2.2 Genealogy of Educational Leadership and Management

Much of the international literature indicates that ELM as a field of study started in the United States (Oplatka, 2009). Its historical overview commences in the mid-1960s and by then, it was known as Educational Administration (EA), developed in other countries such as Britain – British Educational Management Association (BEMA), The Common Wealth Council for Educational Administration (CCEA), the European Forum on Educational Administration (EFFEA) and The Australian Council for Educational Administration (ACEA) (Bush, 1999; Fitz, 1999; Oplatka, 2009). The field of ELM is concerned with "the management and operation of educational institutions" (Oplatka, 2009, p. 9). It is informed by concepts drawn from other disciplines such as business and commerce (Bush, 1999; Oplatka, 2009). Bush (2008) writes that "the field is pluralist, with many competing perspectives and an inevitable lack of agreement on the exact nature of the discipline" (p. 391). Likewise, Harris (2003) asserts that "the field of educational leadership and management is in vogue" (p. 10) and that there are many competing perspectives on the exact nature of the field (Harris, 2003). Oplatka (2009) writes that from the 1960s and 1970s "the field was burdened by undue emphasis over issues of management and technical activities divorced from values and ethics" (p. 9). Scholars of that time were concerned more about school outcomes, improvement, and effectiveness (Oplatka, 2009). In a school setting, "the principal's role was constructed in terms of leader of welfare reform who is autonomous in using his expertise to devise the best means of implementing government programs and legislation" (Oplatka, 2009, p. 11).

Holding on to the above sentiments presents a challenge for 21st-century scholars within the ELM field to revitalise the knowledge base of the field drawing from international literature from countries such as Britain, Australia, and the United States contexts (Bush, 1999). One starting point is to make sure that those concepts borrowed from other settings such as industry or

commerce are tested, before being applied in educational settings. The main argument here is that the ELM field should not remain grounded in disciplines where different concepts were borrowed, but rather should aim for the establishment of well-validated theoretical principles or empirical research organised around the problems of practice within education (Oplatka, 2009; Hallinger, 2017). These ideas speak directly to the intentions of this interventionist study which aimed to explore and establish knowledge on class captainship practices through Cultural Historical Activity Theory, the theory underpinning the study. Another suggested move for scholars is to unpack the issue of management in education which exaggerates educational purpose and values (Bush, 1999; Fitz, 1999). This means a clear distinction between management and leadership activities in education should be well established.

In the next section, I discuss the key concepts of the ELM field.

2.3 Toward an understanding of the concepts of management and leadership in education

Literature reveals that management and leadership are contested concepts (Bush, 1999; Fitz, 1999; Harris, 2003; Coleman, 2005). This means that there are competing perspectives on management and leadership functions, as the concepts are used differently in different contexts (Coleman, 2005). Taking it from Coleman's view, it is really a challenge in most educational institutions, particularly in Namibia, to differentiate between management and leadership practices. It is also noted that in the context of schooling, the two concepts are often used interchangeably (Fitz, 1999; Coleman, 2005; Bush, 2008), something that may obscure the purpose and aims of these two concepts for instance in a school. I therefore argue that a clear understanding of the purpose and aims of these two concepts, particularly in a school, may possibly improve practices. The next section discusses the concept of management and thereafter leadership.

2.3.1 The concept of education management

Generally, the concept of management is often equated to leadership (Bush, 2008). It is therefore imperative to give a clear account of this concept in order for the reader to better understand how

this concept fits in this study. Moreover, it also helps one understand and be able to differentiate between a manager and leader or both in a school.

In most educational institutions, particularly in schools, what is seen as management is also seen as leadership (Fitz, 1999; Coleman, 2005); however, there is a distinction between these concepts. In a school setting, "management involves the installation of disciplinary technologies and techniques for the surveillance of personnel, self-regulating values related to efficiency and effectiveness and strategies to measure individual and institutional outputs" (Fitz, 1999, p. 31). The practice of management may promote different forms of controlling relationships that may hinder collegiality because it is more concerned with efficiency and effectiveness. The emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness in a school fulfils "the feel-good factor" for those in management positions; however certain individuals will have little or no involvement in school affairs (Fitz, 1999).

In the Namibian education context, the concept of management is enforced by national education policies such as the Educational Training Sector for Continuing Professional Development (CPD); Plan of Action for Academic Improvement (PAAI); and the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) to mention but a few (Namibia, 2007). Although some of the above-mentioned policies help principals to ensure the smooth running of their schools, they sometimes undermine local democracy (following Fitz, 1999) because they concentrate more on power and authority and mostly on controlling relationships. The fundamental question that one may ask is about who holds legitimate authority for instance in a school and on what basis (Woods, 2016). In order to provide an answer to this question, we should first understand that a school is a system where all parts are functionally intimately linked and connected with each other (*ibid.).* As an educator in one of the Namibian schools, I have observed that management practices are dominant. This notion is exacerbated by the fact that school principals are often referred to as school managers. Being considered school managers, also broadens the controlling relationships which deprive other stakeholders, particularly learners (and, in my study, class captains) of the chance for their voice to be heard. Grant (2008) suggests "the approach should not be so much about the controlling relationships through team processes but more about how the agent is connected with others in their own and others' learning" (p. 86).

Equally considerable, is that if we concentrate on controlling relationships which is more on individuals who hold authority or power as it is advocated for by the concept of management, then we do not expect changes to flow into other parts of the school unless all parts work in harmony. With management practice only, we are assuming that changes brought by a certain individual or individuals, for instance in one domain of the school, will have effects elsewhere, for example in classroom practice, which is never the case (Fitz, 1999). I therefore argue that an awareness of what management can achieve and what it cannot achieve can put us in a better position to improve practices in our schools.

Despite the fact that management concerns itself more with the smooth running of educational institutions, I argue that it should not be disregarded. It needs to be considered in order to achieve the proper functioning of schools (Bush, 2011). When schools are not competently managed, the core purpose of schooling of which is teaching and learning are likely to suffer. Hence a clear understanding of management functions may put school managers in a better position to devise ways on how to improve practices in their schools. In order to improve practices, the issue of values and vision of the school should come into focuses, which are constructs of the concept of leadership, discussed next.

2.3.2 The concept of education leadership

As highlighted earlier, the concept of leadership is often used interchangeably with management in everyday speech and practice (Coleman, 2005; Christie, 2010), something that may exaggerate the aims and purpose of this concept in education. From an educational perspective, leadership has a focus on educational values and purposes, unlike management which pays attention to procedures, implementation and technical issues (Bush, 2008). Having educational value and purpose as constructs of leadership suggests that leadership should not over-generalise situations but rather engage seriously with local conditions, as well as the day-to-day experiences of those in school contexts (*ibid*.).

Literature suggests that leadership can take place outside of formal organisations as well as inside of them and can be exercised at every level of an organisation and in most activities (Smyth, 1989;

Christie, 2010; Hallinger, 2017). For example in a school, one expects that leadership is extended and exercised by all school personnel regardless of their positions (Hallinger, 2017). This is to say leadership should not be the preserve of any position, for instance a principal in the school. Moreover, it should operate at the centre, and be stretched and dispersed across people and functions (Foster, 1989; Christie, 2010). This study is premised on the argument that leadership can be stretched in all directions across the school, with the principal and school management team (SMT) seeking to explore ways of developing the leadership of teachers, parents and learners (and particularly in this study, the class captains). The agenda as put by Smyth (2006a), is not about what is decided by those in power or who has status concerning learners' lives, but rather that the focus is more on learners' involvement and active participation in their own and others' lives in achieving the vision of their school.

Even though leadership is considered to be one way of achieving the vision for the school, there is still a challenge concerning the appropriate leadership theory. Harris (2003), drawing from Lakomski's work during 1998 and 1999, claims that "there is no natural entity or essence that can be labelled leadership" (p. 10). As mentioned earlier, this is because leadership means different things to different people in different contexts. Having multiple perspectives on leadership requires one to carefully scrutinise the kind of leadership theories that match one's context. Literature suggests that all leadership theories, either traditional or contemporary, provide distinctive perspectives on school leadership (Bush, 2008). Thus, in this study, I would like to present how leadership theories have been characterised as traditional and thereafter present some contemporary perspectives which inform my study.

2.4 Traditional Constructs of Leadership

This section of the chapter introduces major traditional leadership theories which, historically, have guided leadership practices in educational institutions. The discussion of these traditional leadership theories makes it easier for one to trace back how leadership as an abstract concept has evolved over time. It also provides the 'bigger picture' of leadership theories leading to the theories my study draws on.

As revealed by literature, "leadership as a concept is full of competing theories and counterclaims that make any attempt at generating a single, overarching theory impossible" (Harris, 2003, p. 15). In the next section, traditional leadership theories such as the great man/trait theory, behavioural theory, contextual, situational and contingency theories, and transformational theory are discussed.

2.4.1 The great man and trait theories

The great man theory identifies leadership with the quality or qualities of the individual (Coleman, 2005). Its implication is that leaders are not made but born (*ibid*.). This is something that may create a depressing thought, that there is no need for leadership training or development. It is even common in our everyday speech when we refer to some individuals as born leaders and we tend to elect certain individuals, assuming that they are the only ones possessing leadership qualities to serve in leadership positions, something that deprives others of the same opportunity. I, like Grant and Nekondo (2016), strongly support that leadership can be developed among individuals and is not limited to the naïve yet commonplace idea of saying leaders are born. Similarly, trait theory holds the assumption that there is a range of traits that are common to leaders (Coleman, 2005, drawing from Stogdill, 1969). However, as Coleman explains, "it has proven impossible to empirically identify a particular set of traits that are clearly present in a range of leaders and transferable across cultures" (Coleman, 2005, p. 9). I acknowledge that class captains as individuals may have traits that could influence their collaborative efforts in this study.

To me, this means that class captains will also bring in their personal traits that I think will help in the process of developing their leadership as they work collaboratively with others. Despite the above account, I am strongly holding on to the idea that leadership can be developed, thus my study focused on exploring opportunities to develop voice and leadership amongst a group of class captains. The aim was to include even class captains who were not identified on the merit of their personality traits. I assumed that I might encounter some class captains who were selected because they possess certain leadership qualities; hence my intention was to nurture those qualities and spread the leadership opportunity to other class captains in the school who were not identified as such.

2.4.2 Behavioural theory

This theory is based on a leader to follower hierarchy and depends on what leaders do (Lumby, 2013). It actually focuses on certain behaviours and approaches that are consistently associated with successful leadership. This leadership theory does not provide an explicit framework of leadership practice in the school because it is premised on an individual and again, considering the different school contexts in which leadership is being practiced, makes this theory insufficient to bring about authentic change. It focuses on an individual and the fact that it does not take cognisance of the context in which it is being practiced (Coleman, 2005), falls short of adequate evidence to inform my study.

2.4.3 Contextual, situational and contingency theories

Contingency theories match a leadership style to the right situations which involve matching the team of people and goals (Coleman, 2005). It criticises the trait and great man theory concerning leadership in that they fail to consider situational factors, and it considers both individuals and situational factors together in determining leaders' effectiveness (Coleman, 2005). Harris (2003) drawing from Blackmore (1989) and Shakeshaft's (1996) contingency theories started from the basis of power and control and not from the ability to act with others and to enable others to act. Although this seems to be an advanced leadership style compared to the trait or great man theory, it is still premised on a single leader and does not account for multiple leaders who are the focus of my study.

2.4.4 Transformational theory

As one of the traditional leadership theories, transformational theory recognises leadership as an interactive process, to transform both the leader and followers (Coleman & Earley, 2005). This may result in positive outcomes in an organisation such as a school. This leadership theory involves both leaders and followers interacting and working together to achieve common interests and mutually desired ends (Coleman & Earley, 2005). Its vision or goal is created by the leader and that goal or vision should have meaning for both the leader and followers. However, although a transformational leadership style is considerate of the interaction process, it falls short of

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"considering the need for transferring and extending the leadership roles, duties and responsibilities to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the educational process and improvement of schools" (Cooper, 2012, p. 44). I, like Spillane (2006), align with the kind of leadership that is carried out through interactions amongst various individuals in the school, whereby there is an equal chance to create the goal or vision of a school. This is a tenet of this study.

Key ideas that are drawn from the traditional leadership theories discussed above, are the notion of leadership of a sole person, thus the unit of analysis is the individual. However, equating leadership with one individual overlooks important aspects of what leadership entails in my study, which sees multiple leaders in the school and the unit of analysis being the collaborative efforts between and amongst individuals. Moving from a single unit of analysis to a collective unit of analysis, distributed leadership as one of the contemporary leadership theories, provides some important leverage to the practice of leadership (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004).

2.5 Distributive leadership: A contemporary view of leadership

Having discussed the traditional constructs of leadership, I wish to continue with what contemporary leadership views hold for this contested concept. A distributive leadership perspective opposes the idea of a single leader. It sees leadership as the development of others to become agents of change (Mitra & Gross, 2009). As affirmed by Whitehead (2009), "leaders are found at all levels of society and are important figures who initiate, integrate values, facilitate change, as well as broker, distribute and share power" (p. 848). In a distributive leadership practice, teamwork is the most important aspect where individuals need to take on leadership roles through interactions and relationships, rather than simply striving for individual development and change (Spillane, 2006; Harris & Spillane, 2008). The interactions and relationships should go beyond recognising other stakeholders as leaders, including learners, to these stakeholders taking part in decision-making (Flutter, 2006). This is because in the 21st century, as put forward by Day and Harris (2002), "we require a type of leadership which considers a dynamic between individuals with emphasis on shared purpose and the development of others" (p. 960).

In the Namibian education context, particularly in a school, distributive leadership comes in many forms. One of the forms of distributed leadership being practiced and advocated for in this study is a type of learner leadership referred to as 'class captainship'. I recognise class captainship to be a form of learner leadership; thus, in this study I intend to explore opportunities to develop voice and leadership among class captains as learner leaders. The concepts of learner voice and learner leadership, as well as leadership development, are discussed in the next section.

2.5.1 Learner leadership as a form of distributive leadership

As discussed earlier, leadership in schools can spring from anywhere (Foster, 1989). It is not a quality that comes with an office or a person; rather it focuses more on a set of relationships among people. In a school setting, leadership may be shared and transferred amongst the principal, teachers, as well as learners. Putting learners in focus is the noble agenda for educational leaders, more especially in the 21st century (Grant & Nekondo, 2016) and there is a growing body of research on this focus area (Osterman, 2000; Flutter, 2006; Grant & Nekondo, 2016).

It is interesting to note that educational research of our time has increasingly focused on listening to the voices of learners (Osterman, 2000; Flutter, 2006; Grant & Nekondo, 2016). The question was posed "what would happen if we treated the learners as someone whose opinion matters in the introduction and implementation of reform in schools" (Osberg, Pope, & Galloway, 2006, p. 329). This question is addressed by Flutter (2006) who argues that "an alternative way of investigating the effects of the environment in schools is to ask those who learn in them the learners themselves" (p. 184). There is no valid reason to exclude learners in issues affecting them in their school since learners are the majority group who benefit more from schooling. Hence, I argue that learners should be afforded a platform to articulate matters concerning them in their school by hearing their voices. This is discussed next.

2.5.2 Learner voice as a prerequisite for leadership

Learner voice "focuses on the many ways in which learners can actively participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers" (Mitra, 2006, p. 315). It goes further to encompass learners substantially participating in the change process by collaborating

with adults to address the problems in their schools and in the broader policy environment (*ibid.*). Similarly, Fielding (2004) writes that the "new wave" of learner voice "covers a range of activities that encourage reflection, discussion, dialogue and action that primarily concern learners, but also, by implication school staff and the communities they serve" (p. 299). One important aspect of learner voice, according to Gunter and Thomson (2006), is the importance of the balance of learner's rights as individuals and their responsibilities as citizens.

The different views of learners' voice presented above provides an overview of this broad concept, however, in the context of my study, learners' voice implies the many ways in which class captains can actively participate in school decision-making. There is a further emphasis on interactions and building relationships with other learner leaders such as LRC members, class teachers, the SMT and other members of the school (Flutter, 2006). Building relationships includes the learner; hence learner leadership is discussed next.

2.5.3 Defining learner leadership

There is no distinct definition of the concept of learner leadership (Uushona, 2012). However, there are characteristics of learner leadership which Rudduck and Flutter (2000), as well as Clarke (2007) propose as follows:

- It is a relational process;
- In involves the external community;
- It involves interactions and building relationships with other learners, peer leaders and other members of the school;
- It involves many types of leadership;
- It may develop through participation.

Holding onto the above sentiments made by various scholars, I took a position as an interventionist-researcher to explore the leadership development of class captains as learner leaders in the school. I saw class captains as well positioned to exert leadership that is required to bring about positive changes in the case study school, when they are fully involved in school

change efforts. I believed that by interacting with class captains, the following benefits, as suggested by Seymour (2001), may be achieved:

- An improved system for decision-making in the school;
- The development of new skills for class captains and others in the school;
- Improved communication with outside professionals;
- Faster development of improvement projects;
- School and classroom environments designed with a better fit for purpose;
- Positive cultural changes within schools (Flutter (2006) as cited in Seymour, 2001, p 187), All of the above-stated benefits can be realised when there is a collaborative effort among stakeholders in the school.

2.5.4 The significance of learner leadership in the school

There is a widening recognition of the importance of giving learners active roles in shaping the conditions of learning in schools (Flutter, 2006; Osberg et al., 2006). This came as a result of the many challenges faced by schools. Central to school life are learners (Grant & Nekondo, 2016) and there is no doubt that their voice and leadership have a positive impact on school reforms. Learners are experts in the system of schooling, which means that they are able to identify practices that work for them in their school. Seeking their expertise can benefit the school in many ways. As put by Leren (2006), "standing up for an opinion on behalf of the learners in a room with solely teachers and administrators is not an easy job, and the learners will quite often be left out of the real work and the real decision-making" (p. 363). By allowing learners to be part of decision-making processes, it provides a more comfortable setting for the learners to put their opinions forward (Leren, 2006).

In a school setting, there should be a partnership with learners when problems and possible solutions are identified. The partnership reminds the SMT, teachers, and parents that learners possess unique knowledge and perspectives about their school that cannot be fully replicated by those in management positions (Mitra, 2006). More emphasis should be put on relational work at schools than on management positions (Smyth, 2006a). It has also been pointed out, that through

championing learners' voices (Collinson, 2006), schools become more attentive to individual learners' needs. Learners develop positive emotions towards the system of schooling and show high autonomy and self-regulation (Osterman, 2000).

It is however disturbing if the learner's voice is not heard (Mitra & Gross, 2009). When this happens, learners tend to withdraw and develop hostility toward their school (Smyth, 2006a). If a learner feels disengaged from school decision-making and other activities, it creates an unpleasant environment for them (Smyth, 2006b). They lose interest and the sense of belonging to their school (Noddings, 2005), which ultimately leads to diminished motivation, alienation and poor performance (Osterman, 2000). The worst thing that is associated with the exclusion of learners is the increased rate of school dropout. This presents a big challenge, especially in our Namibian society, where we are experiencing a high rate of learner dropout. This ultimately means that a large cohort of learners will not become fully functioning human beings who can participate, contribute and find fulfilment in the various dimensions of democratic public life (Starrat, 2007).

However although an advocate for learner voice and learner leadership in school decision-making, I argue that learners should not determine everything in the school; this means there should be collaboration with the SMT, teachers, and parents when deciding on issues affecting them. For this to happen, learners should be encouraged to speak out about their concerns, either on playgrounds, in corridors, in classrooms or during lessons (Grant & Nekondo, 2016).

Another platform for hearing learners' voice suggested by Grant and Nekondo (2016) is through their involvement in leadership clubs. In clubs, learners can share their different experiences, determine what matters to them and learn to lead. In these clubs, there is "a collective interaction" among learners (following Spillane, 2006, p. 4) which promotes a form of leadership that recognises the voices of learners (Smyth, 2006a) as vital to effective school leadership.

Drawing on my learner leadership research report (2016) as part of my Bachelor in Education (Honours degree) with Rhodes University, the findings revealed that learner leadership clubs are indeed a good platform for learners' voices to be heard and they can bring positive outcomes to learners, both individually and collectively (Nehunga, 2016). Therefore, it resonates well with

what Flutter (2006) asserts, when she argues that adults cannot fully replicate what learners are demanding in schooling without hearing their side of the story.

It is, however, not without challenges when learners are involved in school leadership. The research by Fielding (2001) indicates that it is difficult for learners to find a place within existing school leadership. This means that if the school believes that learners are the recipients of whatever is decided on their behalf by adults, then learner leadership is constrained. Moreover, radical collegiality between teachers and learners is another challenge that impacts on learner leadership in schools (Fielding, 2001). The entry point to learner leadership in schools is when school principals, teachers and other members of the school community are willing to learn, not only from each other but also, and more importantly, from their learners. This allows them to work in harmony, which can ultimately bring positive school changes required by all in the school. Next, I discuss ways to engage learners in school leadership.

2.5.5 Learner voice and learner leadership through engagement

Networks of engagement between learners and adults in a school enable learner voice and learner leadership to be woven into all aspects of the school, thus promoting a leadership model that is increasingly learner-led (Shuttle, 2007). In a school where the power is believed to be central to one person, for instance, a school principal, learner leadership cannot be achieved. I therefore argue that school leaders should shift primarily from sole leader perspectives to seeing the school as a community composed of multiple leaders (Spillane, 2006). This transformative study was grounded in seeing multiple leaders in the school, with learners as an important constituency.

The pyramid on learner voice by Mitra and Gross (2009) suggests that the "common and basic form of learner voice is 'being heard'" (p. 523). This means that the engagement starts when school personnel listen to learners to learn about their experiences in the school. The second level is 'collaboration with adults' which suggests learners working together with either their teachers or the school principal to tackle issues in the school (Mitra & Gross, 2009). The last and top level of engagement is 'building capacity' for leadership (Mitra & Gross, 2009). At this level, learners take

ownership of their leadership and are fully involved in overall school leadership. The pyramid is represented next.
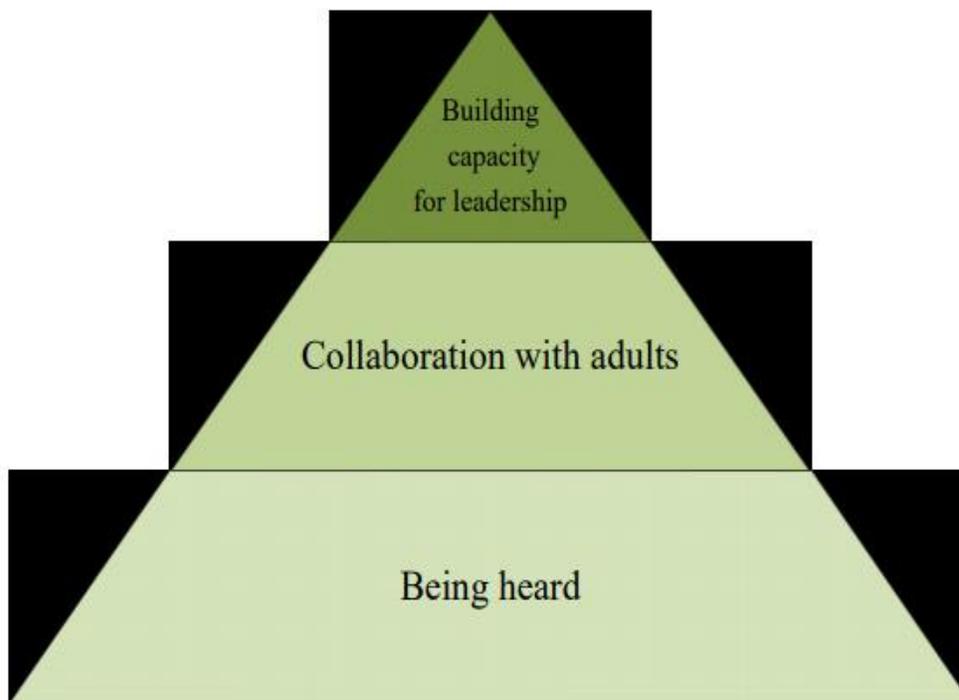
Figure 2.1: Pyramid of learner voice (Mitra & Gross, 2009)

This interventionist study aimed to achieve the top level of the pyramid of learner voice which is 'building capacity for leadership'. These are levels in which chances of leadership are afforded to learners to participate in school decision-making. As Grant (2015) asserts, "at each level, the agency of the learner is felt because they start to question issues within and around certain practices within their school which may include cultural and structural injustice" (p. 100). Similarly, this study may afford a platform from which class captains and vice-class captains may start questioning themselves as learner leaders, as well as the overall school leadership in which they operate.

Further to the Mitra and Gross 'pyramid', a typology of four levels of student involvement is provided by Fielding (2001). I adapted Fielding's typology as an inverted pyramid. The main aim

of adapting it in this way is to provide more advanced thinking on learners' involvement in school leadership. While Fielding started with a wide base and a narrow end, I decided to apply a narrow base and wide end of the pyramid. This kind of presentation allows future researchers to see the bigger picture of learners' involvement in leadership at school. Shifting from a wide base, we are aiming to see the narrow end of the pyramid where learners become co-researchers or researchers themselves. This shift would suggest a learner-led leadership which ultimately leads to improved school practices.
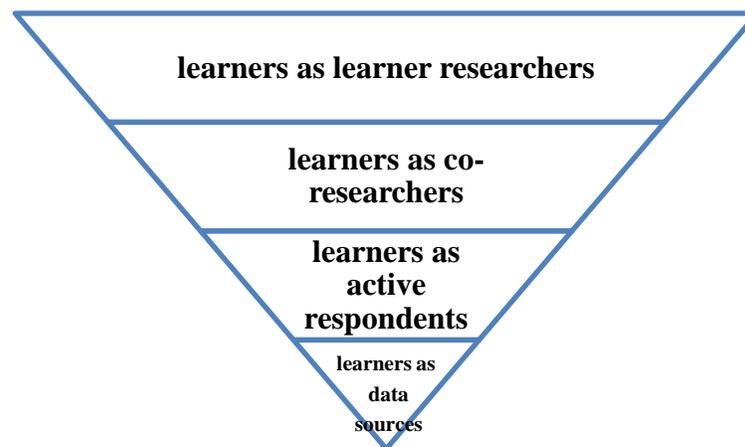
Figure 2.2: Inverted pyramid of learners' involvement (adapted from Fielding, 2001 typology)

In developing the above-inverted pyramid I aligned my argument to Gunter and Thomson (2006), who highlight the need of seeing learners as respondents and voices within the data, to learners as constructors and analysers of research data. In this study, class captains are positioned as co-researchers along with me as a researcher-interventionist, to explore opportunities to develop their voice and leadership. Being co-researchers may enable them to identify enabling and constraining factors surrounding their leadership practice. Of particular relevance will be a focus on the constraining factors, which has the potential to empower them to work collectively to bring about change to their leadership practice. Bringing about change resonates well with the leadership development concept discussed next.

2.5.6 Leadership development as a key concept

There is still limited literature on what the concept of leadership development entails (Amadhila, 2018; Kalimbo, 2018, Vaino, 2018). However, in the context of my study, I define leadership development as the potential that learners (class captains as learner leaders) develop in overcoming challenges within their leadership practice (after Shields, 2006). Linking it to the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development and expansive learning, entails class captains learning their current activity with its historical roots and contradictions and foreseeable activity in which the contradictions may be expansively resolved (Mbelani, 2014). For this study, the ZPD offers an understanding of how class captains as learner leaders currently exercise their leadership and how their current level could be improved through developing their leadership. The process requires support which I will provide as an interventionist-researcher. It is imperative to inform the reader that further elaboration on the theoretical underpinning of the study will be discussed later in the chapter.

Leadership development implies that learners (class captains in this study) identify themselves within a certain way of thinking and acting until they meet an internal or external obstacle that questions and challenges their leadership practice within their school (Smyth, 2006a). This study focused more on placing class captains in the driving seat, making them subjects of their activity and giving them control and responsibility as learner leaders (Engeström, 1987; Flutter, 2006). This makes them learn what matters to them and then act and learn what is not yet there (Sannino, Engeström, & Lemos, 2016). Linking it to the CHAT concept of problem-solving and experimentation, class captains could discover creative life skills such as problem-solving, team working, communication, negotiation and citizenship, all of which are likely to engender self-belief and confidence (The Sorrell Foundation (2001) as cited in Flutter, 2006). This construct of leadership connects well with transformative leadership and links well to the theoretical framing of my study.

2.6 Transformative leadership: A theory framing the study

This section discusses how the transformative leadership model informed my study. As an interventionist researcher, I recognised class captainship practice as a form of distributed learner

leadership in Namibian schools, which confirms that distributive leadership is indeed practiced, the extent to which still needs further interrogation. Although this learner leadership practice can be observed – structurally it is present in most Namibian schools; in practice, the leadership of class captains is restricted (Nehunga, 2019, personal observation). My intention to conduct this study was to enhance class captainship practice, as well as to develop class captains as learner leaders, thus expanding the concept of formation (Engeström, 1987). One may ask how the leadership of class captains can be developed. In order to answer this question, I align myself with and draw on transformative leadership theory and CHAT to examine the process of development. Next, I define transformative leadership and discuss its potential in the study.

2.6.1 Definition and relevance of transformative leadership

Transformative leadership is defined by Foster (1989) as a kind of leadership that is oriented toward social change (p. 52). Similarly, Shields (2009) writes that "transformative leadership is an exercise of power and authority that begins with the question of justice, democracy and the dialectic between individual accountability and social responsibility" (p. 89). This leadership theory goes well beyond the traditional understanding of leadership for school improvement, as well as beyond rational and technical approaches to educational change (Shields, 2009). Transformative leadership theory resonates well with the interventionist nature of this study and as Grant (2017) argues, it could be the answer to Namibian educational leadership woes (Grant, 2017). It has the potential to address challenges, as well as systems of belief transferred from our colonial era (Foster, 1989. For this study, transformative leadership may question justice and democratic participation of those that are involved in school leadership (Shields, 2009) including class captains. Unlike, distributed leadership discussed earlier, it has a particular power to address the continued impact of systemic discriminations (Shields, 2009), thus seeking "social betterment, enhancing equity and thorough reshaping of knowledge and belief structures" (Shields, 2009, p. 55).

Transformative leadership also links well to democratic distributed leadership (Grant, 2017). Likewise, it also attends to how knowledge concerning school leadership is constructed and how it is legitimised to perpetuate norms that "permit some groups to dominate and others to be

marginalised within a given social system such as a school" (Shields, 2009, p. 58). A crucial point to note is that transformative leadership theory offers a platform for class captains and vice-class captains to begin questioning their current leadership practice as learner leaders in their school. The questioning allows them to engage in a conversation around issues concerning their leadership practice and considers alternative ways of re-ordering their activity in the school (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). My main role as a transformative/interventionist researcher in this study is to assist class captains and vice-class captains to "unveil" or "unmask" (Smyth, 1989, p. 183) the self-understanding of them as learner leaders which conceals the way in which they are supposed to exercise their leadership roles. Hence, I strongly support that transformative leadership can have an enabling capacity that may empower class captains and vice-class captains to frame problems, to discuss and work individually and collectively to understand and to change the situation that causes these problems (Fried (1980) as cited in Smyth, 1989, p. 191). Smyth's (1989) writing about an educative form of leadership proposes some guiding questions towards a deeper understanding of issues concerning school leadership. I adapt these questions for class captains and vice-class captains in exploring their current leadership practices.

- Where did the idea of class captainship come from historically?
- How did we come to appropriate them into our school?
- Why do we continue to endorse class captainship now in our work?
- Why do we continue to practice it?
- Whose interest do class captains serve?
- What power relationship is involved?
- How do these ideas influence my relationships with others?
- In light of what we have discovered, how might we work differently? (p. 20)

Paired with my research questions, Smyth's questions provide important leverage for this interventionist study.

2.7 The Theoretical Underpinning of the Study

2.7.1 Introduction

Earlier in the chapter, I discussed transformative leadership as a leadership theory informing this interventionist study. Although transformative leadership starts with questioning justice and democratic participation, it shares elements with CHAT, a theoretical framework underpinning the study.

The overarching aim of this study was to bring about change particularly to the leadership practice of class captains. With this overarching aim, I considered CHAT as a suitable theory to inform my study. Firstly, the CHAT framework provides a practical reflection to ones' previous, current and anticipated practices (Foot, 2014). For this study, CHAT is hoped to provide a nuanced understanding of the leadership practice of class captains, taking account of the past, present, and mapping for the future. Moreover, CHAT allows one to dig deeper into understanding factors such as cultural, political, economic and contextual that may have impinged on the development of class captains' voice and leadership. Secondly, CHAT offers a best constructive way to assess the intervention and change process in institutions and societies when the activity system perspective is used to identify its participants, who are then made aware of their roles and actions within it (Sannino, Daniel & Gutierrez, 2009), hence providing tangible alternatives to the practice. Similarly, as stated, CHAT allows participants to examine, facilitate and document change that might have happened in their practice through the intervention (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013).

Lastly, CHAT has transformation power. Transformation means changing an object internally, making evident its essence and altering it (Sannino et al., 2009). From a theoretical point of view, the transformation may come as a result of practice. In other words, "practice is the epistemological source of knowledge and it is the involvement of participants in practice and activism" that may contribute to improving school leadership practice in general and in particular for class captains (Sannino et al., 2009, p. 29).

I begin this section with a brief overview of the genesis of CHAT in order for the reader to understand how the theory was developed. I then discuss the activity analysis within CHAT to

inform the reader on the theoretical, analytical and methodological aspects of CHAT for this study. I conclude the section with a discussion on some critiques of CHAT. I now turn my attention to a brief overview of the genesis of CHAT.

2.7.2 The genesis of CHAT

The origins of CHAT have been tied to the 1920s Russian scholarship (Engeström, 2016). The need for developing a new and comprehensive approach to human psychology processes prompted various scholars to develop the initial ideas under this theory (Engeström, 2016). Vygotsky, in particular, based his theory on individuals and their social environment and he examines the organism and the environment as a singular unit of analysis. He believes, through mediated actions with artefacts, tools, and social others, individuals can find new meanings in their world (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). This provides good leverage for my study since it is possible that individual class captains, as a collective, will learn in the process and expand their thinking about leadership. However, the study is premised on examining the collective actions of class captains; hence, the collective is the unit of analysis.

Further to Vygotsky's theory, other scholars, for example, Leont'ev, Luria and Galperin introduced analytic categories for examining the interactions between the organism and the environment (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Drawing from Rubinstein's psychological aspect of activity theory, as well as from Vygotsky's mediated actions; other scholars have broadened the theory by introducing human activity as the unit of analysis that is distributed among multiple individuals and objects in the environment (Engeström, 2016). To contextualise this, the study intends to examine the class captains' activity, taking account of individual class captains and the overarching object of their activity, which is their voice and leadership. Through achieving this object, it is hoped that their voice and leadership could be developed which may eventually become the outcome of their activity.

This study examined the activity of class captains to capture what it means to develop voice and leadership of these learner leaders. In capturing the class captains' activity, CHAT offers analytical tools discussed next.

2.7.3 Activity systems analysis

From the work of other scholars, particularly Vygotsky's mediated actions, Engeström developed analytical methods within activity theory (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). The analytical methods are used to capture the interactions between individuals or a group of individuals and the environment and the way they affect one another (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). The unit of analysis within an activity is the object-oriented activity itself (Sannino et al., 2009). Engeström represents an activity systems model in a triangular diagram whereby the top triangle is Vygotsky's mediated actions, composed of *subject* (individual or group of individuals), *tools* (social others and artefacts) and *object* (goal or motive of the activity). He added other socio-historical aspects of mediated actions that did not gain Vygotsky's attention such as *rules* (formal or informal regulations), *community* (social group) and *division of labour* (shared tasks). The representation of the above elements is captured in all three CHAT generations (Sannino et al., 2009). This study is limited to a second-generation activity system analysis because it focuses on the single activity of class captains. The second-generation condensed a visual way of understanding class captains' activity (Mbelani, 2014). As put by Sannino et al. (2016), a second-generation triangular model is "a tool designed to destroy the myth of directness in learning and teaching and to overcome the dualism in existing traditional theories" (p. 13). This is to say, the model is hoped to assist class captains to develop a deeper understanding of their leadership practices within the school context. They would be able to see how their activity is positioned and who has a direct influence on achieving the object of their activity. The notion of contradictions as one philosophical underpinning of CHAT becomes a catalyst for the new learning. This means that the surfacing processes of contradictions enable class captains to learn something that was not yet there (Engeström, 1987) and develop expansive solutions for their current leadership practice and future.

On the next page is the representation of the second-generation triangular model as developed by Engeström (1987).

Mediated artefacts:

Documents/Training Workshop

Subject:

Class captains
Vice-captains

Object:
Voice &
leadership

Outcomes:
Voice &
Leadership
development

Rules & norms:

National & school policies

Division of labour:

SMT, teachers, learners

Community:

Role of class captains,
LRC, SMT, SB
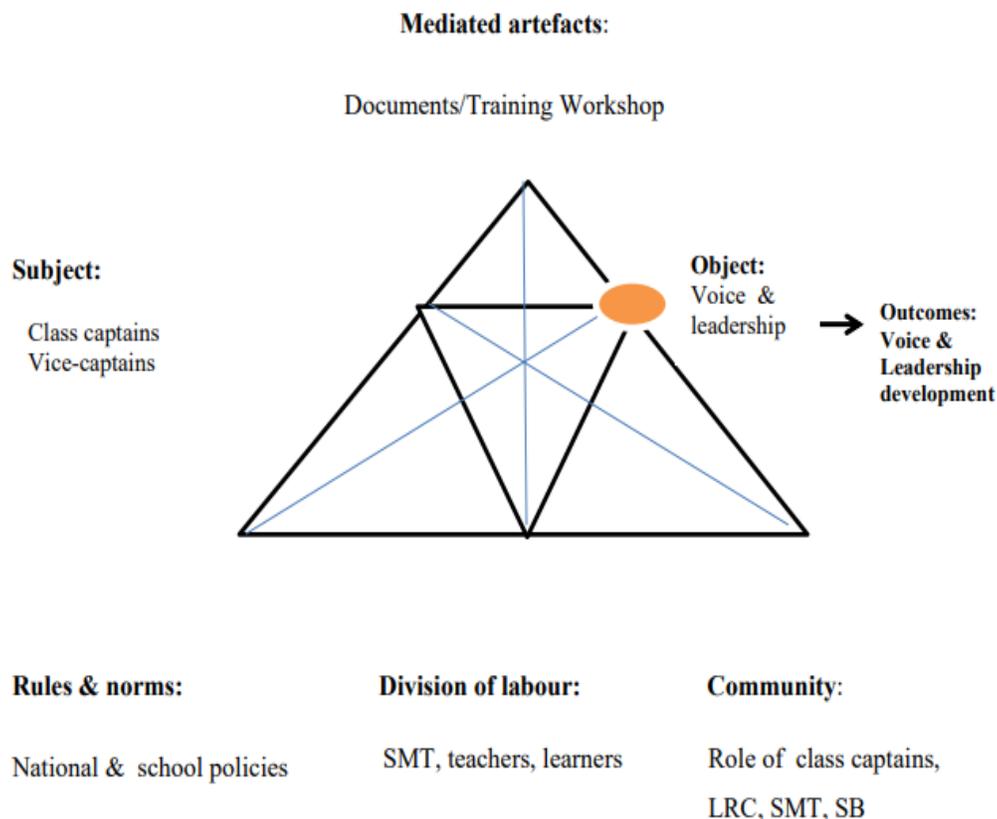
Figure 2.3: Second-generation activity system model and its elements (adapted from Engeström, 2016, p. 107)

The above transitory analytical device represents how elements within the class captain's activity are interconnected. It helps to unlock class captains' understanding along with other participants to work toward achieving the object of the study (voice and leadership of class captains). My role as an interventionist-researcher is to encourage the adoption of the expansive learning process by presenting and explaining the model to my participants.

2.7.4 Expansive learning explained

Expansive learning entails "the multidirectional movement of learners (class captains and vice-class captains) constructing and implementing a new, wider, and more complex object for their activity which ultimately leads to qualitative transformation, both at the level of individual actions and at the level of the collective activity and broader contexts" (Sannino et al., 2016 , p. 321). It

involves "the beginning of new understanding and new practices for a newly up -and-coming activity, which is learning embedded in and constitutive of qualitative transformation of the entire activity system" (Daniels, Cole, & Wertsch, 2007, p. 523). Expansive learning as one principle of CHAT is the main thrust for my study that follows seven steps presented hereunder:
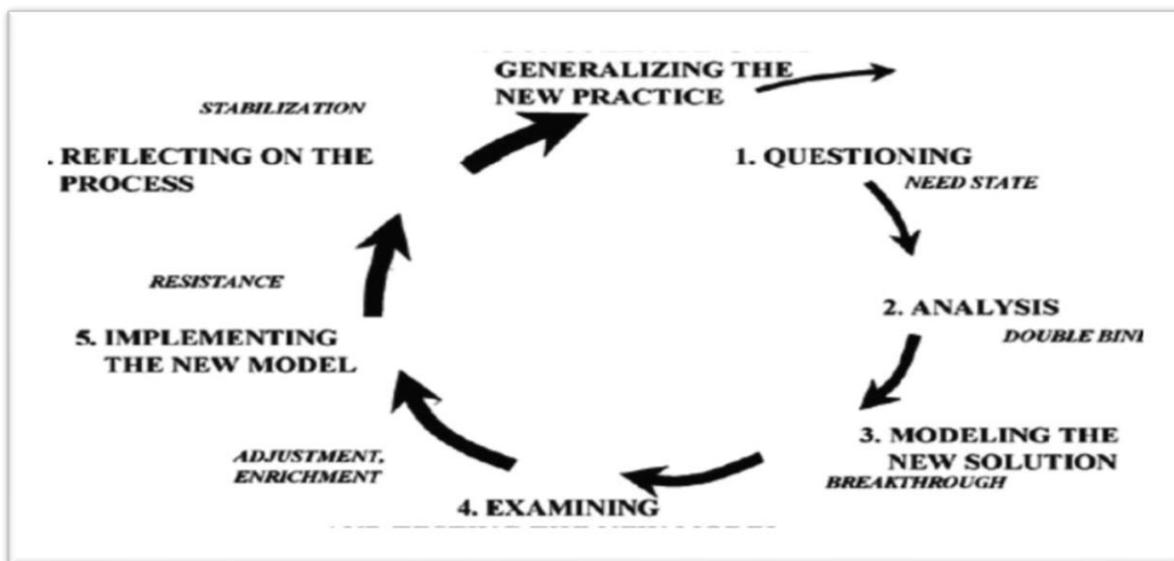
Figure 2.4: The expansive learning cycle or process (adapted from Engeström, 2000, p. 970)

The expansive learning cycle as shown in Figure 2.4 is a conceptual and analytical tool used in the study to examine the transformation process anticipated for class captains' activity. The transformation process is driven by contradictions. Contradictions can be defined as historically accumulating structural tensions within and between the use value and exchange value activity (Engeström, 2016). With the use of the second-generation triangular model, it is likely that contradictions may surface. The literature revealed four types of contradictions (Foot, 2014), however this study intends to explore primary and secondary contradictions because it focuses on a single activity of class captains. Primary contradictions occur within one element of a single activity system (Foot, 2014); for example, a contradiction within the subject (class captains & vice-class captains). Secondary contradictions take place when two elements of a single activity system

are in conflict with one another (Foot, 2014), for example, contradictions between subject and the division of labour or vice versa.

The process that leads to the surfacing and resolution of contradictions may expand the understanding of participants which may possibly enable the object of class captains' activity to be achieved. Participants along with me, would employ the seven expansive learning actions to examine and analyse the six elements and the relationships between them to capture the emergence of the inner contradictions (Engeström, 2016) and focus our efforts to resolve our priority contradictions.

It is also imperative to state that the formative intervention nature of this study does not expect one to have specified desired outcomes ahead of time (Sannino et al., 2016). This means participants are expected to learn what is not yet there. Hence, collective and collaborative efforts among participants are recommended, for example by Sannino and Engeström (2010). The platform for participants' collective and collaborative efforts would be provided by the formative change laboratory method discussed next.

2.7.5 Change Laboratory: A formative intervention method

A change laboratory is a formative intervention method and a living toolkit (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) for bringing about transformation. Engeström defines formative intervention as "purposeful actions by human agency to create change" (Ploettner & Tresseras, 2016, p. 90). For the study, change laboratory workshops would provide a platform that may promote a collective process of inquiry, learning, change-oriented to class captains' activity contradictions. Being a living toolkit implies conceptual tools that offer to mediate the expansive learning process. One such tool is the concept of double stimulation which offers two stimuli to trigger the learning and inquiry process. The 1st stimulus would be the problem areas/challenges identified within the leadership practice of class captains, whereas the 2nd stimulus could be the CHAT second-generation model, expansive learning model or any other applicable model which may be used to mediate and scaffold the expansive learning process (Sannino et al., 2009).

It is against this backdrop that change laboratories form part of this study to provide a platform for class captains and vice-class captains along with me as a researcher-interventionist, to learn expansively about the leadership practice of class captains and bring about transformation. Next is the representation of the change laboratory layout.
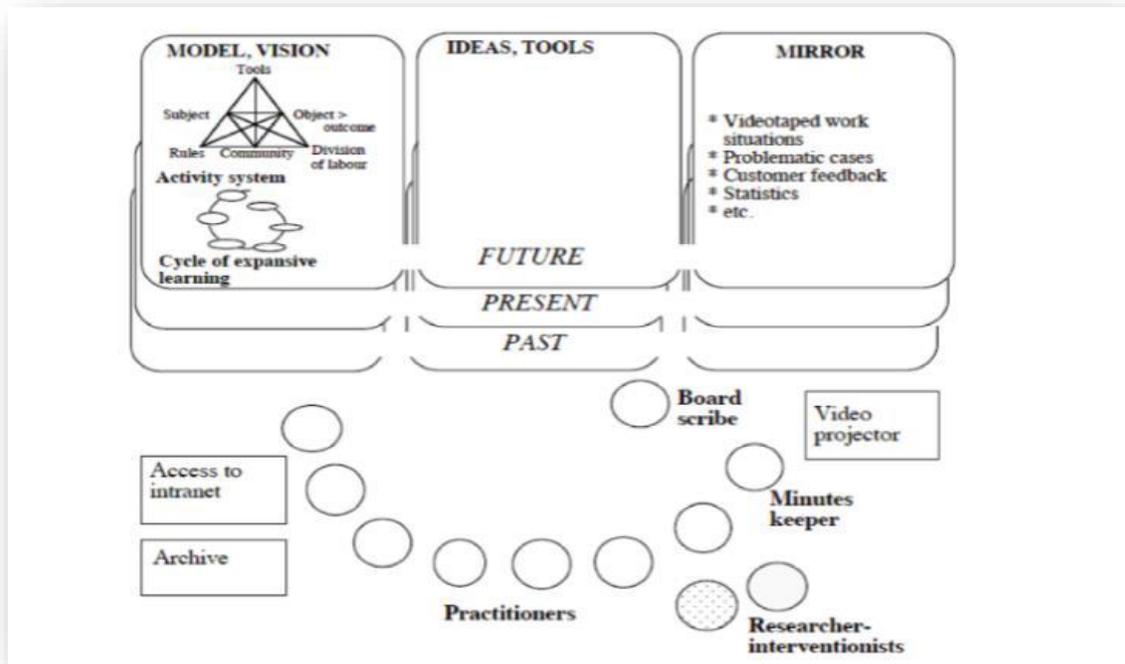
Figure 2.5: Layout and instruments of the change laboratory space (adapted from Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 16)

The change laboratory layout presented above may be applicable to this study. It comprises three sets of tools. The right-hand side presents the mirror, in which historical data (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) are represented. For this study, the mirror data is the analysis of the challenges and problem areas on class captainship practice. This data may come from interviews and questionnaires, just to mention a few. The model and vision represent the part on the right-hand side whereby analytical tools such as the CHAT model and expansive cycle will be used during

CL sessions to encourage the expansive learning process. Overall, the layout visualises the settings of all CLWs to be conducted. My attention now turns to the critique of CHAT.

2.7.6 A critique of CHAT

One key notion of activity theory is transformation. Transformation means "changing an object internally, making evident its essence and altering it" (Sannino et al., 2009, p. 29). In order to bring about the transformation, it requires participants' volition (Engeström & Sannino, 2010), which means participants should be willing to take agency by themselves. In this regard, CHAT does not account for participants' willingness to participate in the change process. Moreover, sometimes the transformation anticipated might not be the real transformation as in CHAT, because of factors like time (Engeström, 2016).

Another critique for CHAT is the notion of collective versus individual activity. Although CHAT fully supports collective activities, it falls short of a clear analysis of the exact nature of those involved in the collective activities (Sannino et al., 2016). It is emphasised that "a comprehensive analysis of the stages of the collective process should put emphasis on the conditions of its realisation" (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 44). One may question the essential feature of a collective subject that intends to study a problem situation. On this, CHAT falls short of providing a clear analysis of the individuality that composes a collective group. Responding to the above point, I intend to work with a collective group of class captains and vice-class captains from different classrooms in the school. Since CHAT could not provide me with a clear analysis of these individual learners, their individuality might influence the collective process of expansive learning. As such I would draw from traditional leadership theories such as trait theories in which traits are well captured.

The last critique of CHAT is that it does not account for power relations that might arise as participants of a different status learn together. To bring participants to learn together, one should know how to handle the feeling and emotions that some participants might want to be fulfilled (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Considering this situation, I will try to give a clear purpose of my

study which may possibly minimise participants' emotions or feelings about the collective learning processes.

2.8 Conclusion

In a nutshell, the chapter provided a brief history of the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) within which the study is located. The distinction between leadership and management as key concepts of the field were elaborated upon. The chapter continued to discuss the traditional and contemporary constructs of leadership, showing a shift from individualism to a multiple leaders' perspective. Learner voice and learner leadership, the focus of this study, was captured by contemporary distributive leadership perspectives and further informed by transformative leadership theories within a critical lens to bring about change. This resonated well with the CHAT framework underpinning my study discussed in the latter pages in the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

While chapter two discusses the concepts and theory framing the study, this chapter focuses on the methodological design employed. I am aware that a clear alignment between the conceptual and methodological design makes for a good study (Maxwell, 2008). A research methodological design has been defined by various scholars, but common to most definitions is a logical plan (O'Leary, 2004; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Yin, 2009; Maxwell, 2012) employed by a researcher to move from the research questions to research findings or answers. The plan may include the methodology which is the paradigmatic assumptions and methods which can be the techniques for collecting data, as well as tools or devices used for collecting data (*ibid.*). The overarching purpose of this chapter is to present the plan employed throughout the study to find appropriate answers to my research questions.

The chapter begins with a discussion on the research orientation and design, as well as the method used to conduct the study. It continues to make explicit how the research site was selected and there is a brief discussion thereof. Furthermore, the research participants and sampling methods or procedures, data generation methods, and data analysis are elaborated upon. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the researcher's positionality, the trustworthiness of the study and research ethics, despite the fact that ethical consideration has been intertwined throughout the research process.

To begin with the chapter, I first present my research objectives and questions in order to remind the reader of what this study aimed to explore and achieve. The overarching purpose of this study was *to investigate how learner voice and learner leadership can be developed amongst class captains in the school*. To address this, the goals were:

1) To explore the participation of class captains in the current school leadership structure;

2) To establish the relationship between class captains and other leadership structures in the school such as the LRC;

3) To enhance and transform the leadership practice for class captains through Change Laboratory Workshops.

The overarching research question for this study was: ***How can voice and leadership be developed within a group of class captains in a Namibian combined school?*** The study took place in two phases, whereby phase one aimed at exploring the current participation of class captains in leadership at the school, while phase two aimed at intervening in class captains' leadership practice which may have led to the development of their voice and leadership. **Phase one** was guided by the following research questions:

1. *How are the concepts of learner voice and learner leadership understood at the school?*
2. *How does class captainship relate to other leadership structures at the school?*
3. *What are the conditions enabling and hindering class captains' participation in leadership at the school?*

Phase two: An intervention phase was driven by the following research questions:

4. *How can the expansive learning cycle help to surface the inner contradictions within the class captain's activity for transformation?*
5. *How did the change laboratory method contribute to the development of voice and leadership amongst class captains?*

Having discussed my research objectives and questions, I now turn my attention to discuss the research orientation for my study.

3.2 Research orientation: A critical orientation

A research orientation is a gateway to the research methodology and design. According to Maxwell (2008), "a clear paradigmatic stance helps to guide the design decisions and to justify these decisions" (p. 224). As a researcher, it is important to justify decisions regarding the choice of one

orientation over another. It also allows the reader to assess the compatibility of the chosen orientation for my study. Still, as a researcher I am aware that choosing an orientation that does not fit one's study makes the reader uncomfortable (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011), therefore I am confident that I have chosen the research orientation that best fits my study.

This is an interventionist study undertaken within a critical orientation. I decided to take a critical stance because it aligns well with the interventionist nature of my study. The overarching purpose of a critical orientation is to bring about change (Cohen et al., 2011). In order to bring about change, a critical orientation has the potential to emancipate, which means to redress inequality in order to promote individual or group freedoms within a democratic society (Connole, 1998). This resonates well with transformative leadership, a leadership theory informing my study. Informed by transformative leadership and taking a critical stance allowed me to dig deeper into the leadership practice of class captains as learner leaders. The deeper analysis exposed conditions surrounding class captains' leadership practice, but special consideration was given to class captains' participation in school leadership i.e. school decision-making processes. Furthermore, the social critique lens offered by both a critical orientation and transformative leadership theory enabled me as an interventionist researcher and participants, to identify restrictive and alienating conditions within class captains' leadership practice (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

A critical orientation also links well with CHAT, the theory underpinning my study as discussed in the previous chapter, because both have "a special social critique lens to surface and mirror contradictions in society in order to seek for emancipation by eliminating the causes of alienation and domination" (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 29). While a critical orientation and transformative leadership helped to investigate the dynamic social relationships in the research site context, CHAT provided an analysis of what was happening in the past and present, as well as mapping the future by revealing the contradictions. Paired with critical orientation, CHAT also has an enabling capacity to capture the practicality of the change process (outcomes). This was important in this study as it captured the processes which led to the class captains' voice and leadership development.

Against this backdrop, the critical orientation paired with transformative leadership and CHAT aligned with the purpose of my study, because both helped me as a critical interventionist researcher to facilitate the development of class captains' voice and leadership, which is the aim of this study. Adopting a critical lens also enabled class captains as primary participants to understand themselves as learner leaders and how they relate to other leadership structures in their school. Developing an understanding of themselves, enabled them to work towards the elimination of the causes of alienation and domination surrounding their leadership practices, particularly their participation in school decision-making and other leadership activities in their school. Next, I discuss how I designed my study.

3.3 Research design

The deeper analysis offered by a critical orientation paired with CHAT and transformative leadership theories helps to expose conditions surrounding a phenomenon under scrutiny, thus the study employed a qualitative case study design which used a naturalistic approach (Yin, 2009) to understand issues surrounding the leadership practice of class captains in their particular school leadership context. A qualitative design is premised on the notion that findings are created rather than discovered (Yin, 2009). Therefore, it is important to emphasise that findings in this study represent the views of people in that particular school context. The viewpoints and understanding of participants were considered because it is understood that every context has its unique circumstances (Maxwell, 2008), as a result, it was important to learn from participants. As argued, participants know their school context better than any other person and they are well-positioned to bring about transformation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

For this study, a qualitative design offered a deeper analysis of the social context in which class captainship was practiced (Maxwell, 2012), taking into account how the practice has been performed over time, as well as other factors surrounding it. Tracing back into history makes qualitative design compatible with CHAT and history opens up possibilities for conducting formative studies (Maxwell, 2008) such as my study. It also helped me to build a nuanced understanding of why class captainship is practiced the way it is being practiced today (Maxwell, 2008).

I adopted a case study method to obtain an in-depth understanding of class captainship practice within the school leadership context. Yin (2009) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 18). While qualitative design enabled me to explore the school leadership practice context in general, case study method geared me towards exploring the leadership practice of class captains in particular within that specific school leadership context, hence the case in this study was the leadership practices of class captains. Furthermore, as noted in Yin's definition, a case study has the advantage of using multiple sources of evidence. The multiple sources of evidence offered by the case study allow the development of converging lines of inquiry which is a process of crystallisation and corroboration (Yin, 2009). Put simply, I was able to draw the views of different participants through using a variety of data generation methods. A case study method is also appropriate when "how" and "why" questions are posed (Yin, 2009, p. 9). This was appropriate to help me answer most of my 'how' questions. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that the case study method was helpful in providing me with evidence (Yin, 2009), that made it possible for me to move to phase two (the intervention stage) of the study. It was through case study evidence that I was able to facilitate an intervention during change laboratory workshops.

Despite the advantages, the case study method has limitations. One limitation of the case study method is that findings cannot be generalised (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). However, this study has a generative potential, thus findings could be transferred to other school contexts (Sannino et al., 2016).

Having discussed my research design and method, I now turn my attention on how I selected the case study school and also provide a brief account of the case study school.

3.4 Selection of the case study school (research site)

It was essential for me to select a research site that is "suitable and feasible" for my study (Maree & Pietersen, 2012, p. 3). Taking cognisance of this, I selected a case study school that was convenient in the sense that class captainship, the focus of my study was being practiced. Moreover, the school was easily accessible for my study because it was less than five kilometres

from my place of work, which meant it was within walking distance. Next, I provide a detailed description of the case study school.

3.5 Description of the Case Study School

The study was carried out at a government rural combined school in the Omusati region, in the northern part of Namibia. Being a rural school, Ngcobo and Tikly (2010) claim that rural school environments have strong traditional norms, beliefs, and values that may impact the voice and leadership development of learners particularly class captains, within those school communities. Due to such impacts, there is a need to engage with local values, perceptions, and realities in order to possibly amend how school leadership should be practiced (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). The case study school was established in 1977, which means the school has been in existence for 42 years. This historical information was crucial to the study partly because it allowed one to trace back the history of how class captainship has been practiced in the case study school.

Previously the school was offering grades 5 to 10, but due to high enrolment of learners and inadequate infrastructure i.e. classrooms, grade 5 was moved to a nearby primary school. Currently, the school offers grades 6 to 10. It is hoped that Grade 11 will be offered from 2020 with the current grade 10 learners. This came about as a result of the Namibian revised curriculum that is underway. The revised curriculum provides for the advancement of knowledge and skills and extension of the curriculum which led to the additional grades at the case study school.

The current principal is male and has been in this position for six years. Apart from the principal, there are three Heads of Department (two males and one female) and together with the principal, they form the School Management Team (SMT). The issue of gender added another dimension to my study, as it enabled me to trace whether gender has had an influence on school leadership practice in general and class captainship in particular (Lumby, 2013).

The School Board (SB) was also functional with 13 members who consisted of two teachers, nine parents, and two learners, specifically the LRC's head boy and head girl. The chairperson of the SB is a female parent from the school community. At school, the SB is regarded as the highest

decision-making body. Against this backdrop, I developed a curiosity to explore whether school leadership was equated to positions and why the SB was regarded as such.

Apart from the SB and SMT, the school has a learner leadership structure called the LRC, which consisted of 12 members. These were the learner leaders responsible for overseeing the affairs of other learners in the school (Uushona, 2012). Like the LRC, all classrooms in the school had class representatives (class captains and vice-class captains) who were in charge of their classrooms. At the time I conducted this study there were 30 class representatives (21 class captains and nine vice-class captains) in the school. Moreover, leadership structures were evident in the school starting with learners, more especially class captains and vice-class captains at the classroom level, and moving to the LRC, teachers, HODs, the school principal and parents at the school level. My intention was to explore the leadership practice of class captains which included vice-class captains, particularly their participation in school decision-making processes.

The enrolment of learners for the 2019 academic year was recorded at 480 learners with 24 teaching staff and three non-teaching staff. All learners were accommodated in 15 classrooms whereby each class was allocated a class register teacher.

In addition, the school has a computer lab, a science lab, a school garden, and netball and soccer fields. Finally, the description of the case study school allows the reader to have a picture of the context in which this study was conducted. Having described the research site, I now turn my attention to my research participants.

3.6 Research Participants

Seeing through the eyes of the participants was the first step to understanding the class captains' leadership practices at the case study school (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The focal group of participants were class captains themselves in this study. Due to the complexity of the phenomenon, I deemed it essential to consider other groups of participants which included the SMT, SB, LRC and class register teachers. These groups of participants represented a typical case which could reveal more information on class captainship because more actors are activated (Flyvbjerg, 2006). More importantly, they could help to clarify factors around class captainship practice in their school.

3.6.1 The class captains and vice-class captains as primary participants

As discussed earlier, the study focused on exploring the leadership practice of class captains with the intention to develop their voice and leadership. The vice-class captains were also qualified for this study. I personally considered these learner leaders to be leaders at an entry-level in the school and once they are empowered they may contribute significantly to overall school leadership (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). Based on CHAT, specifically the second-generation model of class captains' activity system (see theoretical framework section), the unit of analysis would be the collective efforts of class captains/vice-class captains. They became the subject (main actors) in the study. Being the main actors, they developed collective and collaborative efforts amongst themselves and with other members of their school, in exploring ways to develop their voice and leadership as learner leaders. Since the study was designed as a qualitative case study, I wanted to hear the voices of the main actors regarding their leadership roles and how they worked in relation to other leaders within the school.

3.6.2 Learner Representative Council (LRC) members

Apart from class captains and vice-class captains, LRC members formed part of this study as secondary participants. These learner leaders were selected to participate simply because they are formally recognised learner leaders (Uushona, 2012) at the school. Because of their formal leadership positions, they provided a very interesting perspective on the leadership practice of class captains as their peer leaders. All LRC members have portfolios that range from head boy, head girl, entertainment, sport, discipline, academic, secretary-general, hair-styles and time management. Some of these portfolios were shared among LRC members. Three learners were serving two leadership roles of being a class captain and an LRC member. In summary, their perspectives enriched the study and most importantly it helped to answer research question 2 (see Section 1.4).

3.6.3 Class register teachers

Class register teachers were another group of secondary participants in the study. The school had 15 class register teachers. They were selected to participate in the study because of their position

and their experiences of dealing with class captains. In addition, class captains/vice-captains were under their supervision and they were aware of the context in which they operated. In summary, they provided invaluable input to this study

3.6.4 School Management Team (SMT) members

The school principal and Head of Departments (HoDs) were the SMT in the study. The school has one principal and three HODs as indicated earlier. Their positions and roles in the school qualified them for the study. Considering the fact that they were dealing with the overall school leadership, was an added advantage to the study because they were able to provide necessary information regarding the school leadership in general and class captainship in particular. The data provided by them was useful in answering all my research questions.

3.6.5 School board chairperson

Upon starting with the data generation process I realised that it was necessary to hear parents' views concerning class captains' leadership practice. This was triggered by a call I received from a parent asking about the consent form I sent and whether his child was a class captain at school (Nehunga, 2019, personal communication). Considering the parent's inquiry, I selected the chairperson of the school board to represent views from the parents. The chairperson was also considered because of her position and experience in the decision- making body of the school. Her inclusion provided insight into answering all my research questions.

Having described categories of participants selected for my study, my attention now turns to discuss the sampling methods employed in selecting my research participants.

3.7 Participant Sampling Method and Procedures

Sampling is defined as "the process used to select a portion of the population for the study" (Nieuwenhuis, 2014, p. 79). The sampling method employed for this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is "when particular settings, persons or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide, that cannot be accessed from other choices" (Maxwell, 2008, p. 235). Purposive sampling indicates that "participants are selected

because of some defining characteristics that make them the holder of the data needed for the study" (Nieuwenhuis, 2014, p. 79). Purposive sampling was good for this study because it helped to achieve the representativeness of the school context in which class captains' leadership was practiced. Representativeness was achieved through the consideration of views of class captains, vice-class captains, the LRC, the SMT, class register teachers and the school board chairperson (parent representative).

Although there were 30 class representatives in the school, only 12 class captain representatives (10 class captains & two vice-class captains) participated in the study. This number was reasonable and manageable for the intervention stage, where participants could form part of the change laboratory workshops (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Moreover, nine members of the LRC, the principal, two HoDs, six class register teachers and one parent representative (SB) were sampled and participated in the study.

The overall sample size of my study was 31 participants as represented by the table below.

Table 3.1: Sample size of the study

Participants	Males	Females	Total
Class captains	5	5	10
Vice class captains	0	2	2
LRC	5	4	9
SMT (including principal)	3	0	3
Class teachers	4	2	6
SB (chairperson)	1	0	1
Total	18	13	31

The table summarises the overall sample size of participants who participated in the study at the case study school. The number of participants was indeed reasonable for me to carry on with my study, since the primary participants (class captains and vice-class captains) who would form part of the intervention phase were a reasonable and manageable number. In the next section, I discuss how data was generated.

3.8 Data Generation

Data generation refers to "different procedures of getting evidence and information in order to find answers to research questions" (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 71). The data generating process and analysis were done simultaneously to allow data saturation *(ibid.).* Since the study was interventionist, data for phase one informed phase two which was an intervention phase. The main aim of phase one was to generate data on the current class captains' leadership practice at the case study school. The second phase aimed at resolving identified challenges or problem areas surrounding class captainship practice. The critical learning point of problem resolution for phase two took place in the Change Laboratory Workshops (CLWs). Henceforth, I discuss the data generation methods and tools used for phase one and how these methods helped to generate data.

3.8.1 Phase one: Data generation methods and tools

3.8.1.1 Document analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing all types of written communications that may shed light on the phenomenon that one is investigating (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Bowen, 2009). This can be done with the aim to complement data generated through other data gathering techniques such as interviews and questionnaires. In this study, I reviewed school documents such as the school development plan (SDP), the school internal policy, the school year plan, the Plan of Action for Academic Improvement and meeting minutes (SMT, SB, LRC) (see appendix M). This was important because it enabled me to get data that informed me as to whether class captains as learner leaders were afforded a chance to participate in school activities. Moreover, it enabled me to see whether there was a working relationship between class captains with other members of the school such as the LRC, SMT, and SB.

In addition, some of the documents I reviewed informed me of some elements of class captains' activity systems such as tools, rules, division of labour and community (refer to second-generation triangular model) which may enhance or contradict voice and leadership development of class captains. Document analysis was a convenient method for my study because it saved time since data was readily available (Bowen, 2009). Another advantage of document analysis for my study

was that it provided me with background information, as well as historical insights concerning class captainship; hence this resonated well with CHAT (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis with CHAT as a framework helped me to understand the historical roots of class captainship practice and conditions that impinged on this practice (Bowen, 2009).

Despite the fact that document analysis was a useful data gathering method, it presented potential flaws (Bowen, 2009). I was unable to obtain sufficient information to inform my study as some of the documents were too general to the leadership practice of class captains. Moreover, it was difficult for me to access all required documents since the school has a poor filing system. Finally, as a researcher, I selected documents that I thought would inform my study, which could have led to some degree of biasness (Rule & John, 2011). Furthermore, during the analysis process of some documents, I encountered a challenge as some documents did not provide me with sufficient evidence as to whether class captains participate in school leadership thus, I used the evidence from documents to investigate further through other data gathering methods such as questionnaires. I now turn to discuss how questionnaires were used and for what purpose in the study.

3.8.1.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a "printed set of field questions which participants respond to on their own or in the presence of a researcher" (Rule & John, 2012, p. 66). Questionnaires are extremely beneficial when wanting to get an overall idea of a particular phenomenon because it allows for a bigger sample size with a fast turnover time for data generation and result analysis (*ibid.*). It also helped me to answer my research questions that I could not answer through document analysis. In this study, I designed questionnaires comprising of closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions allowed participants to choose from one or more than one response. The use of closed-ended questions made it easier for me to analyse the data. The design of the questionnaires included a few closed-ended questions and open-ended questions which allowed participants to give detailed information, which yielded interesting categories to emerge through thematic analysis of responses (Maree & Pietersen, 2012). Separate questionnaires were developed for the different groups of research participants, for example a similar questionnaire was designed for

SMT, class register teachers and SB chairperson, another one was designed for class captains, vice-class captains and the last one for LRC members. These were designed to solicit responses for research questions 1-3 (see Appendix G, H, & I).

Although the use of questionnaires was beneficial to the study, I experienced some challenges. Some questions were poorly understood by participants. Time could not allow me to conduct a 'captive audience' (Irwin, 2003) to reduce the misconceptions. However, adults had a better understanding of questions than learners. I was impressed with a 100% return rate of the questionnaires administered.

Unlike document analysis, questionnaires allowed participants to express themselves through answering questions by writing; however, it was still not enough since I wanted to dig deeper and hear more diverse views of participants. Therefore, to achieve this, I conducted interviews with different participants. Following is the discussion on the interviews.

3.8.1.3 Interviews

An interview is "a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to gather data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours of the participants" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 87). Through interviews, the researcher intended to understand participants on their own terms and how they make meaning of their own lives, experiences and cognitive processes (Brenner, 2006). It aims to see the world through the eyes of the participants, thereby getting rich descriptive data that helps to understand the participant's construction of knowledge and social reality (Brenner, 2006).

It involves an interactional relationship between the researcher and participants as they engage in an ongoing process of making meaning (Brenner, 2006). Unlike the questionnaires, an interview allows a space for participants to express meaning in their own words and gives direction to the interview process (Creswell, 2014). The study employed semi-structured interviews that were guided by a set of pre-prepared interview questions (Appendix J, K, & L). The semi-structured interview schedule allowed for probing and the seeking of clarity of answers. For the study, the

aim was to solicit multiple views on class captainship practice. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal and two other members of the SMT.

Apart from the individual interviews, I also conducted different focus group interviews. A focus group interview is a qualitative research technique that may include eight to 12 persons brought to a centralised location to respond to questions on a topic of particular interest to a sponsor or client (Frey & Fortana, 1991). A focus group has one advantage of taking a group dynamic to produce new and additional data (Frey & Fortana, 1991). The evolving relations among group members can be a "stimulus to elaborations and expression" (Frey & Fortana, 1991, p. 183). The first focus group interview was conducted with six class register teachers, the second was conducted with nine members of the LRC and the third was designed for class captains and vice-class captains which consisted of 12 members. Data was obtained in a collective manner rather than on an individual basis (Cohen et al., 2011). Like the individual interviews, focus groups were also recorded. Permission was obtained before recording.

Although focus group interviews were beneficial to the study, it posed some challenges in the process. It was challenging to bring a group of class captains together. This is because these learners work in isolation and were not used to this type of gathering. I also realised that in a focus group, the outspoken persons were more active than others and this resulted in the domination of views from the outspoken persons. I personally was not satisfied with the outcome of the focus group interviews with the learners particularly the class captains and vice-class captains. The responses were shallow and I could tell that learners were not feeling free to speak up, thus I kept on probing more often which shifted our conversation from a focus group to a one-on-one kind of conversation. Because I was interested to hear more voices of class captains and vice-class captains who were my primary participants, I employed participatory methods discussed hereunder. These methods helped to address some of the challenges experienced in the focus group interviews.

3.8.2 Participatory methods

Apart from the traditional method of collecting data presented above, the studies employed 'mapping' and 'transect walks' as innovative methods of generating data. Generally, participatory

innovative methods have the primary intention of increasing research participants' involvement and control of the data generation (Rule & John, 2011). I felt it was relevant to use these methods since I wanted participants to own the data generation process. Moreover, participatory methods have the same agenda as this interventionist study. This is the agenda of collective and collaborative learning amongst participants to bring about transformation; for this study, the transformation to the leadership practice of class captains at the case study school. Another added advantage for using participatory methods is to minimise the possibility of literacy particularly the English language barriers to the process of data generation (Rule & John, 2011). In this study, English language barriers were minimised through drawing school maps.

I also speculated that maybe one reason why class captains and vice-class captains were not free to speak up during the focus group interview was that it was conducted in English. I conducted the interview in English because it was their language of teaching and learning. However, I came to realise that some participants were not conversant in English possibly because of their rural school context. As noted, English literacy in a rural setting is considerably poor (Uushona, 2012). I now discuss the participatory methods employed which helped to possibly overcome language barriers.

3.8.2.1 Mapping

Mapping is a participatory method of generating data whereby participants are asked to draw a map of their context (Rule & John, 2011). Mapping is a useful method for generating a collective sense of how people see their immediate world or work context and allows people an opportunity to express themselves despite language barriers (Rule & John, 2011). In the context of my study, which was designed as a qualitative case study, mapping helped me to have an in-depth understanding of the school context in which class captainship was practiced. I requested that those who enjoy drawing amongst class captains and vice-class captains to draw their school map. I also asked other class captains and vice-class captains who were participants to share ideas with these drawers as to what should be included in their school maps. The first map depicted the past. Class captains and vice-class captains who have been learners at the school since grade one shared their experiences of how the school looked like in the past. They were about five learners among others, who have been at the school since grade one, which meant they were aware of most of the changes

that had happened at the school. They also consulted other members of their school for more details. For this study, the school's past map was important because it allowed us to trace how the school context changed overtime. History being a core principle of CHAT enabled me and the participants to develop a better understanding of the school context and its history.

The second map depicted the school in the present. This map helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the current school context in which class captains operate, as well as collecting data to answer my research questions. It also provided me with contextual profiling data that became evident to the reader on the description of the case study school (see Section 3.5 in this chapter). The third map captured the future. In the map, class captains and vice-class captains envisioned how they wanted their school to look in the future. This highlights that "possibilities are not given; they are created and articulated by those whose lives are at stake" (Virkkunen & Newhmam, 2013, p. xvii). This means that the map provoked the agency of the participants, which was the core of this interventionist study.

Mapping data was collected during a group discussion with class captains and vice-class captains. I asked them to take me through their different maps and as they were explaining, I probed for clarity. I was also taking field notes which became my data source. For the study, the main focus was to question the changes that happened in their school context over time and whether class captains participated in any school decisions to bring about those changes. This method was useful in soliciting responses to research question two.

Besides mapping being a very useful method for my study, I noted one drawback in my implementation thereof. This exercise was only carried out with 12 participants which included the class captains and vice-class captains. This somehow surpassed the potential of this method in this interventionist study, which calls for collective and collaborative efforts of individual persons. I personally realised that this method could yield better results if conducted with class captains and vice-class captains together with other participants, such as SMT, SB and LRC members and class teachers.

Below is the representation of the three different drawn school maps of the case study school.

Past school map	Current school map	Future school map
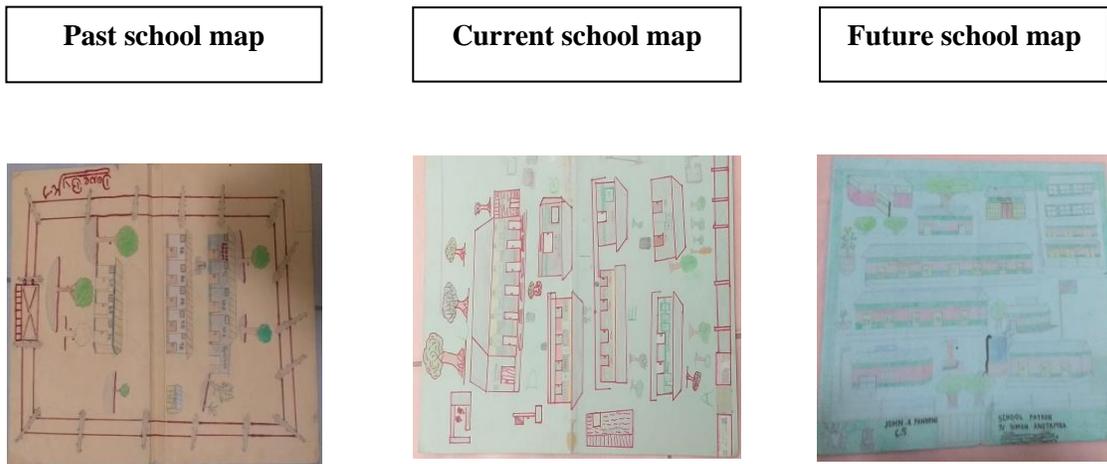
Figure 3.1: Different school map context of the case study school as drawn by class captains and vice-class captains

3.8.2.2 Transect walks

Another participatory method employed was transect walks. A transect walk is when the researcher asks participants to take him/her on a walk through their context (Rule & John, 2011). This allows participants to show the researcher issues of importance, concern, or pride while explaining the history and the impact of various landmarks and developments in their lives and their immediate context (*ibid.*). It can also provide a situated understanding of the social and environmental milieu of a case from the perspective of key informants (Rule & John, 2011).

Aided by mapping as explained earlier, transect walks helped me to further develop an in-depth understanding of the school context in which class captainship was practiced. The route was exciting, since participants were able to walk with me through all the corners of their school while engaging in a conversation. The present map was used to direct the walking session. The walking session took about 40 minutes. I was taking field notes during the walking session and also

encouraged learners to take notes in their personal notebooks. In addition to my notes, learners' notes also became important data sources.

A drawback as identified in mapping also existed in this generation tool. I should have engaged other research participant groups in this activity. I hereby present the school map that guided the transect walk session.
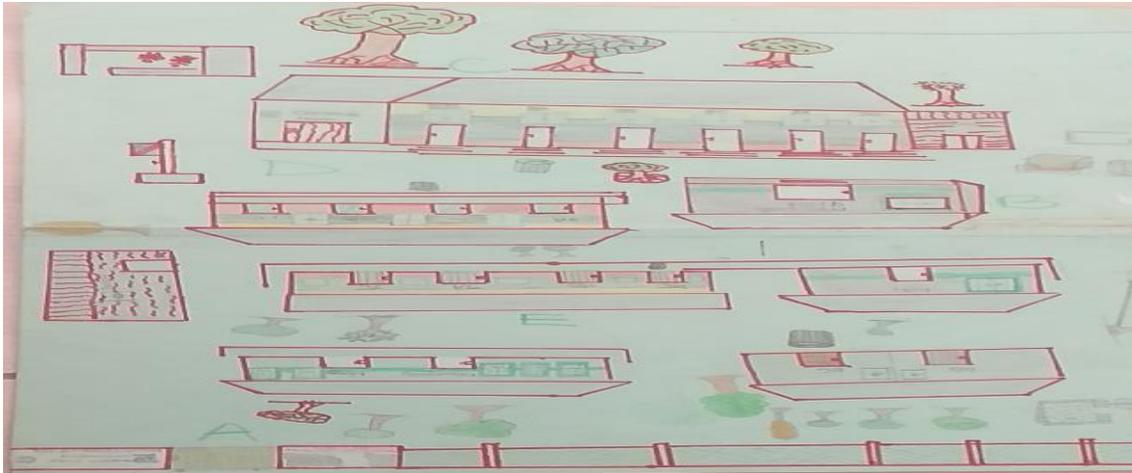
Figure 3.2: Transect walk map

Table 3.2: Transect walk map

School features visited during the transect walks Marked A, B, C, D and E on the map.	Observations made at point A-E
Point A: School Motto • **The school vision and mission statements**	The school motto was located at the main gate of the school. It is a well-decorated statue with the vision and mission statement of the school. The mission statement of the school was: *To give quality education and knowledge to all learners and promote the goals of access, equity, quality, and democracy.* The vision statement was: *For learners to be useful and trustful empower them with knowledge and skills to help them*

	achieve their future goals, create the spirit of self-development and value the dignity of each individual.
Point B: Principal's office	The participants indicated that it was the highest office in the school. It was also the room where SB members usually meet for their meetings.
Point C: Staffroom	The room where teachers reside and where staff meetings are held.
Point D: Morning devotions open space	An open space where the school meets every Monday and Friday to conduct the prayers, host the Namibian flag while singing the National, AU anthem and the regional inspirational song. This space also provides a platform for information sharing between learners and teachers either from the principal, teachers or learners particularly LRCs.
Point E: Classrooms	The rooms where teaching and learning take place at the school. The learners indicated that each class has a class teacher and a class captain and vice class captain as representatives. In some classrooms, there are even LRCs

Overall, mapping and transect walks as participatory methods invoked agency (Sannino et al., 2016) in class captains and vice-class captains which enabled me as an interventionist researcher to work jointly with class captains and vice-class captains as primary participants. These methods contributed to answering my second research question. Data was captured through an informal discussion with participants. To conclude I would acknowledge that these methods helped to fill the gap in terms of data generation methods. It also stands out from the traditional data generation methods, thus encouraging future researchers to utilise these methods in their interventionist studies because they help to evoke agency among participants (Sannino & Engeström, 2010).

3.8.3 Phase two: Change laboratory workshops

The study has a methodology of a formative intervention (Sannino et al., 2016), thus the second phase of data generation employed a change laboratory method consisting of six successive Change Laboratory Workshops. They were all conducted in the duration of 10 weeks (from 13th

of May to 26th July 2019). CLWs are aimed at providing a platform or space for research participants to work collectively and try to resolve contradictions (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Being a learning space, it was imperative for me as an interventionist-researcher to prepare before I started with CLWs (*ibid.*). It is also indicated that one cannot pre-determine the outcomes of the workshop, but one can prepare for it in advance (Sannino et al., 2016). I now turn to discuss how I prepared for the CLWs.

3.8.3.1 Change laboratory workshops' preparations

Acknowledging the need to work ethically, I asked permission from participants before taking photographs and videoing all CLW sessions. The recorded videos helped me during data analysis as it enabled "the collection of rich longitudinal data on actions and interactions involved in cycles of expansive learning" (Engeström, 2016, p. 14). CLWs' data were also captured through informal individual and focus group interviews. One challenge I encountered was that it was difficult for me to ensure anonymity during the CLW sessions; therefore, I informed my participants that anonymity was only possible through the use of pseudonyms during the write-up of data presentation in the study.

As an interventionist researcher, I was aware of the power relations (Engeström & Sannino, 2010) that may occur as participants of different leadership positions, roles or status gather and learn together in the CLW; therefore, I only allowed the first and final workshop to be attended by all participants. When participants are aware of the problems, they can provide the necessary support to resolve them (Shields, 2006).

Before I started with my CLWs, I prepared posters, obtained marker pens and push pins to be used during the workshops. I also cleared my phone of some items to create enough space for videoing, as well as taking photographs during the sessions. For videoing, I asked a non-participant class captain to help me. A non-participant class captain was chosen so that I could minimise the influence that might occur when an adult or an outsider person video records the sessions. Moreover, I prepared PowerPoint presentations for the first and last sessions. I now discuss what transpired in each CLW session conducted.

3.8.3.2 The first change laboratory session

All participants were invited. It was attended by 12 class representatives (10 class captains and two vice-class captains), four LRC members, one HOD and three teachers. The aim of this workshop was to report back the analysed data gathered in phase one of the study. During this session, I mirrored the challenges and problematic areas that had emerged concerning the leadership practice of class captains at the school. I prepared a PowerPoint presentation and I used my laptop and the school overhead projector to mirror the data. The mirroring process became the 1st stimulus (Sannino et al., 2016) that encouraged the involvement, analysis and collaborative design efforts among the participants (*ibid.*). After presenting the challenges and problem areas, participants were left with a task to think deeply about those problems. As postulated "the emphasis is not on completeness, finality, and closure but to take the agency of the learners as a foundational point of departure" (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 1). I handed out hard copies of my presentation to participants for them to begin their questioning process.

Figure 3.3 The first session of the change laboratory where I mirrored the data

Next, I discuss the second CLW.

3.8.3.3 The second change laboratory session

The second workshop was only attended by 12 class representatives (class captains and vice-class captains). The main purpose of this workshop was to question and analyse the problem areas identified. As an interventionist-researcher, I displayed pre-prepared questions on the overhead

projector that motivated the participants to question and analyse the problematic areas. The questioning and analysis captured learning action one and two based on the cycle of expansive learning (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). To encourage further questioning and analysis, I presented the second-generation activity model of class captains and the cycle of expansive learning. These were conceptual tools that became the 2nd stimulus (Sannino et al., 2016) in the class captains and vice-class captains' activity.

Figure 3.4: Representational devices: The second-generation model and the cycle of expansive learning and guiding questions employed in the second CLW

The presentation of the two analytical models, as well as guiding questions promoted expansive learning and stimulated participants to start thinking dialectically regarding class captainship practice (Engeström, 2016). This was evident as participants started to question and share ideas on the underlying factors of the problems or challenges. Collective actions among class captains and vice-class captains made them understand and face identified problem areas concerning their leadership practice (Sannino et al., 2016). Overall, the second session focused on two learning actions of the expansive learning cycle, which were questioning and analysing the problem areas.

3.8.3.4 The third change laboratory session

Like the second workshop, the third workshop was also attended by 12 class representatives. The main aim of this workshop was to provide a platform for participants to share ideas on how to resolve the problems/challenges identified. The reconceptualisation and practical transformation process of the object of their activity continued in this session (Engeström, 2016). I provided posters and marker pens for participants to write their views. Among the six problematic areas identified, participants prioritised to resolve four problems. They engaged in a discussion and proposed what they thought were the ways to resolve those problems/challenges and wrote their suggestions on a poster. Based on CHAT, at this stage participants engaged in two forms of agencies, namely explicating new possibilities or potentials in the activity and envisioning new patterns or models of the activity (Sannino et al., 2016). As an interventionist researcher, I asked
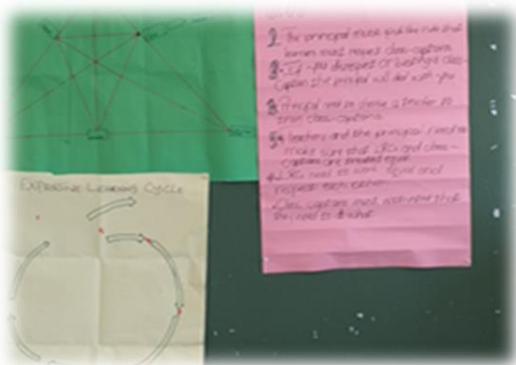
them to present their suggestions as I was taking my field notes. This workshop captured the learning action of analysing and modelling of the new solution. During the workshop, photographs of posters were taken.

Figure 3.5: Class captains and vice-class captains sharing ideas and presenting their poster of suggestions

During the workshop, participants proposed to send three learners to the principal's office in order to inform the principal about their plans. A challenge was captured as some participants refused to take up some given responsibilities. Another plan as per their problem number 6 was to organise a one-day workshop with a focus on learner voice and learner leadership as concepts. Organising for a workshop as part of the intervention captured the practical experimentation phase of the class captain and vice-class captains' activity system (Engeström, 2016). They consulted Mr. Nico (pseudonym) a teacher who recently facilitated a workshop with the LRC in their school. Mr. Nico studied his BEd Honours at Rhodes University and had written a research report on learner leadership development. To me, Mr. Nico was of help since he was familiar with learner voice and learner leadership, the main concepts for my study. However, he indicated that he was not familiar with CHAT; therefore I explicitly explained to him the use of CHAT in my study. Further to this, I also introduced to him DaSilva's learner leadership analytical model (DaSilva, 2018) that helped him in preparing his PowerPoint presentation to suit the class captains' learner voice and learner leadership workshop.

Next, I discuss what transpired in the fourth change laboratory.

3.8.3.5 The fourth change laboratory session

The fourth workshop was meant for participants to further share ideas on how to implement their anticipated solutions from session three, thus it captured learning action four which was examining the new model. The workshop started off with three representatives providing feedback from the principal. They reported on the positive response of the principal regarding the proposed initiatives. The principal said, "*My office is in support of your initiatives that may contribute to the school development".* The principal's statement indicates the beginning of what is termed *"germ cell"* (Engeström, 2016*),* which means "an internally contradictory unit that can generate complex, theoretically mastered concrete developments". (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 9). This means to open up rich and diverse possibilities of explanation, practical application and creative solutions led by

class captains and vice-class captains as they led the process of transforming their activity system (Sannino et al., 2016).

Another representative who was sent to Mr. Nico (pseudonym), reported back that he also responded positively and he indicated his willingness to do a presentation on learner leadership for class captains and vice-class captains. After all the feedback, participants began to plan for their workshop. They drafted a workshop programme with a list of items divided among them. Items such as an opening prayer, welcoming remarks, introduction of the aims of the workshop, what is learner leadership, vote of thanks, and a closing prayer were part of the programme. One learner volunteered to take up the chairmanship role and the other took up a secretarial role. The item on "what is learner leadership" was dedicated to be presented by the invited Mr. Nico. Furthermore, learners suggested inviting the LRC and other learners to their workshop.

3.8.3.6 The firth change laboratory session

This workshop was attended by 12 class representatives (10 class captains and two vice-class captains) who were the primary participants, five LRC members, five class captains and four vice-class captains (who were not research participants) and 10 other learners. The workshop was led by learners who volunteered to take up the responsibilities of various items in the programme. The chairperson took the lead and directed the workshop.

The workshop started with the Namibian National anthem that was sung by all participants. The opening prayer, welcoming remarks, introduction of the workshop's aims were also done as a matter of protocol. Later, Mr. Nico was given a chance to do a presentation on learner voice and learner leadership. His presentation drew on his 2012 project. After the presentation, learners were provided with an opportunity to ask questions and share their experiences. As I was observing, this triggered participants' conflict of motives (Sannino et al., 2016) as they debated about the need to improve learner voice and learner leadership at their school.

Figure 3.6: Learner leadership workshop

3.8.3.7 The sixth change laboratory session

This was the last workshop in phase two of my study. However, I was aware that it takes a lengthy period of time in both the class captain and vice-class captains' activity and the school as a whole for generative solutions on class captainship practice to develop (Sannino et al., 2016). Although, participants contributed to the development of solutions, I prepared a PowerPoint presentation containing a summary of the resolutions for all participants.

Having discussed how I collected data in phase two of the study, I now turn my attention to how data was analysed.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of "making sense out of the data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). It involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said, and what the researcher has seen and read (*ibid*.).The first step in data analysis is the data organisation (Rule & John, 2011). Data organisation makes it easier for the analysis process (*ibid.).* In this study, data organisation was done through sorting and grouping questionnaires from different participants, transcribing all taped individual and focus group interviews, sorting out transect walks and mapping field notes and summarising the content from documents.

I now begin the discussion on the analysis.

3.9.1 Inductive and abductive stages of analysis

Thematic content analysis is "an inductive and interactive process for searching for similarities and differences in text that would corroborate or disconfirm theory" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 101). It starts with a sample of text by defining the units of analysis e.g. words, sentences and the categories to be used for analysis *(ibid.)*. The study followed the level of analysis as suggested by Merriam (1998). These levels are descriptive accounts, category construction, and theory building *(ibid.)*. In the study, descriptive account was done through coding which means "choosing labels and assigning them to different parts of data" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 77). Coding was important as it helped to identify related information and this led to the next level of analysis, category construction. The next stage was to work with the codes to identify patterns such as similarities and differences, as well as the absence of coded data I encountered in all data sources. Codes were grouped logically into named categories. Categories were further analysed to generate themes. The development of themes stage was the highest level of abstraction under inductive analysis. Though inductive analysis contributed much to the sense making of data, one could not be certain of the conclusion drawn from the data (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). Another limitation was that it only ended up at conclusions of empirical generalisations and regularities *(ibid.)*.

Moving on to abductive analysis, which "involves making inferences, developing models, or generating theory" (Miles & Huberman (1994) as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 187). The process is described as moving up "from the empirical trenches to a more conceptual overview of the landscape" (Merriam, 1998, p. 187). Fundamental to abduction analysis is creativity and the ability to form associations (Danermark et al., 2002). As Danermark et al. (2002, p. 93) assert:

> Besides comprehensive knowledge of established alternative theories, models and frames of interpretations, abduction requires a creative reasoning process enabling the researcher to discern relations and connections not evident or obvious to formulate new ideas about the interconnection of phenomena, to think about something in a different context, an ability to see something as something else.

The above sentiments provide for the discovering of new knowledge (Reichertz, 2004). In this study, abduction was a step toward building on the leadership theories, as well as Cultural

Historical Activity Theory. Put simply, it was about linking theories to findings. In phase one of the study I employed both traditional and contemporary leadership theories to understand the leadership practice of class captains, whereas in phase two I analysed the findings through a CHAT lens. The CHAT methodology helped me to understand the complexity and interconnectedness regarding developing voice and leadership amongst class captains in the case study school. I specifically used the second generation activity model paired with distributed leadership theories to analyse the activity system of class captains. While the model enabled me to see how elements (subject, artefacts, community, division of labour and objects) are interconnected, distributed leadership theory enabled me to explain the division of labour as one element of the activity system.

Moreover, the use of the model enabled the emergence of contradictions. Contradiction as one principle of CHAT was the driving force for this interventionist study. In addition, I used the cycle of the expansive learning model paired with transformative leadership theories to analyse the resolution process for the emerged contradictions. The expansive learning cycle was guided by double stimulation as another principle of CHAT. Double stimulation helped me to capture and analyse the high mental volition among participants, as they moved toward the resolution of contradictions and outcomes of class captains' activity system (Sannino et al., 2009). I also used the principle of multi-voicedness and transformative agency to analyse how collective efforts, as well as class captains' agency, brought transformation to their leadership practice, which is developing voice and leadership (*ibid.*). To capture the transformation process I employed the learner leadership model (DaSilva, 2018).
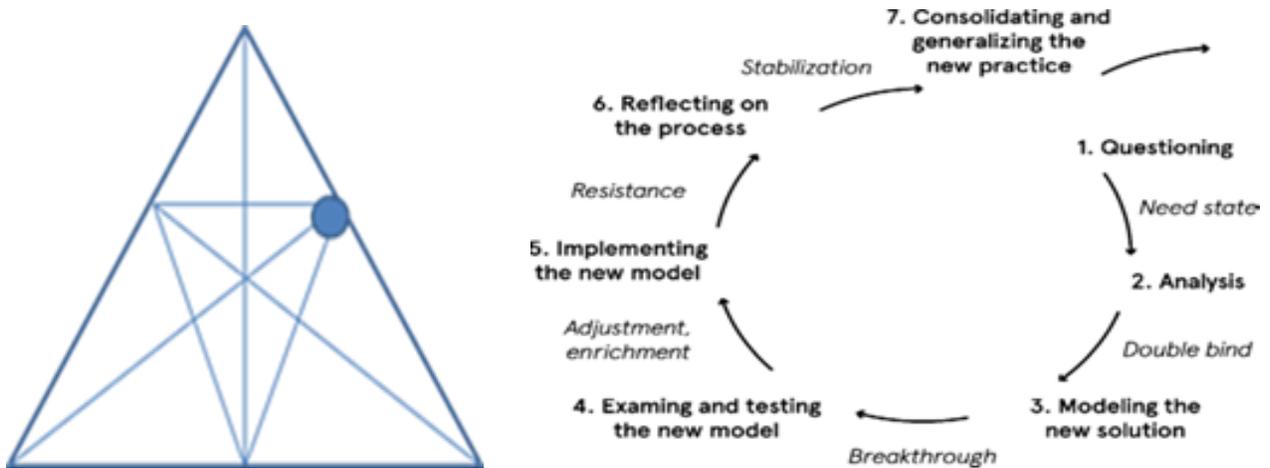
Figure 3.7: Learner leadership, expansive learning, and second-generation models as tools for abductive analysis

In this study, abduction provided a more comprehensive way of reasoning for the study, as revealed by Danermark et al. (2002).

3.10 Trustworthiness of the Study

"How do we know that the research is worthwhile and something we can learn from?" (Winter, 2000).

This question was critical to the credibility and trustworthiness of my study. To ensure trustworthiness, I discussed my data-generating tools with my supervisor before I began with the data gathering processes. This was done to ensure that I was comfortable to carry on with data generation. Secondly, I piloted my interview questions with fellow scholars (ELM group of 2019) as well as my colleagues at my workplace. Piloting was also important as it helped me to identify problem areas in advance (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), which means I was able to make proper amendments before data generation. Thirdly, I ensured "member checking" (Maxwell, 2008, p. 214) took place, whereby participants confirmed the accuracy of data I gathered from them. Lastly, trustworthiness was ensured through crystallisation which is defined "as incorporating multiple qualitative methods that exist on a continuum from traditional qualitative inquiry on one side to artistic inquiry on the other" (Ellingson, 2009, p. 240). This means that the qualitative nature of this study allowed findings to be crystallised to recognise the many truths that may present themselves through different forms of inquiry (Ellingson, 2009).

The next section discusses the inherent limitations such as my positionality, beliefs, and experiences to the study.

3.11 Reflexivity and Positionality

Although I have known the case study school for some time, it was a daunting experience to enter as an interventionist-researcher. I was an insider (Mercer, 2007). An insider is a person who partly immerses himself/herself in the lived experiences of the group being researched (Mercer, 2007). I was a teacher, who teaches in a different school in the same area where the case study school was located. Being in the same area, I was aware of the cultural norms and values of the school community (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). As a researcher-interventionist I acknowledged what I knew about the school community in order to minimise influencing the study.

Another influence I could encounter is that I was known by most participants at the case study school; hence I introduced my position as a research-interventionist, the aim, the risk and benefits of my study. This was done to establish a good rapport with the school community within which I conducted my study.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research are described as principles and professional standards essential for conducting a study in a responsible manner (Louw, 2014). The primary aim of research ethics is to minimise the risk to participants, hence it requires one to obtain ethical clearance before conducting a study (see Rhodes University Ethics Handbook, 2018). I first obtained my research ethical clearance from Rhodes University's Human Ethics Committee before I started with the data gathering process. Although ethics was intertwined in the whole study, I highlight how ethics was ensured below.

3.12.1 Seeking for permission and access to conduct the study

I was aware that I had to conduct my study in one of the Namibian schools, of which the entry and permission should be sought first before I conducted my study. My study employed a case study method that required an exploration of the context (school). Due to this and as Creswell (2014) claims that access in case studies is "guarded by the 'gatekeeper' – people who can control the researcher access to those whom they really want to target" (p. 225). For my study, I sought permission from the Omusati Regional Directorate office, addressed to the Regional Director for me to conduct my study in a school under that directorate. This was done because the director is the custodian for all schools in Omusati. I proceeded to seek permission from the case study school through the principal's office. The principal was a gatekeeper for the school from which I obtained access and permission to conduct my study, as well as to my research participants. I negotiated with the principal to gain access and permission while presenting to him permission seeking letters and the permission granting letters I obtained from the Director's office. After gaining access and permission, I continued with the next step which was to negotiate with my research participants.

3.12.2 Negotiating with research participants

Even though I obtained permission from the principal, I was aware that one should never force people to take part in a study without their consent or assent. It was also important for participants to know the purpose of my study, what would be expected from them, as well as how the study would benefit them. In addition, issues of risks or harm, their identity and confidentiality/privacy

were also highlighted before their voluntary participation. Being aware of this, I arranged to meet with them and explained the purpose of my study, how the study would be conducted and what sort of help I wanted from them. I also pointed out how the study would benefit them and alerted them to possible risks. Moreover, I prepared written consent and assent letters requesting participants' permission to participate in the study. The consent forms were designed for adults (SMT, class register teachers, and parent SB members,) while assent letters were designed for learners (LRC, class captains and vice-class captains) who were underage and could not give their signatory power. In this case, learners' signatory power was obtained through written consent forms that were sent to their parents. This is as Stake (2005) argues, because children can only participate in research when legally written permission has been obtained from parents. A file of all signed consent and assent letters was created.

3.12.3 Other ethical concerns addressed

The issues of confidentiality, as well as anonymity, were addressed in the consent forms and assent letters; however, it was really difficult particularly to anonymise participants during change laboratory workshops which required participants to pool their efforts and learn collectively and collaboratively to bring about change. To ensure ethics, I designed different forms for participants to reflect on how they would feel when combined with others in a change laboratory workshop. The forms were given to all groups of participants.

The information provided to me by participants through individual interviews and focus groups, mapping, and transect walks were treated with confidentiality and were only allowed to be shared with participants themselves and the researcher. I also informed my participants that if need may be, information would only be shared with my supervisor/s. Data would be stored in a protected folder linked to Google drive for about five years in case there was a need for future reference (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

Lastly, issues of harm and deception were also addressed. As a researcher, I was mindful of the fact that I was working in a school with its norms and culture as well as rules. I was careful not to disturb the existing relationship I found in the school, but rather to adopt a co- approach where

members of that school would realise the importance of conducting my interventionist study in their school. For more information on ethics (see Appendix A).

3.13 Conclusion

In this section, I discussed the methodology and design that guided my data generation process. I also highlighted how I selected the research site and research participants. I further described the methods I used to generate data for the two phases of my study. Data analysis also formed part of the discussion and the chapter concluded with the issue of research positionality, trustworthiness and research ethics.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERROGATING THE CURRENT CLASS CAPTAINSHIP LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reported on how the research was undertaken by answering the 'what', 'how' and 'when' questions. This is the first of two chapters that present and discuss the findings from the data. To remind the reader, the overarching aim of the study was to explore opportunities to develop learner voice and learner leadership amongst a group of class captains at a rural combined school in the Omusati region, Namibia. In this study, the data generation and analysis process were done simultaneously and was divided into two phases. During phase one, data was generated through document analysis, questionnaires, interviews, mapping, and transect walks. This formed the basis of contextual profiling which helped me respond to my first three research questions. This chapter focusses on presenting and discussing the data generated during phase one. The findings of phase two will be addressed in Chapter Five.

To begin the chapter, I first present my research objectives and questions to remind the reader of what the study sought to explore and achieve.

Research Objectives:

1) To explore the participation of class captains in the current school leadership structure;
2) To establish class captains' roles and relationships with other leaders within the school.

The overarching research question for this study was: ***How can voice and leadership be developed within a group of class captains in a Namibian combined school?*** To answer the overarching research question, the contextual profiling phase was guided by the following research questions:

1. *How are the concepts of learner voice and learner leadership understood at the school?*
2. *How does class captainship relate to other leaders at the school?*
3. *What are the conditions enabling and hindering class captains' participation in leadership at the school?*

In summary, this chapter is organised in response to the research questions tabulated above.

4.2 Coding of Data Sources

As part of the ethical protocol, protecting research participants' identity is a fundamental principle to research ethics, thus in this study, participants' identity was anonymised through coding. In presenting the data, I used the coding system as shown by the table below. Each code represents the participant and data generation method employed.

Table 4.1: Coding system for phase one of the study

Data sources	Codes
School Board Chairperson individual interview and questionnaire	SBC, QSBC
Principal individual interview and questionnaire	PI, PQ
School management team individual interview and questionnaire	SMT1, SMT2, SMT1Q, SMT2Q
Class teachers focus group interview and questionnaire	CT1, CT2, CT3, CT4, CT5, CT6, CT1Q,CT2Q etc
LRC's focus group interview and questionnaire	LRC1 to LRC 9, LRC1Q etc.
Class captains and vice class captains focus group interview and questionnaire	CC1,CC12 and VC1, VC2, CCQ and VCQ
Document analysis: • School internal policy - D1 • School rules - D2 • School development plan - D3 • Education act 16 of 2001- D4 • School year plan - D5 • Plan of action for academic improvement - D6	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, and D6
Mapping	M1, M2, M3
Transect walks	TW followed by date e.g. 18/07/2019

Having presented the codes of the data sources used in the study, I continue to present and discuss the findings of the study. The presentation and discussions of findings will follow the logic of my research questions and are captured by the following themes:

- Participants' understanding of learner voice and learner leadership concepts;
- Class captains' relationships with other leaders within the school;
- Conditions enabling class captains' participation in leadership at school;
- Conditions hindering class captains' participation in leadership at school.

I now begin to discuss each theme separately beginning with theme one.

4.3 Participant understanding of the concept of learner voice and learner leadership

The section is organised into two parts. The first part presents a sub-theme that captures the understanding of the concept 'learner voice'. Under this part, two categories are discussed. The second part discusses the understanding of the concept of learner leadership and it is organised into three categories. I now turn my attention to discuss the first part of the section.

4.3.1 Toward an understanding of the concept 'learner voice'

Being heard is key to the definition of the concept of learner voice (Mitra & Gross, 2009). The study's intention of developing voice amongst class captains makes the concept fundamental to the study. It was therefore imperative to establish the understanding of participants with regard to this concept. I was however aware that participants might define the concept differently as argued by for example (Fielding, 2004; Gunter & Thomson, 2006; Mitra, 2006). Findings revealed two lines of arguments which are discussed next.

4.3.1.1 Learner voice understood as agency

Learner agency emerged from the data to explicate learner voice. During a transect walk discussion, a participant expressed, "*to have a voice is to tell the principal what should be done in the school* or *to communicate our concerns to our teachers*" (TW-18/ 07/2019). The above comment suggests learners' taking agency to communicate their concerns or needs to the school

management. This is well supported by Mitra and Gross (2009), who assert that the most common and basic form of learner's voice "being heard" (p. 523), requires school personnel (the principal) to listen and learn about learners (class captains) experiences in the school. To add to this point on learners' agency, during the focus group interview with the LRC members, participants indicated that learner voice means to let learners' voices be heard by teachers (QLRC4, QLRC6 & QLRC9*).* This view resonates well with what most scholars put forward, that learner voice implies hearing the voices of learners, see for example (Harris, 2006; Harris & Spillane, 2008). Learners' voice encourages new ideas to be formulated and an imaginative outlook which may promote authentic change in the school (Shields, 2006).

Furthermore, another participant described learner voice to mean "*the consideration of learner's ideas or suggestions by the school management*" (QLRC2). Similarly, another respondent expressed that it is "*when our concerns are responded positively by our teachers or principal*" (LRC3). From this point of view, it was highlighted that learners do not only raise their concerns or needs, but they also expect positive responses from their school management. Their expectation of responses indicated a lack of collaboration which is core to school leadership. Flutter (2006) acknowledges the need for collaboration, engagement, and participation between school leaders which includes learners. It is through engagement with learners that the school management may genuinely respond to learner concerns and in the long run, it promotes authenticity within school leadership (Whitehead, 2009).

In any case, if there is no proper engagement of school leaders at different levels, it may have an implication on their leadership relationships in the school (Young, 2001). This highlights that the school management may have control over many things in the school, but it is difficult to master every aspect of the school. Spillane (2006) argues that there is a need to hear the voices of other leaders, in this study being a class captain, who may also contribute positively to improving practices in the school.

In summary, the findings revealed that participants had a basic understanding of the concept 'learner voice' as their understanding corresponds with Mitra and Gross' (2006) idea of 'being heard'. To enhance participants' understanding of learner voice, the Mitra and Gross pyramid could be used to enhance participants' understanding of learner voice (2006).

4.3.1.2 Learner voice understood as democracy

The study revealed learner's freedom of expression as one way to describe learner voice. This was affirmed by a participant who viewed learner voice as "*having the freedom of speech"* (QLRC7). Another participant expressed learner voice as "*sharing your problem without fear*" (QLRC1). These views imply a deliberative democracy that sees freedom of expression (Mabovula, 2009) as a basis for learners to participate in school leadership. It is, however, demanding what Mabovula (2009) terms "mutual justification", which means that even if learners have freedom of expression, they should also listen to and learn from others, for instance, their teachers, and also the principal. Further to this, another participant described learner voice as a way *"to speak on behalf of other learners*" (QLRC4). Speaking on behalf of other learners implies becoming a voice for the voiceless (Flutter, 2006). This is as Fielding (2004) writes that the "new wave" of learner's voice "covers a range of activities that encourage reflection, discussion, dialogue and action that primarily concern learners, but also by implication school staff and the communities they serve" (p. 321). It is from the above sentiments that one may conclude that learners' voices should emphasise the balance of learner's rights as individuals and their responsibilities as citizens (Gunter & Thomson, 2006). In light of the above, one may conclude that participants had a basic understanding of the concept of learner voice and for this study, learners, especially class captains have learned the democratic principles of sharing their opinions and working to improve conditions for themselves and others in their school (Mitra & Gross, 2009).

4.3.2 Toward an understanding of learner leadership

The concept of learner leadership is central to my study. Therefore I deemed it necessary to find out participants' understanding of the phenomenon. A discussion of three views that dominated the data sets will now be discussed.

4.3.2.1 A positional view of learner leadership

The concept of learner leadership is associated with learners who hold leadership positions in the school. This was evident as most participants pointed out that LRC members are the ones representing learner leadership in the school (QCC4, QCC12, LRC3, QLRC3, QLRC5, QCC8, QCC9, QLRC2, & CC10). Further to this, other participants indicated that learner leadership is all about LRC members directing and controlling other learners who were not elected as leaders (QLRC3, QLRC5, & QCC8). The above view also adds to the positional view of leadership, as directing and controlling are managerial tasks that may sometimes come with positions (Fitz, 1999). If learner leadership is equated to positions, the relational process in the school would be limited (Spillane, 2006). As put by Smyth (2006), the agenda should not be about what is decided by those in leadership positions or that have status, but rather the involvement and active participation of all stakeholders in achieving the vision of their school. During an individual interview, the principal also had a similar understanding of the concept of learner leadership as indicated in the excerpt below:

> *You can start with classrooms where we have learners that are assigned to look after others, to keep order and these are called class captains and vice class captains, those learners are in leadership positions and their   core duties are to assist the management of the school, the principal and the entire management committee of the school management in running, taking decisions and solving problems of the school (PI).*

The principal's view alludes to the notion that only those afforded with positions such as LRC members and class captains are learner leaders. Similarly, another participant confirmed that *"learner leadership are learner's representatives, elected committee of learners to represent the rest of learners in the matters concerning their daily life at school"* (CC7*)*. Central to the above views is that learner leadership is viewed in terms of those selected or elected into positions. On the contrary, Hallinger (2017) argues that leadership should not be the preserve of any position and should be exercised and extended throughout the school. This is to say, not only learners with positions such as class captains and LRC members are leaders, but other learners without those positions could also exercise their leadership. Similarly, Christie (2010) and Foster (1989) also highlight that leadership should operate from the centre and be stretched and dispersed across people and functions. This is as argued, that leadership positions through interactions and

relationships are the cornerstone for school leadership improvement (Spillane, 2006; Harris & Spillane, 2008). Learner leadership might come with positions; however, equating it to positions might have an implication to other learners in the school. Spillane (2006) advises that every learner can be developed into a leader. Aligning my argument to Spillane's sentiments, the school should be seen as a community comprising of multiple leaders striving toward a common objective.

4.3.2.2 Traditional learner leadership traits

The 'abilities' of leading that some individual learners possess emerged as a way of understanding learner leadership. Most participants expressed that learner leadership is viewed as the ability to be a good leader to fellow learners and to lead by good example (LRC4, QLRC10, CC11). This viewpoint suggested that leadership is understood in terms of traits that some learners possess, and it is linked to the 'great man' or 'trait theories (Coleman, 2005). These leadership theories see leadership as an attribute of certain individuals which presents the traditional construct of leadership. This notion is expressed in the following excerpt:

> *Learner leadership also means that you (learner) lead by example, they are exemplary; like we have LRCs of which we are expecting much from them and they are leading by example to show good behaviour and to give an actually educational examples to other learners at the school (SMT1).*

The above response highlighted that learner leadership is attributed to the quality or qualities certain individuals possess. It also suggested the influences that certain individuals exert on others which makes them leaders with followers (Coleman & Earley, 2005). Grant (2017) suggests that when leadership is conceptualised in this way, it promotes controlling relationships and deprives others a share in school leadership. In the context of this study it will be the class captains.

4.3.2.3 Learner leadership conflated with managerial tasks

Managerial roles fulfilled by learners were viewed as leadership. It was expressed that "*learner leaders are those involved in ruling and managing other learners in the school*" (LRC2). As highlighted, ruling and managing are merely managerial tasks. It is not surprising since literature confirms that management and leadership activities or roles are usually conflated (Fitz, 1999;

Coleman, 2005; Christie, 2010). Still, on the same point, the principal emphasised that "*learner leaders need to be included in leadership processes to ensure effective management of the school*" (PI). In line with what the principal expressed, the notion of managerial roles for learner leaders was captured. Although managerial roles could be equally important in the school, the focus on managerial roles alone may promote controlling relationships, of which collective and collaborative efforts of leaders would be influenced. Holding to this, I argue for school leaders to differentiate between leadership and management roles which may enhance their understanding of what leaders and managers can or cannot do. This puts them in a better position to improve school leadership practices in their schools. In conclusion, traditional perspectives to learner leadership were captured whereby certain individuals' (learners) abilities or qualities are considered to be beneficial for leadership. This notion limits the leadership potential of others, who as Grant (2008) argues, if concomitant conditions are provided, leadership can as well develop in them (others).

Overall, the findings under this section revealed that the concept of learner voice was understood in terms of learners taking agency and exercising democracy in making sure that their concerns and needs are heard by the school management. Although the element of agency and democracy provide good leverage to the understanding of the concept, taking it from a transformative perspective (Shields, 2006), the agency, as well as the democracy of learners could be achieved through authentic relationships (Whitehead, 2006). Unless there is an authentic relationship between learners and the school management, one may not expect learners' needs or concerns to be genuinely considered.

Furthermore, the understanding of the concept of learner leadership was also viewed differently by participants. Constructs such as positions, leadership traits and managerial tasks performed by learners emerged to define learner leadership. It was confirmed that there is no distinct definition, as different people defined learner leadership differently. However, a crucial point to note, is that learner leadership should concentrate more on building relationships rather than executing mere managerial roles or tasks.

Having presented and discussed my findings for my first research question, I now focus on my second research question.

4.4 Class captains' relationship with other leaders within the school

This section presents data for my second research question which is: *How does class captainship relate to other leaders at the school?* The sets of data used to answer this question were mapping, transect walks, focus group interviews, individual interviews and questionnaires. A discussion of three views that dominated the data sets will now be discussed.

4.4.1 Positional and hierarchical relations

The position of authority that class captains hold in the school was one way in which they relate to others, for instance, LRC members. To confirm this, a participant wrote that "*class captains are learner leaders taking care of the classrooms, while LRC members are learner leaders taking care of all classrooms in the school*" (QLRC4). The above view implied that class captains and LRC members complement each other's roles to contribute to school leadership. It was also highlighted that *"class captains as peer leaders LRCs communicate learners' issues from their classrooms to the LRC members or class teachers"* (CC3). This indicated a relational work between class captains and other leaders within the school. Clarke (2007) describes that leadership is all about interactions and building relationships with peer leaders within the school to improve practices. The peer leaders for class captains as referred to by Clarke could be the LRC members. It was, however, a concern that there is a positional hierarchy within the school which also influences the way class captains or LRC members are positioned in the school leadership. Although their positions and roles seemed to be hierarchical, it is suggested that individuals should take on leadership positions through interactions and relationships (Spillane, 2006; Harris & Spillane, 2008). This is to say that perhaps a position is important, as long as there is a working relationship with others who do not have positions.

Additionally, participants indicated that any issues that happened in the classrooms are to be reported by class captains via the LRC members to the principal's office (SMT1, LRC3). Still, on this, another respondent mentioned that *"class captains should learn from the bigger body which is the LRC in the school*" (LRC5). The above points indicated some sort of hierarchy (Coleman, 2005) within the school leadership practice, of which class captains are considered learner leaders at a classroom level only. During a focus group interview, it was raised that LRC members are

more important than class captains and most learners report to LRC members than to class captains (LRC6, LRC2, LRC7). To confirm further on this point, another participant denoted that "*class captains must take their initiatives through the LRC to reach the principals' office*" (CT3). This again adds to the point of hierarchy raised earlier, which means that class captains have to follow a certain channel in order for their voices to be heard. Although hierarchy is being promoted in the school, I argue that opportunities should be provided for other leaders, for instance class captains to contribute freely to school leadership regardless of their positions and the hierarchical structures in their school.

To sum up, findings revealed that class captains perform numerous roles that ensure they relate to others in the school. In terms of their positions, class captains relate to LRC members because they complement each other's roles in representing learner matters, as well as other school affairs. It was however noted that hierarchy within the school leadership structure narrowed the participation of other leaders such as class captains in leadership. I argue along with Grant (2008), that the approach to school leadership should be "how the agent is connected with others in their own and others' learning" (p. 86). To elaborate further, this is to say that class representatives may possibly also build leadership relationships with other members of the school and share in the overall school leadership. And again, through a transformative perspective, there is a need to question the hierarchy within the school leadership structure. The questioning may help to unpack the issue of inclusivity and social justice (Shields, 2006), which may also expose the enabling and constraining factors to the leadership practice of class captains.

4.4.2 Class captains' role in handling and resolving disciplinary matters

The findings revealed that disciplinary issues are handled and resolved with the assistance of the class captains. Evidently, during a transect walk discussion, one participant reported that "*as class captains, we are expected by the principal or class teachers to report all disciplinary issues happening in our classrooms because we are leaders there*" (TW-18/07/2019). This viewpoint indicated a link between class captains, class teachers and the school principal working together to promote a safe and conducive classroom and school environment for learners and other members of the school. Similarly, other participants expressed that *"we report all disciplinary*

issues from our classes to the LRC, particularly to the LRC who hold a disciplinary portfolio in the school … who will then notify the principal; we sometimes accompany the LRC disciplinary to the principal office for disciplinary hearings" (CC9). This view highlights that class captains occupy a crucial leadership position in the school. However, reporting alone does not equate to leadership and limits the leadership potential of these learner leaders. I therefore argue, that class captains should be empowered to be able to handle or resolve some disciplinary issues at their level or to collaborate with other school leaders in the case of critical disciplinary issues that are beyond their power. Moreover, participants indicated that the principal's office is the most important office in the school. In a transect walk discussion, the following was captured:

> *This is the most important office in our school (referring to the principal's office). We normally come here for disciplinary hearings. If you are called to this office, know that something is not right either you are going to be punished or sometimes beaten. Like us (class captains or vice class captains) we report all disciplinary cases from our classrooms to this office or sometimes to the staff room because our class teachers operate from here. But … we consider the office of the principal because most learners fear the principal more than any other person in this school (TW-18/07/2019).*

The above excerpt highlighted two important places in the school where learner disciplinary issues are normally handled. One of the places is the principal's office and the other is the teachers' staffroom. Although disciplinary issues were handled in other places in the school, I would acknowledge the partnership between class captains, teachers and the principal in making sure that disciplinary issues from classrooms reach the relevant offices to be resolved. I argue that without this partnership, there is no-one to keep an eye on what is happening in classrooms; therefore I fully support the idea of empowering class captains and providing them with opportunities to develop their voice and leadership.

Furthermore, participants indicated that the principal is the most feared person in the school (CC2, CC7, CC9). There is no doubt because as Donaldson and Gordon (2006) argue, that the principals' position or status promotes a breeding site for miscommunication in the school. Although this might be the case, I argue for a collective approach of school leaders including class captains. This is to say leadership should not be equated to the position or status of the principal only, because it may have an impact on other potential leaders, for example class captains whose position is

informative regarding the functioning of the school classrooms which makes a school (Thurlow, Bush, & Coleman, 2003). Taking it from the distributed perspective, one could support the idea of shared leadership (Gronn, 2000).

In addition, class captains' classroom managing role was revealed as another way of their relationship within the school. In a questionnaire, a participant stated that "*class captains participate in developing classroom rules*" (QSMT2). Classroom rules have become the artefact for class captains to effectively manage their classrooms (Preez, Campher**,** Grobler**,** Loock, & Shaba, 2003). As put by Fitz (1999), classroom rules can also be among the disciplinary technologies and techniques used to ensure effective management of the overall school. This is because as Bush (2002) argues, if schools are not well managed, the primary task and central purpose of teaching and learning is likely to suffer.

In summary, the findings revealed that class captains relate to others through some of the roles they perform. Their position is indeed informative, since they are the focal people to pick up learners' matters in their classrooms and communicate them to the school management. I therefore argue, that a clear understanding of the leadership role that class captains may perform in relationship with other leaders is necessary. This would help to uncover the many ways class captains could contribute to the overall school leadership.

4.4.3 Class captains' role in promoting their school culture

Morning devotion is part of the school culture in which class captains usually take part. In our transect walk discussions with class captains and vice class captains, the following was highlighted:

> *We use to gather here every Monday and Friday at 7h45. All learners, teachers including the principal attend the devotion. The principal, teachers, school secretary, cleaners and the LRC usually line up in front of the learners at the morning assembly point. During the devotions, we are expected to make sure learners from our classrooms are in proper queues and we stand at the back or sometimes in front of our class queues. Our class teachers, as well as the LRC also re-enforces that sometimes. We are expected to conduct the prayer, hoisting the Namibian National flag, and sing the Namibian National Anthem*

and the Regional Inspirational song together with others when it is our classes' turn to conduct the morning devotion as per the school timetable (TW- 18/07/2019).

The excerpt confirmed that class captains relate to other school leaders in a way that both contribute toward promoting their school culture. Their role of directing learners from their classrooms to honour the morning devotion, indicated their share in promoting their school culture. Likewise, class captains also mentioned that "*even the principal, class teachers and LRC as peer leaders expect class captains to direct and control other learners at that space in order to keep the order of each class they represent (*TW-18/09/2019). This again indicates the relationship between class captains and the principal, class teachers and LRC members at that particular assembly point. This is as Thurlow, Bush and Coleman (2003) argue, that relationships may contribute to effective leadership which may lead to school improvement.

Furthermore, a strong leadership bias was captured when participants indicated that the LRC are expected to stand in front at the morning assembly point because they are the leaders of the whole school (LRC2, LRC4, VC1, CC9). Although this might be a valid point, both class captains and LRCs should be considered as equally important learner leaders of schools, regardless of their leadership positions. Whitehead (2009) strengthens the above point saying, "leaders for instance in the school are found at all levels, and are important figures who initiate, integrate values, facilitate change as well as broker, distribute and share power" (p. 848).

4.4.4 Class captains' role of planning and organising school events

Findings revealed that class captains usually collaborate with other leaders within the school to plan and organise school events. This was affirmed by a participant who expressed that "*class captains normally have to sit with other members of the school to organise school events such as Mr. and Ms. Valentine, Entrepreneurship day*" (SBC1). Planning of events required class captains to share their expertise with others to achieve the school common objective. Hence it indicated collaboration as an important element of leadership (Grant, 2008). During an interview, the principal echoed "the *whole organisation, the whole co-ordination, the whole preparation of Mr. and Ms. Valentine was carried out through the participation of class captains*" (PI). He further emphasised that "*these learner leaders have guided the school management on the setting up of*

the day, the dressing code, the time of commencement and what activities are to be done on that day" (PI). Having a share in planning and organising school events indicated that class captains are afforded opportunities for working with others in a participatory way (Grant & Nekondo, 2016).

To sum up, findings in this category presented a strong notion on the leadership practice of class captains in connection with other leaders within the school. It highlighted the extension of class captains' leadership roles beyond the confines of the classrooms. This suggests a good move toward enhancing their participation in the overall school leadership.

4.5 Conditions enabling class captain's participation in leadership

This section is divided into two parts to address my third research question: *What are the conditions enabling and hindering class captains' participation in leadership at the school?* In Part one I present data for the enabling factors of class captains' participation in school leadership. I now begin discussing two lines of argument that emerged as findings under this theme.

4.5.1 Provision through documents

In reviewing different documents at the case study school, I came across a few documents that made provision for class captains to participate in leadership at school. One such document was the School Internal Policy (SIP) for the year 2010. It stipulated that "*class captains must be respected*" (D1). Respect for class captains as stipulated by the document is one enabling factor to their participation in school leadership. Respect is also one construct of leadership connected to values and purpose (Bush, 2008). Valuing and respecting class captains as learner leaders enable them to practice their leadership in a non-threatening space, thus sharing in the overall school leadership. Equally important, the SIP also provided the mission and vision statement of the school. The two statements are written in big letters on the "School Motto" closer to the school's main entrance and they are visible to anyone approaching the school. The following appears on the motto:

*The vision of the school: To give quality education and knowledge to all learners and promote the goals of access, equity, quality, and democracy. **The mission of the school**: For learners to be useful and trustful, empower them with knowledge and skills to help them achieve their future goals, create the spirit of self-development and value the dignity of each individual (D1).*

It is evident from the above statements that learners are fundamental to the vision and mission of the school. Among the school learners are class captains, hence it becomes another enabling condition for class captains to participate in school leadership. For example, the part of the mission statement which says, "for learners to be useful and trustful", shows that the school aims for learners to be active in school activities. However, the key question one may ask is how these statements manifest within school leadership, particularly with class captains. In a transect walk discussion participants' pointed to their school motto saying:

This is our school motto; it is beautiful, it is important to our school because I think it gives us a purpose of being in this school. As you can see, it is written the vision and the mission statement of our school. This motto was renovated last year by our former learner who completed his last grade here. The principal informed him that the school motto needed renovation … because he is talented in drawing. He was paid by the school to do the work (TW-18/07/2019).

Considering the viewpoints of participants, it showed that the "School Motto" is a very important artefact of the school. This is as Heystek, Nieman, Mosoge, & Bipath (2012) explain that "the school motto is the ethos of the school which reflects the shared norms, symbols, and traditions" (p. 174). For participants, their school motto displayed their shared norms and traditions.

Apart from the vision and mission statements, a participant indicated that class captains are also guided by the school rules. As I reviewed the school rules of the year 2014, endorsed by the retired Deputy Director five years back, I found Rule no: 12, which stipulated that " any absenteeism should be reported to the class teacher, principal or members of the school management" (D2). Likewise, Rule no: 6 stipulated: "classrooms as well as school premises must be kept clean" (D2). Still on the above, Rule no: 4 provided that, "class captain should report all irregularities to the school authority at all times" (D2). In a way, the school rules enable the leadership practice of class captains because it speaks directly to the roles of class captains in the

school. It is, however, worrisome to learn that the school is still using the same school rules that were endorsed five years back by a retired Deputy Director.

Still on documents, provision was visible in the School Development Plan of 2017 when it stipulated an intervention "to establish the motivational committee comprised of learners, teachers, and parents as committee members" (D3). Interestingly, the anticipated intervention included learners, which I assume may include class captains. This alone could be another provision made for class captains to participate in school leadership.

Another significant provision was revealed in the School Development Plan through an activity of awarding learners every Friday with different categories identified mainly as time management, discipline, academic performance, wearing of school uniform and neatness, etc. (D3). This serves as a positive reinforcement which boosts the motivation of learners, particularly class captains (Heystek et al., 2012). Rewarding class captains becomes another enabling factor in their participation in school leadership.

To conclude, school documents could serve as mediating artefacts to the leadership practice of class captains (Foot, 2014). However, most of the reviewed documents are too general to really address class captains' leadership in the school. Another challenge is that some of the documents are outdated and it seems that the school is reluctant to develop up-to-date documents. For example, the school rules I reviewed were endorsed by the retired Deputy Director five years back. Therefore, I argue that revision of school documents is needed to develop documents that speak to the current leadership practices at the school. Overall, the findings revealed a lack of national documents to guide the leadership practice of class captains with no stipulations in the *Education Act 16 of 2001* (D4).

4.5.2 Informal guidance of class captains by the teachers

Informal guidance rendered to the class captains by their teachers was identified as an enabling condition to the participation of class captains in school leadership. During a focus group interview, a participant expressed that "the *school has no guiding document but we use to guide them orally*" (CT3), referring to the class captains. This was affirmed by another participant who

indicated that "*the class teachers are the ones entrusted by the school management to guide class captains in their classrooms*" (SMT2). The support and guidance rendered by class teachers has the potential to improve class captains' individual performances in their classrooms, as well as improving leadership practices (Heystek et al., 2012). Although class teachers might try their level best to guide class captains in their classrooms, it also presents a daunting task to them since there is no national document or school-based document on class captainship practice. The practice is not documented (Kalimbo, 2018) and this situation ensures the practice is disregarded, although it is practiced at the case study school.

4.6 Conditions hindering class captains' participation in leadership at the school

Just like the previous section, this section presents data for my third research question: *What are the conditions hindering class captains' participation in leadership at the school*? To alert the reader, there is a link between this section and Chapter Five. While the description of the problem areas and challenges of class captains' activities are provided in this chapter, Chapter Five will continue to surface contradictions that have given rise to the problem areas/ challenges using Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). I now begin with the descriptions of the hindering conditions (problem areas and challenges) surrounding class captain leadership.

4.6.1 Lack of supportive documents and motivation for class captainship practice

Class captainship practice is lacking support at the case study school. In reviewing the documents, I came across the national policy document *Education Act 16 of 2001*, whereby provision on learner leadership is only made for the LRC structure. The document stipulates that "every state secondary school shall have a learner representative body to be called the Learner Representative Council" (Namibia. MBESC, 2001). On class captainship practice, I could not find a policy or guiding document. Still on this, most participants indicated that there are no guiding documents for class captains in the school (SMT1, CT1, CT3, SMT2, CT6). Other participants expressed their dismay saying that class captains are elected as leaders in their classrooms, but they are not given any training, workshops or induction to assume their duties (SBC1, PI, CT5). In addition, the principal emphasised during an individual interview saying:

Another challenge is the training, these learners are not well trained, some sort of needs have to be analysed to say what type of knowledge to be imparted to them. Having them not trained is going to be somehow challenging and this could be one of the hindering pitfalls that we are encountered with (PI).

Commenting on the above viewpoint, it clearly indicated that class captainship practice lacks support both nationally and locally, particularly at the case study school. Programmes such as induction, workshops or training are not available for class captains. If support could be rendered to class captains, they could execute their roles better. This is as Heystek et al. (2012) argue that a workshop may provide hands-on experience that could help prepare class captains for their demanding tasks. Additionally, during a focus group interview with the class teachers, a participant expressed the following:

They only know themselves as class captains but there are no guidelines on what is expected from them. There are no duties drafted for class captains at a school level and in case that a specific class teacher did not draw duties sheet for class captains, it means that they will not even know their duties and these learners are just there I think by title and they have no direction as to what is expected from them (CT5).

The above views elaborated on the point that class captainship lacks support and class captains as learner leaders are faced with challenges when executing their roles in the school.

In terms of motivation, in a focus group interview, a participant voiced his dismay saying "*we are not exposed to leadership activities like the LRC who sometimes go for the LRC training* (CC7). Another participant expressed that "*we are not easily identifiable; we do not have uniforms like the LRC*" (CC4). The viewpoints pronounced the causes of the lack of motivation among class captains. The fact that the practice is not gaining prominence with regard to guiding documents and other benefits such as training or uniforms makes class captains withdraw and become reluctant to participate in school leadership. The school management also influences this situation as the principal indicated that "*there is poor recognition of class captains from the school management regarding their leadership practice*" (PI). Likewise, a participant expressed that "*only the LRC could stand in front with the principal or teachers during the devotion to present something to other learners*" *(*TW-18/07/2019*).* I also observed LRC members in their uniforms the first day I attended their morning devotion. This aroused my interest to question why only LRC

members had uniforms and not class captains. Designed as a formative intervention, the change laboratory method (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) in this study provided a space or platform in which class captains and other school leaders could question why things happen the way they do, especially with regard to their school leadership practices, in particular class captains.

4.6.2 Culture of ill-discipline amongst learners in the school

The school community within which class captains exercise their leadership, lacks discipline. This was affirmed during a focus group interview with the class captains and vice-class captains, when participants indicated that some learners who are older than some of the class captains usually bully them in their classes (CC7, CC8, CC9, CC3, VC2). Still on the same point, another participant expressed that "*we have cyberbullying as one of the hindering processes at school because if the class captain or LRC want to perform their duties, there are those learners who are bullying them or beating them so it hinders their process*" (SMT1). Bullying others designated ill-discipline among learners which may signify the weakness of values such as respect in the school (Heystek et al., 2012). It indicated that the value of respect is not well established among learners at the school. If learners could be self-disciplined, class captains would be motivated to exercise their leadership, freely supported by learners and other members of their school.

In addition, participants remarked that learners respect LRC members more than class captains, because they are closer to the principal (LRC5, LRC6, LRC4). The above view implied that class captains as learner leaders are considered based on their classroom positions in the school. This situation presents another hindering condition which is also promoted by teachers, as a participant indicated that "*sometimes class captains experience harassment from some teachers*" (LRC9).

In conclusion, the views presented here implied that the school in which class captains practice their leadership is lacking discipline amongst learners. Hence one could suggest that the school should build a culture of respect which may promote the participation of class captains in school leadership.

4.6.3 Insecurity and confidentiality issues a concern

One of the hindering conditions raised by participants was the issue of confidentiality and insecurity. Participants indicated that class captains are excluded from school leadership, particularly decision-making processes because some issues in the school are considered too confidential to class captains. During an individual interview, the SMT1 had this to say:

> *It does not necessarily mean learners cannot be part of that, but I'm seeing some of the issues that are affecting teachers; they may not take part in them, simply because I should say for example the teacher came to school drunk, we cannot call learners, learners are just learners and can always leak the information and you know some of these information need to be treated confidentially. This is the reason why they are not involved in all decisions that are taken at school (SMT1).*

Considering the above views, the SMT1 was expressing that learners (class captains) could not form part of all decision-making processes when confidential matters, especially those concerning teachers are discussed. Still, on this point, the principal further elaborated:

> *You see learners are still in the process of growing, their level of keeping confidentiality issues is at a very minimal pace, therefore when you are working with them you have to make sure … know that you are working with young ones that are in the process of growing, they cannot actually keep secrets as an adult so, in issues where you know that there is a need to keep confidentiality, the learner (class captains) has to be excluded (PI).*

Based on the above views, the exclusion of learners in school decision-making is motivated by the fact that learners are considered immature to handle confidential information; however, one participant during an individual interview turned this point saying:

> *Yes, sometimes it is confidentiality but I think sometimes the top leader or manager they are just trying to hide crucial information from the learner because … imagine there is a teacher who is not going to lessons occasionally, so these learners are supposed to approach the office of the principal and report these matter, but if they are denied those roles or rights that maybe there is something confidential to be raised, I think that is denying learners the opportunity (SMT2).*

Contemplating on the above response, it indicated that what school management considers as confidential to learners is sometimes not. Some issues might be confidential, but as SMT2 expressed, sometimes it is a matter of concealing the wrongdoings from the side of adults

(teachers). On this point, the school board chairperson mentioned that *"if we give them training and inform them that some issues are confidential, I think they will take it"* (SBC1). This view implied that learners could also form part of the decision-making process, considering the fact that they are made aware of their roles to handle confidential issues just like any other person in the school. This also speaks directly to the focus of developing voice and leadership amongst class captains which may prepare them to handle confidential information.

To conclude, I acknowledge that some of the issues are indeed confidential in the school, however, learners should be involved in age-appropriate matters. In doing so, it may create opportunities for learners, especially class captains to have a share in school decision making processes. As argued, it is a good thing to ask those who learn in the school – the learners themselves (Flutter, 2006). Learners are the witnesses of schooling (Osberg et al., 2006), thus could represent a crucial part in school decision-making processes.

4.6.4 LRC's leadership overshadows class captainship

LRC leadership is more visible than class captainship in the school. This is not a surprise because LRC's leadership practice is documented (Namibia. *Education Act 16 of 2001).* Participants indicated that schools normally organise the election campaign for the LRC which is never done with class captains (SMT1, SMT2, PI, CT3). They further expressed that class captains are either selected or elected informally in their classrooms to be leaders (*ibid*.). This situation promotes the domination of the LRC leadership structure over the class captainship structure. Hence, one would argue for clearly defined leadership roles between class captains and LRC members. This would reduce domination and see class captains and the LRC complementing each other's roles to achieve the vision and mission of their school. Additionally, this could also discourage class captains, as one participant yelled that "*LRC are important because they are leaders for the whole school"* (CT6).

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter presented how the concept of learner voice and learner leadership was understood by participants at the case study school. Agency and democracy emerged as a construct of the learner

voice. The concept of learner leadership was viewed in terms of positions and managerial tasks performed by learners, as well as traditional leadership traits some learners possessed. Moreover, the chapter highlighted the class captains' role and relationship with other leaders within the school. On this, findings revealed that class captains perform roles that linked to other leaders within the school. Furthermore, I presented findings on the enabling conditions of class captains' participation in leadership and concluded the chapter with the hindering conditions to the leadership practice of class captains. In Chapter Five, the possible contradictions will be surfaced from the hindering conditions presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SURFACING THE CONTRADICTIONS FOR TRANSFORMATION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four which was the first of the findings chapters was dedicated to the contextual profiling phase of learner voice and learner leadership at the case study school and responds to the first three research questions. This chapter is dedicated to the intervention itself and is in response to the final two research questions. For easy access these questions are tabulated below:

- *4. How can the expansive learning cycle help to surface the inner contradictions within class captainship leadership for transformation?*
- *5. How does the change laboratory method contribute to the development of voice and leadership amongst class captains?*

To remind the reader, the challenges and problem areas as identified in the previous chapter were used as mirror data for surfacing the contradictions, hence the discussions in this chapter surround the mirroring and surfacing of contradictions to transform the leadership practice of class captains at the case study school. Although the Change Laboratory (CL) method was used to generate data for this phase, the discussion of the findings will follow the expansive learning actions. The intention is to show the reader the whole process of expansive learning and how participants learned what was not yet there regarding improving class captains' leadership practices.

In the next section, my attention turns to a presentation of the mirror data.

5.2 Mirroring the 'mirror' data

The 'mirror data' in this study is the analysed hindering conditions to the leadership practice of the class captains as discussed in the previous chapter, whereas the mirroring is the process of presenting the analysed findings back to participants. The next PowerPoint slide was taken from the PowerPoint presentation and shows the identified problem areas and challenges. The

contextual profiling findings revealed seven problem areas/challenges that influence the class captains' activity. The PowerPoint slide below illustrates the mirror data.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

Class captains problem areas and challenges identified at the case study school

1. Insecurity and confidential issues a concern
2. Culture of ill- discipline amongst learners in the school
3. Lack of supporting documents and motivation for class captainship practice
4. LRC's leadership overshadows class captainship
5. No formal structure of class captains at school
6. Lack of understanding of the concept learner voice and learner leadership amongst participants
7. No formal elections of class captains at school

</div>

Figure 5.1: Problem areas and challenges of class captains' leadership identified at the case study school

The identified problem areas and challenges became the 1st stimulus (Sannino et al., 2016) for the involvement, analysis and collaborative design efforts among the participants at the case study school (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). This means that participants were left with the task to think critically about the problems in order to find expansive solutions. As Sannino et al. (2016) makes us aware that, "the emphasis is not on completeness, finality, and closure but to take the agency of the learners as a foundational point of departure" (p. 1). Sannino et al. point out that the formative intervention does not aim for quick-fix solutions that are known ahead of time, but rather for expansive solutions that may come from the collective and collaborative effort of participants at the case study school. In other words, participants learn something novel or something which is not yet there (Sannino et al., 2016) regarding the practice.

For this study, the expansive learning process of class captains' activity took a duration of 10 weeks which was from 13th May to 25th July 2019 within the six successive change laboratory workshops. This indicates a local transformative agency (Sannino, 2011) whereby locally expansive solutions were generated.

In the six CLWs conducted, data sources were coded to make it easier for the reader. Below, I present the coding system employed during these CLWs.

Table 5.1 CLW's coding system

CLW's respondents	Codes
Principal	CLP
School Board Chairperson	CLSB
School Management Members	CLSMT
Class Teachers	CLCT
Learner Representative Council	CLLRC
Class Captains and Vice Class Captains	CLCC or CLVC
Observation	CLO

I now turn my attention to discuss the findings for the expansive process by surfacing the contradictions in the next section.

5.3 Expansive Learning Actions and CLWs

As discussed in the literature chapter, the expansive learning cycle offers expansive learning actions as a tool for participants to learn expansively and also to surface out contradictions for the purpose of the development of resolutions. This study employed the expansive learning actions to capture the expansive learning process of class captains and other participants regarding their activity. Although the expansive learning actions are cyclical in the ideal-typical model, the order in which they are presented in this study are not cyclical. This is because the manifestation of the learning actions did not follow the ideal cyclical expansive model. This situation is also revealed by Engeström and Sannino (2010), that it is not always that the learning process follows the ideal expansive model. Below is the cyclical model for easy reference.
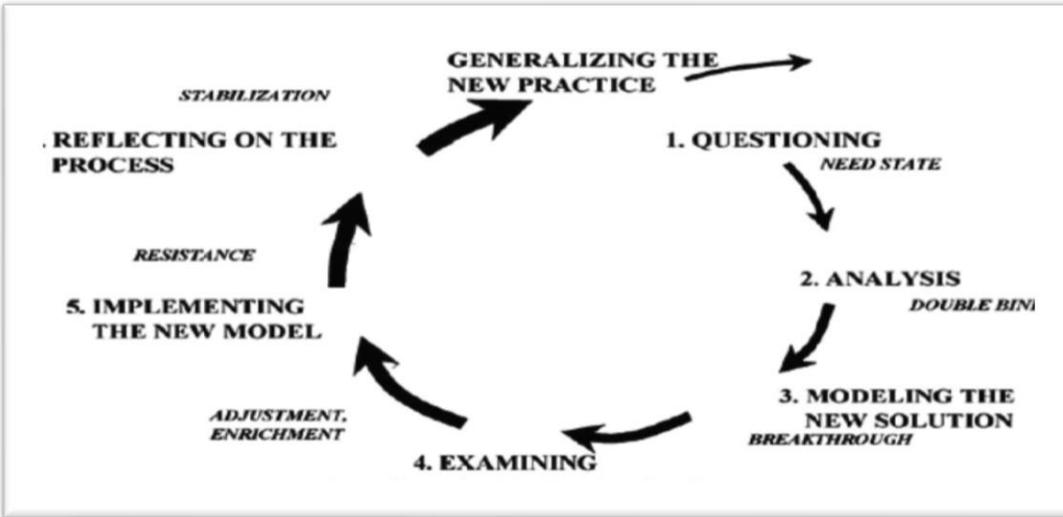
Figure 5.2: The ideal expansive learning cycle

5.3.1 Expansive learning action three: Pre-modelling of the central inner contradictions

This is the third expansive learning action based on the ideal expansive learning cycle. The learning action involves participants collaborating to construct an explicit, simplified model of a new idea that explains and offers a solution to the problematic situation (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). In this study, participants could attempt the pre-modelling, after an encounter with the mirror data. It happened during the first change laboratory which was attended by 23 participants who were the school principal, the SB chairperson, and 12 class captains, two vice class captains, four LRCs, two SMTs, and three class teachers. All participants were accommodated in the science classroom which was the venue for all our CLWs.
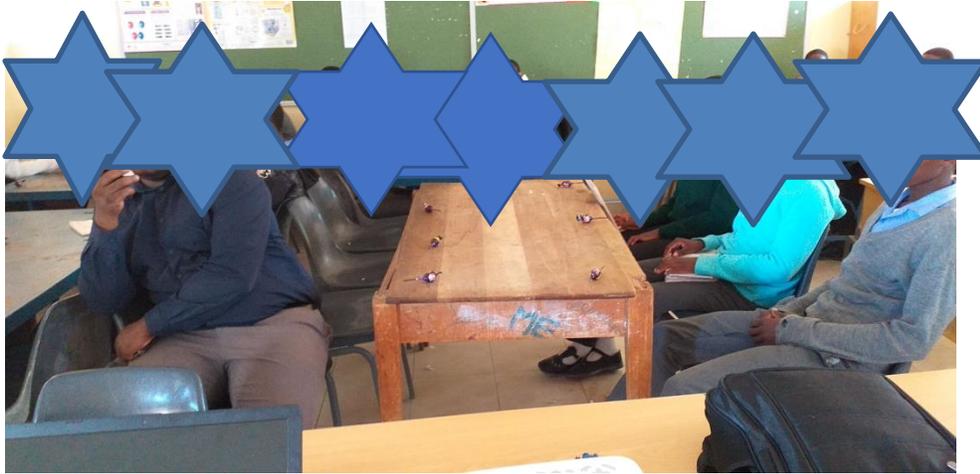
Figure 5.3: First change laboratory workshop

The above photo provides evidence for the first CLW, where I mirrored the identified problems and challenges. Reacting to the mirror data, participants suggested solutions to the problems. The evidence is provided in the next video transcriptions.

In reaction to problem areas no 3 (**The insecurity and confidential issues**) and 6 (**lack of understanding of the concepts of learner voice and learner leadership**), the principal was quoted saying "*these are real problems, the document or duty sheets of class captains should be developed*". He further said, *"they need also training or workshops and support from the school management"* (CLP). Similarly, one SMT was quoted saying, "*as school management members we need to understand the roles of these learners at the school"* (CLSMT2). He further emphasised: "*I think the school management somehow needs the education to understand leadership … I think there are myths in them"* (CLSMT2). Still, on problem no 3 and 6, the class teacher suggested: "*I think we need a school-based induction program for these learners*" (CLCT). Reacting to problem area no 1, the SB chairperson together with one SMT member indicated that children (class captains) could become part of the decision-making processes if they are well guided to handle confidential issues (CLSBC, SMT2). Further to this, one class captain said: "*I suggest that we should work together with our class teachers, principal, and LRC to deal with matters in the school"* (CLCC). Another class captain mentioned, "*we should be treated the same just like the LRC, such as having uniforms*" (CLCC). *"I think the school management and the staff need to come together, discuss and develop a guideline document to help class captains/ vice class captains to lead and control other learners in classes" (SMT3, SMT2).* Another SMT said "*I suggest a week duration election campaign for school class captains, let's say the end of the first school term, by this the practice will gain legitimacy within the school just like the LRC"*. A few LRC members indicated that: "*We are learner leaders of this school, let me say I am the LRC academic I should work in collaboration with class captains to check how a specific class is performing. They should also not work in isolation; they should form up a structure just like the LRC, for example, conducting their meetings and share different challenges in their classrooms"* (CLLRC).

The views expressed by participants indicated quick-fix solutions to the problems or challenges. I acknowledge the fact that participants developed agency (Foot, 2014). It also showed that participants' conflict of motives was triggered by their willingness to change the class captains' situation in their school. However, the study's aim for expansive solutions created a demand for

participants to propel the analysis process of the identified problems, in order to find the underlying causes of each problem. The analysis process allows participants to learn expansively which may result in the generation of expansive solutions (Virkkunen & Newham, 2013).

Furthermore, I have noted that learners (LRC and class captains/vice-class captains) were not free to express themselves (CLO). This point was confirmed by a vice-class captain who expressed that "*we wanted to talk but we were not free to talk around our principal or our teachers*" (CLVC). This view indicates a power relation (Virkkunen & Newham, 2013) between learners and adults. To mitigate the situation, class captains and vice-class captains as primary participants, opted for separate CLWs. This was done to allow for freedom of expression which was difficult in front of their principal or teachers. Even so, the rapport and collaborative efforts were already established which meant that even if learners (class captains and vice class captains) were to continue learning separately, they could consult for example with their teachers or the principal for any guidance or support.

My attention now turns to a discussion of how the expansive learning actions manifested in the study.

5.3.2 Expansive learning actions one & two: Questioning and analysing the situation

Based on the expansive learning cyclical model, *questioning* is the first expansive learning activity that requires participants to be involved in criticising or rejecting some aspects of the current practices and existing wisdom (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). The learning action was attempted simultaneously with analysis. **The analysis** involved the mental, discursive or practical transformation of the situation in order to find out the causes or explanatory mechanisms (*ibid*.).

The following extract from the video transcription provides evidence of the manifestation of these two expansive learning actions:

> *I think the disrespect of class captains, bullying, insulting and beating of class captains are caused by poor discipline among learners in the school. Although the school rules state clearly that they should be respected, learners are continuing to bully, insult or beat them. Like beating is even motivated by the fact some learners think that young class captains*

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cannot control them. It is also clear that class captains are not safe to exercise their leadership in the school environment which is not safe for them. It is even better with LRC members who are more respected than class captains. The other thing is that class captains sometimes do not have a clear direction of what is expected from them.

The above excerpt captured a few underlying causes of the problem areas:

1. Culture of ill-discipline amongst learners in the school.
2. Lack of supportive documents and motivation for class captainship practice.
3. LRC's leadership overshadows class captainship.
4. Lack of understanding of the concept 'learner voice' and leadership amongst participants.

This understanding was still superficial since our quest was to dig deeper into the culture and history in order to surface the deep-seated contradictions to act as a driving force for the intervention (Sannino et al., 2016). Hence, I presented the CHAT second-generation triangular model to further help the analysis process. The model represented the 2nd stimulus to the expansive learning process of class captains' activity (Sannino et al., 2016). Through this model, participants developed more advanced thinking and commenced to analyse the problem areas deeply. The next section highlights how the problem areas were further analysed and how contradictions surfaced.

5.3.2.1 Analysis process of problem areas and challenges

This section uncovers possible underlying causes that have given rise to these problem areas and challenges on class captainship practice. Next, detailed discussions of each problem are provided chronologically.

Problem area 1: The issues of insecurity and confidentiality are embedded in the cultural norms and beliefs within which the school is operating. Participants indicated that "*it is a taboo for children to have a discussion with adults, thus in most cases children do not form part of the adults' discussions*" (CLP). These cultural norms and beliefs within the school communities perpetuated the system of schooling. Even in the school, adults (teachers or the principal) took learners as young ones that should be excluded from making school decisions. From the CHAT second generation model analysis, the problem lies between the **community** (principal, teachers, SMTs,

SB and other adults) and **rules** (school norm). In essence, cultural norms and beliefs held by the school management influenced the exclusion of class captains in school leadership. This secondary contradiction hindered the **objec**t (class captain voice and leadership) of class captains' activity. The resolution of this contradiction may possibly lead to class captains' voice and leadership development (**outcomes**).

Problem area 2: The main cause of this problem was identified as resulting from poor behaviour tendencies among learners. Participants indicated poor behaviour tendencies were influenced by culture and colonial history. Culturally, "*adults could beat children for any wrongdoings as a means of punishment*" (CLCC). They further expressed that "*sometimes children initiate beating as a matter of showing their strength or how powerful one may be*" (CLCC). They indicated that "*the shorter learners in terms of height are always defeated by taller learners*" (CLCC). The cultural and colonial views are inherent in school leadership practices and influence the attainment of class captains' activity object. This situation has created a tension between the **community** (other learners in the classrooms) and the **subject** (class captains and vice-class captains). It is possible that when this tension is resolved, the object of class captains' activity could be achieved.

Problem areas 3 and 6: The lack of support for class captainship practice was identified as caused by a lack of artefacts to guide the practice. There are no policies or guiding documents, induction programmes, training and workshops available for this practice in Namibian schools although it is a common practice. Likewise, it seems that the concept of 'learner voice' and learner leadership was not well understood by participants. On this point "*class captains indicated that they do not know really what is that expected from them*" (CLCC). In tracing the history, the practice has been not documented in Namibia, a situation which still prevails. Without proper documents, the practice is performed informally. This highlights a tension between **mediated artefacts** (workshop, guiding document, induction program) and the **object** (class captain voice and leadership).

Problem area 4: LRC leadership overshadows class captainship, which means the LRC is performing some roles that are supposed to be performed by class captains. There are no relational roles between class captains and LRCs. Participants indicated that it was caused by the fact that

roles of class captains are not documented, whereas for LRCs, they are clearly stipulated in the Namibia *Education Act 16 of 2001*. This situation also makes the LRC members more visible and gives them more prominence as learner leaders. Hence a tension emerged between the **subject** (class captains and vice-class captains) and a **division of labour** (roles of class captains and LRC). The re-definition of leadership roles of class captains and the LRC within the school might be one way to resolve this secondary contradiction.

Problem area 5: Class captains as learner leaders for various classrooms in the school are working in isolation unlike their peer leaders, the LRC. The underlying cause is that their leadership practice is not structured, unlike for the LRC. Considering this situation, there is a conflict within the **subject** (class captains and vice class captains) which presents a **primary contradiction**. Structuring their leadership practice and having them work from within a certain structure, may promote their voice and leadership development.

Problem area 7: The election of class captains also presents a problem. The underlying cause of this problem is that there has been no formal election for class captains at the school. The school management believes that class captains are elected democratically by other learners, while class teachers believe that class captains should be selected by them. Learners believe that it is not fair when class captains are selected by some teachers since it promotes favouritism. Therefore, there is a conflict within the **community** (class teachers, learner, SMTs and SBs). This presents a primary **contradiction.**

To further interrogate these historical factors, I encouraged participants to analyse the drawn three school maps (used in the contextual profiling phase). To remind the reader, the first map depicts the context of the school in the past, the second map represents the current school context and the third map envisions the future context of the school. It was helpful as participants could work between the past map, current map, and future map, to trace out the historical factors that hindered the leadership practice of class captains in their school. Participants concentrated on the visible developments that were at school. Their discussion was captured as follows:

For some of us who have been at this school since grade one, we can tell that the school has changed from poorly resourced to a better school as one can see a lot of buildings (CLVC).

In all changes made, class captains have never taken part in decisions; the same situation with us currently, but I think they could advise better when afforded a chance by the school management to initiate what matters most to us (CLVC, CLCC).

Like in our future map we envisioned things such as a modern kitchen, learner hostel, and many other nice things. We also want to see some of our old buildings renovated (CLCC).

We ought to plant more shade and fruit trees to beautify our school environment (CLCC, CLVC).

As highlighted above, history indicates that class captains have never taken part in developments at the school based on the three maps. This might be as a result of no consultation with class captains because it was felt that they could not contribute positively to school developments. This also presented a tension between **mediated artefacts (**cla**ss** captains guiding document**)** and the **object** (class captains' voice and leadership) which created a **secondary contradiction (**also see problem areas 3 & 6**).**

Overall, the study surfaced seven contradictions (five secondary and two primary contradictions) tabulated next.

Table 5.2: Surfaced contradictions

Surfaced contradictions	Type and elements of the activity system
1. Cultural beliefs and norms within the school management	Secondary contradiction - **community** and **rules**
2. Poor behaviour tendencies among learners	Secondary contradiction - **community** and **subject**
3. Lack of guidance for class captainship leadership practice	Secondary contradiction - **mediated artefacts** and **object**
4. Class captains' leadership overshadowed by LRC leadership	Secondary contradiction - **subject** and **division of labour**

5. Class captainship has no structure in the school	Primary contradiction - within the **subject**
6. No common election for class captains at school	Primary contradiction within the **community**
7. Leadership roles of class captains limited to a classroom	Secondary contradiction - **subject** and **rules**

5.3.2.2 Towards resolving surfaced contradictions

As a criterion for this study, participants were expected to choose priority contradictions to resolve within the given time frame. They considered the doability and whether their anticipated resolutions were within their power. In line with this, participants prioritised contradiction 3 (lack of guidance for class captainship leadership practice) and contradiction number 5 (class captainship has no structure in the school). The following class captains' activity model shows the priority contradictions that participants prioritised to resolve, which were:

- Class captainship has no structure in the school
- Lack of guidance for class captainship leadership practice

Mediated artefacts:

Documents/Training/ Workshop

Subject:

Class captains
Vice-captains

Object:
Voice &
leadership

Outcomes:
Voice &
Leadership
development
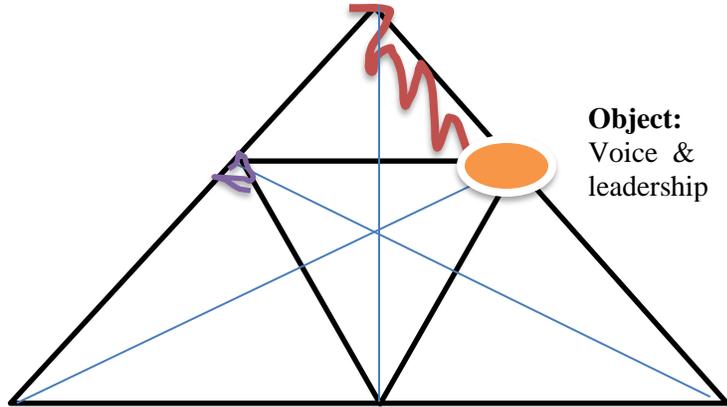
Rules & norms

School policies

Division of labour: Community

SMT, teachers, learners

Role of class captains, LRC,
SMT, SB

Figure 5.4: Primary and secondary contradictions identified as priorities

Next, I discuss how participants modelled to resolve their priority contradictions identified.

5.3.3 Expansive learning action three: Modelling a possible new structure of class captains'
activity

This expansive learning action re-manifested during the fourth CLW. The evidence provided
below was captured in an informal discussion:

Table 5.3: An informal discussion during the fourth CLW

Research interventionist: *let's think of solutions to our priority contradictions*

CLCC4*: We need to organise the class captains' workshop to know our roles better.*

CLCC8: We should organise a day to sit with the principal and our teachers to draft a school-based guiding document for class captains.

CLCC5: The most important thing also is to start working together, therefore I suggest a class captain club.

CLCC1: What about the class captainship yearly election campaign at our school just like for LRCs? I think this way we will also be recognised like them.

Research interventionist: *Where to start?*

CLCC2: *I think we should start organising our workshop but the main question is who is going to workshop us?*

Research interventionist: *I know Mr. Nico has written a learner leadership research report during his BEd Honours, he might be the right person to workshop you, but you can also think of any other person.*

CLCC2: We agree Mr. Nico should be consulted to prepare for the day if he agrees to workshop us.

Research interventionist: *Ok, I will talk to Mr. Nico.*

CLCC3: W*hile we are waiting for the feedback, we should think of informing the principal about our intentions, drafting the programme for the day as well as inviting, for example, the LRC, our peer leaders to our workshop.*

CLCC6: You *just mentioned drafting of the programme, I think we should also volunteer to conduct some items in our programme, for example, who is the chairperson, player conductor, welcoming remarks, etc. two class captains should also volunteer to go and inform the principal about our intentions.*

The planning process of a school-based class captainship workshop was revealed above. To assist with the planning, DaSilva's learner leadership model (DaSilva, 2018), as well as the newly developed class captains' leadership relation web model was introduced to the workshop conductor (Mr. Nico). These two models helped class captains to understand and analyse their

leadership roles within the different zones (DaSilva, 2018). The web model helped class captains to uncover the leadership relationship that might exist between them and other leaders within their school (Nehunga, 2019, personal communication). This was another way to fill the gap since the DaSilva model has not captured that part of the relationship. It was also an answer to Mabovula (2009), who calls for a good "web of social relations" (p. 223). Essentially, this web model contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of Educational Leadership and Management, particularly learner leadership studies. The model is illustrated below.
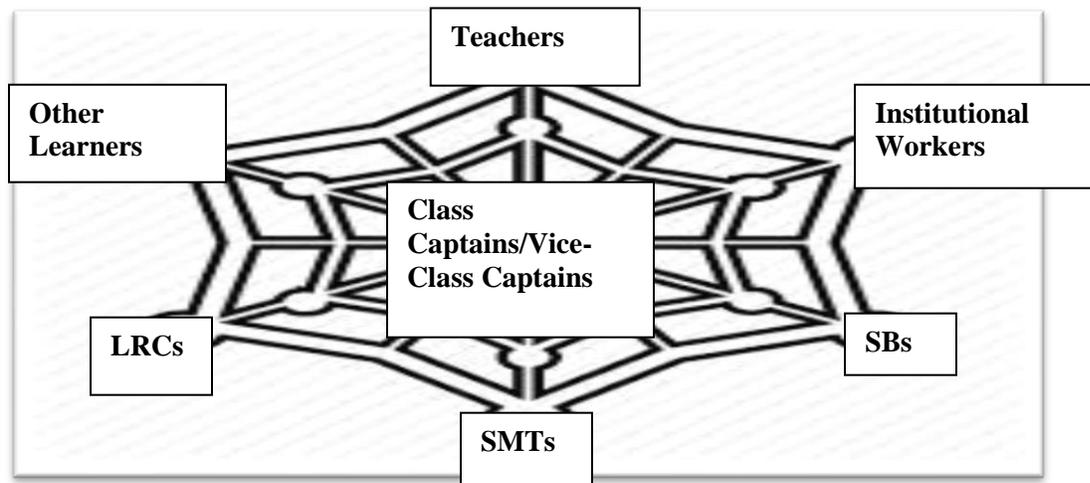
Figure 5.5: Class captains' leadership relationship web model

The above model illustrates the relationship of class captains and other leaders in the school context. In support of Fielding (2006), relationships are essential to help school members to live well together.

Having discussed the modelling phase, I now move on to discuss the manifestation of the fourth expansive learning action.

5.3.4 The fourth expansive learning action: Examining the new model

It was during the fifth CL session when *examining the new mode*l manifested. This expansive learning action involves participants running, operating and experimenting with the new model to

fully grasp its dynamics, potentials, and limitations (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). For this study, the examining started with class captains running the planned class captainship leadership workshop. This workshop was led by class captains, as class captains were seen conducting various items in their drafted workshop programme (CLO).

Figure 5.6: Class captains' workshop and their template programme

Table 5.4: Workshop template programme

CLASS CAPTAINSHIP LEARNER LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP FOR 2019
Date: 16/07/2019   Chairperson: Jacob (class captain 9B)
Secretary: Martha (class captain 6C)
National Anthem
Opening prayer: Asteria (class captain 5A)
Welcoming remarks: Junior (class captain 8B)
Aims of the workshop: Victoria (vice –class captain 7C)
Learner voice and learner leadership presentation: Mr. Nikodemus (workshop main presenter)
Vote of thanks: Oscar (Vice class captain 8A)
Closing prayer: Angel (class captain 10C)
AU anthem.

Although pseudonyms were used to protect learner's identity, the above-drafted programme indicates that the workshop was led by class captains and vice class captains (CLO).

This workshop triggered a conflict of motives among the class captains and vice-class captains to work toward transforming their activity, as they became aware of their leadership roles as learner leaders in the school. They proposed a date whereby they would sit with the principal, their teachers, and the LRC to develop **a school-based guiding document** (in a Z-fold) for class captains (CLO). This was their anticipated resolution to the **secondary contradiction** between **mediated artefacts** and **objects** (lack of guidance for class captain leadership practice).

Furthermore, they also proposed to **establish a class captains' club** at the school for class captains to begin working together with each other and other leaders in the school for example the LRC. On this initiative, one class captain expressed: "*we should begin discussing learner matters with others in the school, for example, to become members of the school disciplinary committee or to tackle academic matters with the respective LRC and so on* (CLCC). This proposal was heading toward resolving the primary contradiction within **subjects** (no structure for class captains at school). Some of these resolutions were long-term which meant the school needed time to implement them; hence it was not possible for me to monitor the implementation phase. On this, as a researcher-interventionist I am planning to go back to the case study school, even after the completion of my Master's degree to observe the implementations, as well as the sustainability of initiatives or projects (Nehunga, 2019, personal communication). I will be interested to observe how the implementation of the anticipated class captains' school-based guiding document, as well as the establishment of the class captains' club at the case study school has materialised.

Finally, the sixth change laboratory session captured the last session for the study. It was conducted in order to share the proposed resolutions to the contradictions of class captains' activity with other members of the school. Hence, all participants were invited. I prepared a PowerPoint presentation for the suggested resolutions. Like the previous workshop, this workshop was learner-led, as the learners drafted and directed the workshop. Herewith, I present the PowerPoint slide of the anticipated resolutions.
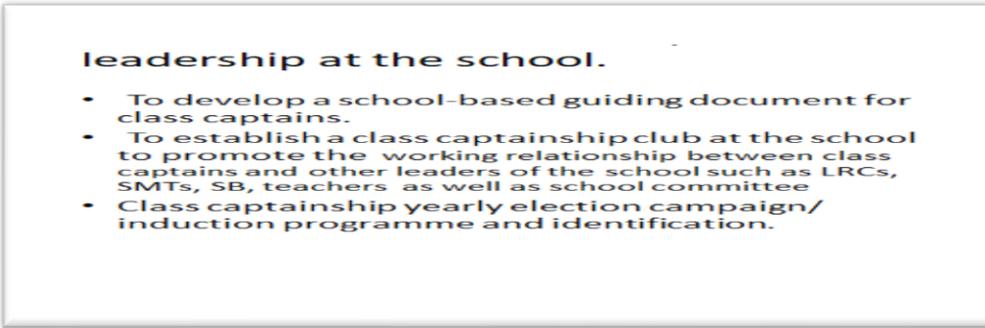
Figure 5.7: Powerpoint slide for suggested resolutions

After my presentation the principal informed other participants "*I want all of us to gather in this room by Friday in order to implement what we have learned today, just inform others*" (CLP). This indicated that the principal was also keen to improve the class captains' situation. His position might be influential toward the full implementation of the anticipated resolutions.

Having discussed the findings for my fifth research question, I now turn to discuss the findings for my sixth (final) research question.

5.5 The Contribution of Change Laboratory Workshops in the Development of Class Captains' Voice and Leadership

5.5.1 Introduction

This section is organised to present and discuss findings on: *How does the change laboratory method contribute to the development of voice and leadership amongst class captains?* In Namibia, the method has been employed by various scholars who conducted interventionist studies (see for example Nehunga, 2016; Amadhila, 2018; Kalimbo, 2018; Vaino, 2018). Their findings revealed that the method can develop agency and allow participants to learn expansively about their problem situations as argued by Virkkunen and Newnham (2013).

For this study, the change laboratory method was used to allow the collective and collaborative efforts of participants toward transforming class captains' activity at the case study school. From

the six CLWs conducted, I had a chance to observe and conduct informal discussions with my participants in order to solicit how they were experiencing the method and how it was contributing to the development of voice and leadership amongst class captains. In the next section, I discuss the findings as they emerged from the study.

5.5.2 The development of skills, attitudes and knowledge

5.5.2.1 Improved confidence and agency among class captains

The fifth CL method contributed to the confidence and development of agency among class captains. This was raised during an informal discussion by a participant who indicated that "*my legs usually 'tremble' whenever I stand in front of people, right now I feel confident because of the CLWs I attended*" (CLRC). Another participant indicated that, "*I gained more confidence and want to be like Job Amupanda, a young Namibian political activist and Sacky Nikodemus, one of the leading experts in Namibia*" (CLVC). Bush (2007) posits that confidence-building is a driving force for the improvement of educational leadership and management in school institutions. On this point, a class captain indicated that "*confidence makes us critical thinkers able to solve problems in our school, as well as in our community*" (CLCC). This point is supported by Smyth (2006), who posits that our agenda should be to produce citizens who are capable of improving their own lives and other's lives, thus the confidence of leadership gained by participants in the CLWs may contribute to their school's improvement, as well as the school communities.

5.5.2.2 Class captains developed into authentic leaders

Findings revealed that authenticity developed amongst class captains. This is evident, as class captains expressed that "*they do not fear anymore to stand up for the truth*" (CLCC). Further to this, they indicated that "*they were ready to represent learner's matters honestly*" (CLVC). Truth and honesty are attributed to authenticity and as Whitehead (2009) argues, authentic leaders always seek improvement and are aware of those being led and look out for the welfare of others. One participant during our informal discussion had this to say: "*it is good that we understand our positions as learner leaders in this school, thus we are aiming to work with others and bring about*

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improvement, starting from our classrooms". In support of the above view, Whitehead (2009) also highlights that good leaders produce outcomes which are healthy for society.

5.5.2.3 Learner voice develops amongst class captains and vice-class captains

The involvement of class captains and vice-class captains in CLWs brought about good communicative skills and learners indicated that *"they were free to speak out about what mattered to them in their school*" (CLVC). This resonates well with Mitra and Gross' (2009) concept of 'being heard'. During the fifth change laboratory workshop, class captains were seen leading and conducting items of their workshop (CLO). They showed a willingness to collaborate with the adults in the school in order to bring about change (*ibid.).* Mitra and Gross (2009) mention that increasing students' voices yields positive results in the school. Their collaboration started with them wanting to inform the school principal, as well as their teachers about their intentions to transform their leadership practice. Their idea was that if they could be supported and afforded with leadership opportunities, they could contribute to the overall school leadership (CLO). This is as Mitra and Gross (2009) emphasise, that learner voice implies a share of learners in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of others in their school.

5.5.2.4 Teamwork develops amongst class captains

Evidence of teamwork was observed throughout all CLWs conducted. Class captains were seen dividing roles and duties among themselves. They had to draw posters containing their plan of actions for contradiction resolutions (CLO). One class captain said: "*if we want to make our workshop a success, we should be willing to work together as a team"* (CLCC). Another one narrated: "*we should work like the LRC, we normally see them carrying out their activities in a team, so they set a good example for us too"* (CLCC). I also observed teamwork among class captains during CLW four and five, when class captains and vice-class captains engaged in planning, organising and conducting their school-based leadership workshop (CLO). Furthermore, their anticipated resolution of establishing a class captains' club indicated their willingness to work as a team. Whitehead (2009) argues that working as a team expands the horizon of others which means developing others in the process. In addition, Harris and Spillane (2008) look at "the

influence of a shared endeavor in order to enhance the skills of the individual" (p. 432). Bringing people together and developing others is one of the most important values. It was finally observed that teamwork created a happy and interactive environment that promoted effective decisions to successfully plan and run the class captains' workshop. Below is the photograph providing evidence of teamwork.

Figure 5.8: Class captains and vice-class captains working as a team in the third CLW

5.5.2.5 Improved interpersonal relationship and behaviour

The class captains indicated that their leadership skills have changed significantly, and their attitudes have improved from being shy both in the school and the community (CLCC; CLVC). The way they interact with others has changed because as learner leaders leading other learners in their class, they have developed good interpersonal relationships which include treating people equally and with dignity. They have developed unity and respect for others in the school. One participant expressed that "*this study made me realise that having good relations with others in the school is the way to success*" (CLCC). This is as Grant (2008) posits, that leadership is all about building good relationships with others.

5.5.2.6 Initiative and commitment

Evidence of taking initiative also emerged from the findings. From my own personal observation, it was clear that class captains were innovative when suggesting possible solutions to the surfaced contradictions (CLO). They had good ideas to contribute to the transformation of their activity. To me, this was one element of taking initiative. Literature emphasises the importance of initiative in

leadership as decision-making often requires new ideas to be formulated and an imaginative outlook promoting change, as opposed to simply achieving status quo (Harris & Lambert, 2003; Harris, 2006). The next excerpt captured the discussion of class captains:

> *Two heads are better than one. We should be willing to bring our ideas forward in order to contribute to the change effort we are all aiming for. We should as well respect other people's opinions and participate without fear (CLCC, CLVC).*

Furthermore, another value demonstrated was learners' eagerness to attend all CLWs. Class captains and vice-class captains were punctual, and I found the venue well-arranged and everyone seated (CLO). They indicated that they were eager to complete the learning process. In support of the above, Whitehead (2009) says that leadership is a complex moral relationship between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion and a shared vision of the good (p. 847). This means that when commitment develops in learners, accomplishing set objectives will be easier.

5.6. Conclusion

The chapter discussed findings for phase two of my research, which adopted a formative change laboratory method. The change laboratory method through the expansive learning cycle and CHAT as an analytical model underpinning this study, enabled participants to surface seven contradictions that hampered the leadership practice of class captains. Of the seven contradictions five were secondary, while two were primary contradictions. Participants' prioritised addressing one secondary and one primary contradiction with the intention to resolve them, which were: **the lack of understanding of leadership amongst participants** and **unguided class captains' leadership practice**. The resolution process was captured by an expansive learning cycle and aided by the expansive learning actions within the cycle. A school-based workshop for class captains was conducted as one resolution to the secondary contradiction of unguided class captains' leadership practice.

Other resolutions such as developing a school-based class captain guiding document and the establishment of a class captains' club, as well as a class captains' yearly election campaign were long-term goals for the school. Furthermore, findings on my sixth research question revealed that class captain participation in the change laboratory intervention contributed to their voice and

leadership development. Skills and values such as communication, commitment and confidence amongst others, were developed amongst the class captains. My attention now turns to the concluding chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the entire study. Firstly, in this chapter, I remind the reader of the research objectives and questions that guided this study. Secondly, I discuss the main findings of the study to alert the reader to what this study has explored, found and achieved. Thirdly, the implication of adopting the chosen theoretical framework of the study is discussed. Moving on, I then present the contributions that this study has made. Furthermore, I provide recommendations, as well as further possibilities for research pertaining to learner leadership studies. Finally, I share my final thoughts on conducting the study.

6.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The primary purpose of this study was ***to investigate how learner voice and learner leadership can be developed amongst class captains in the school.*** To address this, the following goals were set:

1. To explore the participation of class captains in the current school leadership structure;
2. To establish the leadership roles relationship between class captains and other leadership structures in the school such as the LRC;
3. To enhance and transform leadership practice for class captains through Change Laboratory Workshops.

The central research question for this study was: ***How can voice and leadership be developed within a group of class captains in a Namibian combined school?*** The study took place in two phases, whereby phase one aimed at exploring the current practices of class captains' leadership at the case study school. Phase two aimed at intervening in their practices with the intention to

provide opportunities to develop their voice and leadership, thus enabling this group of learners to be heard. **Phase one** was guided by the following research questions:

1) *How are the concepts of learner voice and learner leadership understood at the school?*
2) *How does class captainship relate to other leadership structures at the school?*
3) *What are the conditions enabling and hindering class captains' participation in leadership at the school?*

Phase two: An intervention phase was driven by the following research questions:

4) *How can the expansive learning cycle help to surface the inner contradictions within the class captain's activity for transformation?*
5. *How did the change laboratory method contribute to the development of voice and leadership amongst class captains?*

Having presented my research objectives and questions, I now turn my attention to the key findings of the study.

6.3 Key Insights Emerging from the Findings

This section discusses the main findings of the study. It is structured around these themes: understanding of the concept 'learner voice' and 'learner leadership' among participants; the leadership relationship and participation of class captains in leadership at school; conditions enabling and constraining class captains' participation in leadership at school; and surfaced inner contradictions within class captains' activity and resolutions made.

6.3.1 Understanding the concept of 'learner voice' among participants

The study found that there are various understandings of the concept of 'learner voice'. Some participants referred to learner voice as agency that learners are taking to make their concerns heard by adults in their school. Other participants referred to the concept as democracy, which means the freedom of expression amongst learners in whatever matters to them. Findings also revealed the element of bureaucracy and hierarchy exists within the school context in which the

learners' voice was exercised. This was evident as participants indicated that class captains as class representatives are expected to communicate their concerns through the LRC members before reaching the SMTs. Moreover, learners expect their concerns to be responded to positively by the school management. There seems to be limited relational work between learners and adults to resolve issues. Hence it is imperative to consider Mitra and Gross (2006), who refer to the learner's voice as the many ways of learner's involvement in school leadership. Furthermore, some participants' understanding does not resonate well with Fielding's (2006) term of 'a new wave', whereby learners ought to collaborate with adults to discuss dialogue, reflect or resolve issues in their school. In light of the above, I offered Mitra and Gross' (2006) pyramid, as well as the inverted pyramid (as adopted in Fielding, 2001) to enhance the understanding of the concept 'learner voice' at the case study school. This kind of presentation allows future researchers to see the bigger picture of learners' involvement in leadership at school. For this study, this platform was provided as class captains and vice-class captains and other participants became co-researchers in studying their leadership practice at the school. Being co-researchers, enabled contradictions to surface and a resolution process of those contradictions to be achieved. I personally believe that this pyramid could offer a better analysis of learner voice within the school leadership, hence improving leadership practices.
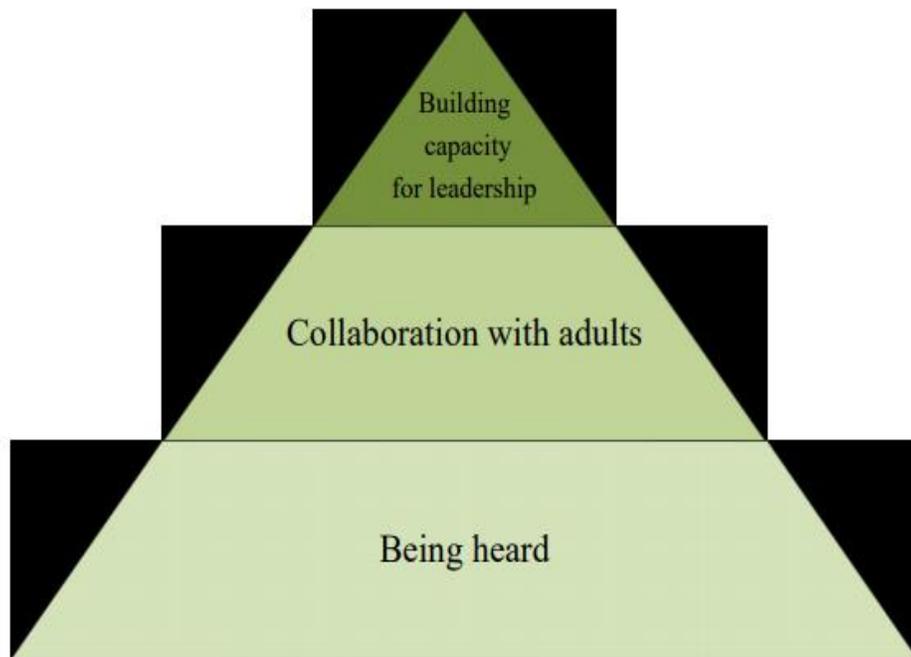
Figure 6.1: Pyramid of learner voice (Mitra & Gross, 2009)

6.3.2 Understanding of learner leadership among participants

Participants understood the concept of learner leadership differently. Firstly, the legislated learner representative body (LRC) that is functional at the case study school understood leadership amongst learners in terms of positions that learners hold in the school. For example, they made reference to class captains as learner representatives at the classroom level. It is not surprising, since Coleman (2005) found that leadership is often conflated with management. This means that those in positions of authority are often viewed as leaders. It is argued that learner leadership can be exercised by those learners in positions such as the LRC members and class captains; however, it can also be exercised even by those learners without positions in the school. Grant (2008) provides that leadership is not the function of an individual(s) and it can emerge anywhere in the school. She further emphasises that it can be developed amongst learners (*ibid*.). This coincides

well with my BEd Honours (ELM) findings that leadership was indeed developed in learner leaders (Nehunga, 2016).

Secondly, learner leadership was viewed in terms of learner leadership traits. Participants expressed that learner leaders are those who have abilities to lead others, thus learner leadership was equated to leadership qualities or traits some learners possessed. This view gives the impression that some learners cannot lead and it is limiting the leadership potential of other learners who might not hold positions in the school. Hence, I argue along with Grant (2018), that leadership does not reside in an individual(s) and can be developed, thus there is a need to consider multiple leaders in the school. Lastly, learner leadership was understood in terms of the managerial tasks performed by learners at school. For example, LRC members and class captains were seen as learner leaders because they help the school management to control and maintain discipline at school. Although their managerial roles could be equally important for the proper functioning of the school, it is worthwhile for one to make a distinction between managerial and leadership tasks in order to improve practices at the school.

6.3.3 Class captains relationship with other leaders within the school

This section provides findings about the relationship that exists between class captains as learner leaders and other leaders in the school. Furthermore, the extent to which class captains participate in leadership at the school is also elaborated upon.

On relationships, the study revealed that although hierarchical, a positional relationship exists between class captains and LRC members because both hold positions of authority in the school. This means they are both learner representatives. While class captains represent learners at the classroom level, LRC members represent learners at a school level. Findings also revealed that they both share in promoting their school culture such as conducting the morning devotions. Participants also indicated that class captains co-operate and collaborate with other school stakeholders to plan and organise school activities such as school events. Another notable relationship was their involvement in handling and resolving disciplinary issues in the school, since they are expected by the school principal or teachers to report cases from their classroom. In

light of the above, I offer DaSilva's learner leadership model (refer to Figure 3.7) which provides an understanding of the leadership roles that class captains could perform based on the different zones. Furthermore, I have captured the leadership relationship of class captains with other leaders in the school and diagrammatically it can be represented as follows:
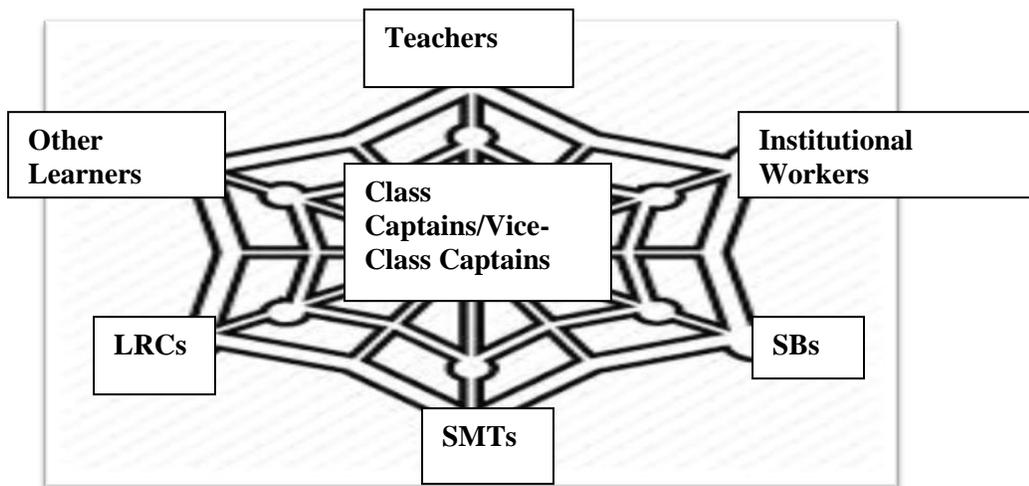
Figure 6.2: Class captains' leadership relationship web model

This web could additionally enhance participants' understanding of the leadership relationship that may exist between class captains and other leaders in the school.

6.3.4 Conditions enabling class captains' participation in leadership

The study revealed few school documents that could provide general guidance to class captainship practice. School documents such as the PAAI, SDP, school rules, as well as the SIP provided general stipulations to learner leadership. In all documents reviewed, I could not find any stipulations directed specifically to the class captain's leadership in the school. In addition, the informal guidance of class captains provided by their teachers was revealed as another enabling condition to their leadership practice. One reason for the few enabling conditions is that the practice is not documented in Namibia (Kalimbo, 2018). It was also revealed that the practice is not legislated, which means there are no policies or documents to guide the practice.

6.3.5 Conditions hindering class captains' participation in leadership

The study revealed more hindering than enabling conditions. Firstly, the study revealed that class captainship practice lacks support in terms of guiding documents both nationally and locally. Secondly, the poor behaviour tendencies amongst learners came out strongly to hinder the participation of class captains in school leadership. The school community in which class captains are supposed to exercise their leadership is not safe and conducive. Thirdly, the issue of insecurity and confidentiality was also raised as another hindering condition to class captains' leadership practice. Class captains are viewed as children thus are not allowed to form part of decision-making processes.

Lastly, another hindering factor revealed was that LRC leadership overshadows class captainship practice. This is to say that the only visible learner leadership structure at the case study school was the LRC; hence in most cases, these learners perform tasks that class captains are supposed to perform. This indicated that there is no relational work between these learners' leaders.

6.3.6 Surfacing and resolving contradictions

The study surfaced seven contradictions (two primary and five secondary) from the hindering conditions to class captainship practice as shown below:

Table 6.1: Surfaced contradictions

Surfaced contradictions	Type and elements of the activity system
1. Cultural beliefs and norms within the school management	Secondary contradiction - **community** and **rules**
2. Poor behaviour tendencies among learners	Secondary contradiction - **community** and **object**
3. Lack of guidance for class captainship leadership practice	Secondary contradiction - **mediated artefacts** and **object**
4. Class captains' leadership overshadowed by LRC leadership	Secondary contradiction - **subject** and **division of labour**

5. Class captainship has no structure in the school	Primary contradiction - within the **subject**
6. No common election for class captains at school	Primary contradiction within the **community**
7. Leadership roles of class captains limited to a classroom	Secondary contradiction - **subject** and **rules**

From the surfaced contradictions, participants prioritised to resolve contradiction number 3 (lack of guidance for class captains' leadership practice) and contradiction number 5 (class captainship has no structure in the school). In response to contradiction number 3, a school based workshop for class captains was conducted whereas for contradiction number 5, participants anticipated establishing a class captain club at the school.

Other long term resolutions agreed upon were to develop a school-based guiding document for class captains, as well as an endorsement of a common school-based election campaign for future class captains.

Next, I discuss how the change laboratory workshops contributed to the voice and leadership development of class captains.

6.3.7 The development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes

The change laboratory workshops contributed to the emergence of various skills, attitudes, and knowledge as attributes to voice and leadership development amongst class captains. Findings revealed improved confidence in class captains as they were also able to take the agency to implement their anticipated resolutions. Authenticity also developed in class captains as learner leaders indicated that they would stand up for the truth concerning learners' affairs. Moreover, teamwork was visible as class captains collaborated and worked collectively to achieve the object of their activity system. Lastly, findings revealed improved interpersonal relationships and

behaviour amongst class captains, as they now communicated and related well with others in the school.

6.3.8 The implications of the theoretical orientation of the study

Adopting a theory in the African context which was developed in Finland has implications. This study is underpinned by CHAT, a theory that provided analytical and methodological tools for understanding and transforming the practice. The analytical tools such as the CHAT second-generation model and the expansive learning cycle, helped to surface the inner contradictions within and between elements of the class captain activity. These surfaced inner contradictions drove the expansive learning process to the stage of generating resolutions to some of the contradictions. This indicated agency, as participants broke out of the confines of traditional top-down development (Engeström, Rantavuori, & Kerosuo, 2013) hence improving the practice. Moreover, CHAT offered a space for participants' collective and collaborative efforts in learning expansively regarding the class captainship practice. This was provided by the method of the change laboratory workshops. I will acknowledge that this powerful theory enabled me and the participants at the case study school to see the bigger picture of what class captainship entailed and to devise ways on how to improve the practice. Considering the multiple benefits that CHAT has to offer, I recommend future researchers to utilise this theory in their studies.

It was, however, a challenge at the case study school for participants to learn together as the theory suggests. This situation is influenced by an African culture of separating children from adults when issues are discussed. The same situation influenced the power relations between children and adults in the space of the CLWs. On this, I would advise future researchers to develop tools which can be pre-workshop applicable for an African context, that could help to reduce the power relations between adults and children in order to promote a collective and collaborative learning environment for all.

6.4 Contribution of the Study

This is a unique study that has contributed to the body of knowledge within the Educational Leadership and Management field. Its focus on class captainship practice made it unusual since

this area is under-researched in the Namibian educational context and the findings could benefit the case study school, as well as inform class captainship practices in other schools in Namibia and elsewhere.

In terms of methods, the study has contributed significantly and future researchers could incorporate methods such as the change laboratory, as well as participatory methods of transect walks and mapping to improve on the traditional methods of data generation. I would acknowledge the link that the participatory method has with interventionist studies such as this one. I therefore argue for future researchers to adopt these methods in their studies. It has the potential to develop agency amongst participants from the onset.

Furthermore, the study contributed to the development of transformative agency among participants at the case study school. The generated solutions to class captainship practice took a theoretical root, which means findings may be transferred to other contexts. More importantly, the study has given voice to participants at the case study school which will allow them to advise either neighbouring schools or other schools on the same phenomenon. Lastly, this study made participants realise that authentic transformation is possible through engagement with local people.

6.5 Possible Limitations of the Study and the Way Forward

This section presents possible limitations of this study. Firstly, I would acknowledge that the study was limited to a single school context. However, I wanted to dig deeper into class captainship practice at that particular case study school, thus findings were specifically applicable to the case study school. However, the generative potential for this interventionist study allows the findings to be used in other school contexts to improve the practice (Sannino & Engeström, 2010).

Moreover, this study was limited by time. Time could not allow me to observe the implementation of all seven expansive learning actions, thus I ended at expansive learning action four. The completeness of all expansive learning actions could have made this study develop a nuanced understanding of the whole process of resolving the contradictions. Furthermore, in studying class captains' practice, I employed a second-generation activity analysis only. Hence the study was limited to a single class captain's activity system. Therefore, I suggest that more studies on class

captainship be conducted with the focus on exploring the leadership relationship that class captains might have with other leadership structures in the school, which was not well explored in this study. This suggests a move to the analysis through CHAT third-generation, perhaps at the level of a PhD.

6.6 Recommendations for Practice

Regardless of the limitations presented above, I argue that we are at a crossroads regarding class captainship practice in our Namibian school context, thus I suggest more research to be conducted in this area. This would make this practice robust and it may contribute to the body of limited knowledge on class captainship practice. I personally consider this practice another important learner leadership structure; therefore, we should continue to promote it in our Namibian context and elsewhere.

This study strongly recommends for class captainship practice to be legitimised within our Namibian education context. This is to say the practice should be documented to provide support to class captains as they are currently faced with numerous challenges. Secondly, I recommend that the LRCs as peer leaders of class captains should build a relationship with each other to represent learner issues in their school. This would see them complementing each other's roles and uplifting the learner leadership relationships in their schools. Furthermore, the issue of gender should also be interrogated to enable future researchers to trace whether gender has an influence on leadership in general and class captainship in particular. Thirdly, I recommend that SMTs, LRCs, teachers and any other leading players in the school, sit down together to draft a school-based guiding document for class captains. Fourthly, I recommend a formal structure for class captains, such as a club for them to begin working with each other and other members of the school. In a club, class captains would be able to discuss developments in their classrooms, as well as in the whole school. Finally, I would recommend a yearly election campaign for class captains and recognition of class captains as learner leaders in order to improve yet another common learner leadership practice in Namibia.

6.7 My Final Thoughts

I am forever grateful that Rhodes University granted me this great opportunity to pursue my first Master's degree. This study created unforgettable memories that will live with me for my entire life. Academically, I have grown as I gained writing and communicative skills. I gained knowledge as well as vocabulary that I may now use in any platform I find myself. Personally, the study transformed me into a hard-working and responsible person as I had to endure sleepless nights throughout the journey of this study. I also developed into a caring, supportive person through the unconditional love and support I received from my wonderful supervisors – my final word is, that I will be always grateful to all who supported me throughout the journey.

As I conclude the entire thesis, I feel overwhelmed by my educational contribution in the form of this study (thesis). However, I feel confident that school personnel could learn one or two things from this study and improve class captains' leadership practice at schools. As for me, I strongly argue that we *illuminate the torch* or *wipe the window* to see the bigger picture and empower those that have the potential to contribute to school leadership practices.

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Appendices
Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa
t: +27 (0) 46 603 8055
f: +27 (0) 46 603 8822
e: ethics-committee@ru.ac.za

www.ru.ac.za/research/research/ethics

6 December 2018

Jacobina Nehunga
nehungajacobina@gmail.com

Dear Jacobina Nehunga

Re: **HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS APPLICATION**
An interventionist study of developing voice and leadership amongst a group of class captains: A case study in a rural combined school, Namibia
Reference number: Nehunga20180921
Submitted: 2018/09/21

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC) – Human Ethics (HE) sub-committee.

The committee's decision is **Approved. Gatekeepers permission has been received.**

Please note that ethics approval will only be valid for one year on the date issued. An annual progress report is required in order to renew approval for the following year.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Sincerely,

Prof Jo Dames
Chair: Human Ethics sub-committee, RUESC- HE

Note:

Appendix B: Permission Letter from Gate Keeper One

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
Team Work and Dedication for Quality Education

Tel: +264 65 251700
Fax: +264 65 251722

Private Bag 529
OUTAPI

Enq: A█████████

27 November 2018

Ms. Jacobina T. Nehunga
P.O. Box 174
Outapi

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY AT ████████████████████

1. This letter serves to notify you (**Ms. Jacobina T. Nehunga**) that permission has been granted to conduct a research study on "**an interventionist study of developing voice and leadership amongst a group of class captains**", at A███████████████ Combined School in █████████████.

2. Please be informed that the research to be conducted at school should by no means whatsoever disrupt teaching and learning.

3. We hope and trust this exercise will enhance quality education in the Region.

Thank you for your understanding

Yours faithfully

████████████
Director of Education, Arts and Culture

OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION,
ARTS AND CULTURE
2018 -11- 2 8
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
PRIVATE BAG 529, OUTAPI
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Teamwork and dedication for quality education

Cc; Inspector of Education for Anamulenge Circuit
Principal for Alphons John Pandeni Combined School

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer.

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Appendix C: Permission Letter from Gate Keeper Two

Republic of Namibia

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

P O Box 27, Outapi, ~~~~~~~~~~ Circuit, Omusati Region

E-mail: johnpandenischool@~~~~~~
www.j~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Tel   : 065-250301
Fax   : 0886516235

29 January 2019

Ms. Jacobina T. Nehunga
P.O. Box 174
Outapi

SUBJECT: **PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY AT** ~~~~~~~

1. This letter serves to notify you (**Ms Jacobina T. Nehunga**) that permission has been granted to conduct a research study on "**an interventionist study of developing voice and leadership amongst a group of class captains**", at ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ d School in A~~~~~~ Circuit.

2. Please be informed that the research to be conducted at school should by no means whatsoever disrupt teaching and learning.

3. We hope and trust this exercise will enhance quality education in the Region.

Thank you for your understanding

Yours faithfully

....

School Principal

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
THE PRINCIPAL
2019 -01- 29
P.O. BOX 27, OUTAPI
TEL: 065 - 250301
OMUSATI REGION
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
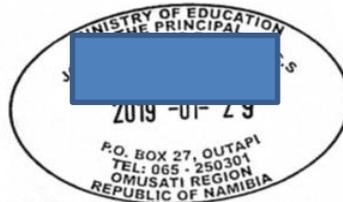
Appendix D: Learner Parent Consent Letters

(the content of this letter will be translated in the parents' language)

Dear Parent

I am Jacobina Taukondjele Nehunga, a part-time Master of Education student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, NIED-Namibia. In fulfilment of this degree, I am required to carry out a research study in one Namibian school. The research study is scheduled to be conducted at the beginning of next year, 2019. The title of the study is "An interventionist study of developing voice and leadership amongst a group of class captains": A case study in a rural combined school, Namibia. This study aims to investigate opportunities to develop learner voice and learner leadership amongst class captains in the school. Furthermore, the study aims to create leadership opportunities for class captains as learner leaders, thus they will be co-researchers with me regarding their leadership practice and come up with ways to improve their leadership practice within their school.

 I am hereby requesting permission from you as a parent to allow your child to partake in this study. Your child is chosen because he/she is serving as a class captain / LRC at the school and I trust that he/she is well positioned to contribute to this study. Moreover, I would like to assure you that your child and you have the right to withdraw any time if you feel so without any further consequences. Furthermore, I would like to inform you that as a researcher I will be accountable to make sure that I protect the identity of your child throughout the research process. This means that all information will be kept confidential at all times. And again, privacy will be maintained by means of pseudonyms. All photographs taken during the process will be blurred to protect the identity of your child.

If you agree with the content of this letter confirm by signing this part below

 I…………………………………………………… (full names of parent) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and nature of this research study and that I have accepted on behalf my child to participate. I understand that I receive the right to withdraw my participation as well as for child from this study at any time.
SIGNATURE
…………………………………………………………………..
Parent

Appendix E: Assent Letter for Class Captain &Vice-Class Captain

Dear learner

I am Jacobina Taukondjele Nehunga, a part-time Master of Education student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, NIED-Namibia. In fulfilment of this degree, I am required to carry out a research study in a Namibian School. The research study is scheduled to be conducted at the beginning of next year, 2019. The title of the study is "An interventionist study of developing voice and leadership amongst a group of class captains": A case study in a rural combined school, Namibia. This study aims to investigate how learner voice and leadership can be developed amongst class captains in the school. Furthermore, the study aims to create leadership opportunities for class captains as learner leaders, thus they will be co-researchers with me regarding their leadership practice and come up with ways to improve their leadership practice within their school.

Having stated it above, I am writing this letter to ask you permission to join me in this study in your capacity as a class captain/ vice-class captain. I trust that your involvement in this study will help you to understand your leadership roles better and execute them well. I would like to inform you that you should not fear to be part of this study because everything will be handled with confidentiality. In case that I will take you photos, I will make sure that they are blurred to protect your identity.

You should not worry because your school principal, SMT and class teachers at school your school are aware of the above. This means that, should anything go wrong I will be accountable. I will also send consent letters to your parents or guardians for permission for you to take part in this study. If you agree with the content of this letter confirm by signing this part below

I……………………………………………… (full names of learner) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and nature of this research study and that I have accepted to participate. I understand that I receive the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

…………………………………….   ……...............................
SIGNATURE   Date

Appendix F: Assent Letter for Learners (LRC)

Dear LRC member

I am Jacobina Taukondjele Nehunga, a part-time Master of Education student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, NIED-Namibia. In fulfilment of this degree, I am required to carry out a research study in one Namibian school. The research study is scheduled to be conducted at the beginning of next year, 2019. The title of the study is "An interventionist study of developing voice and leadership amongst a group of class captains": A case study in a rural combined school, Namibia. This study aims to investigate how learner voice and leadership can be developed amongst class captains in the school. Furthermore, the study aims to create leadership opportunities for class captains as learner leaders, thus they will be co-researchers with me regarding their leadership practice and come up with ways to improve their leadership practice within their school.

Having stated it above, I am writing this letter to ask you permission to join me in this study in your capacity as an LRC. I trust that your involvement in this study will help you to understand leadership roles of class captains as equal important learner leaders like you in your school. Your involvement will also enhance your leadership roles and as well as improving the leadership practice for your school in general. I would like to inform you that you should not fear to be part of this study because everything will be handled with confidentiality. In case that I will take you photos, I will make sure that they are blurred to protect your identity.

You should not worry because your school principal, SMT and class teachers at your school are aware of the above. This means that, should anything go wrong I will be accountable. I will also send consent letters to your parents or guardians for permission for you to take part in this study. If you agree with the content of this letter confirm by signing this part below:

I…………………………………………………… (full names of learner) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and nature of this research study and that I have accepted to participate. I understand that I receive the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

…………………………………….   ……..............................

SIGNATURE   Date

Appendix G: Questionnaires: Class Captains & Vice Class Captains

1. **Participants information**

Grade and class----------------- **Gender**-------------------------------------

2. **Leadership and leadership roles:**

2.1 What does the concept learner leadership mean to you?

2.2 What are the learner leadership structures in your school?

2.3 Do you consider yourself to be a learner leader? Provide a reason for your answer.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………..

Yes ☐   no ☐   not sure ☐

2.4 How did you become a class captain/ vice class captain?

a) Elected by other learners ☐

b) Appointed by your class teachers ☐

c) Chosen by learners together with your class teachers ☐

2.5 What are your roles and responsibilities as a class captain / vice class captain?

2.6 What are challenges you experience as a class captain or vice class captain in carrying out your role?

2.7 What do you think can be done to overcome the challenges experienced by you as class captain / vice class captain?

2.8 Have you ever taken part in school decision making? If yes, give examples of the decision/s you have taken part in

yes [   ]   [   ] no   [   ] not sure

Example

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

What do you think should be done to enhance the involvement of you in the school decision making?...

Appendix H: Questionnaire for LRC

Participants information

portfolio----------------- Gender------------------------------------

2. **Leadership and leadership roles:**

2.1 What does the concept learner leadership and learner voice mean to you?

2.2 What are the learner leadership structures in your school?

2.3 Do you consider class captains or vice class captains to be a learner leader? Why/

Yes [ ]   no [ ]

2.3 How did class captains/ vice class captain become leaders?

a) Elected by other learners [ ]

b) Appointed by your class teachers [ ]

c) Chosen by learners together with your class teachers [ ]

2.4 What do you think are roles and responsibilities of class captain / vice class captain? And is there a relation between class captains roles and your roles?...
....
2.5 What challenges do class captains or vice class captains' experience as learners' leaders in carrying out their roles? ……………………………………………………………………………..

2.6 What do you think can be done to overcome challenges experienced by class captain / vice class captains concering their leadership?

2.7 Have you ever seen class captains taking part in school decision making? If yes, give examples of the decision/s they have taken part in.

yes   [ ]   no   [ ]   not sure [ ]

Example

2.8 What do you think should be done to enhance the involvement of class captains / vice in the school decision-making?...

Appendix I: Interview Schedule for Cc/Vc

The following questions will form part of interviewing process of class captains

1. How do you understand learner leadership?
2. Can you give examples of some learner leadership structures in your school?
3. As a class captains do you consider yourself as a learner leader? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?
4. How did you become a class captain in your classroom?
5. What are your current roles and responsibilities as a class captain?
6. Is there a document or policy to guide you on carrying out your roles and responsibilities in the school?

7. How does your role relate to that of LRC in the school?

   Do you take part in school decision making? If yes, give examples. If, no, why?

8. What challenges do you face as a class captain?

9. What do you think should be done to enhance your leadership position?

Appendix J: Interview Schedules: LRC Members

The following questions will form part of interviewing process of the LRC

1. What are your views of the concept learner leadership?
2. Apart from you as an LRC, which other learner leadership structures exist in the school? Is learner voice being heard in the school? If yes, to which extent. If no, why?
3. What is the relationship between your leadership roles and that of class captains in your school?
4. What do you think are challenges for class captains as learner leaders?
5. Are class captains involved in school decision making? If yes, how. If no, why?
6. Do you think the involvement of class captains in school decision making can contribute to positive changes in the school? If yes, how. If no, explain?
7. What do you think should be done for class captains to be heard in the school?

Appendix K: Questionnaire for SB, SMT and class teachers

1. Participant information

- **Rank: class teacher   class group……………………**
- **Gender**………………………………..
2. **The concept of learner leadership and learner voice**
- (tick in the appropriate box)

a) Leadership is equated to formal positions in the school such as a principal only

Agree [ ]   strongly agree [ ]   disagree [ ]   strongly disagree [ ]   not sure

b) Learners can only form part of some decisions that are not critical in the school?

Agree [ ]   strongly agree [ ]   disagree [ ]   strongly disagree [ ]   not sure [ ]

c) The school is obliged to develop learners as leaders

Agree [ ]   strongly agree [ ]   disagree [ ]   strongly disagree [ ]   not sure

[ ]

....
....

- **Class captainship practice**

(a) Is class captainship being practiced in your school?

Yes [ ]   no [ ]   not sure [ ]

- How are the class captains elected in the school?

a) Elected by learners ☐

b) Appointed by class teachers ☐

c) Chosen by learners together with the class teacher ☐

- How many class captains and vice class captains are there in your class/ school? (indicate the no. of girls and boys in the box).

Girls' ☐   Boys ☐

- Is there any document to inform you on how class captains carrying out their roles in the class/ school?

Yes ☐   no ☐   not sure ☐

- If no, tell me what guides class captains/ vice to carry out thier leadership roles

……………………………………………………………………………

2.6 Are they involved in school decision making?

Yes ☐   no ☐   not sure ☐

2.7 Give Some examples of school decisions in which class captains or vice class captains have taken part?

2.8 What challenges are faced by your school that hinder the leadership and voice of class captains in the school?.. ....

2.8 What do you think can be done for class captains/ vice class captains to be heard in the school?.. ....

Appendix L: Interview Schedule: Principal, SB, SMT Members and Class Teachers

This is the outline of the interview schedule I intend to use during data generating process of this study .The following questions will guide me during interviewing process and are deduced from the main research questions

1. What does learner leadership concept mean to you?

2. In which leadership structures are learners involved in the school?

3. In what ways learner's voice is being heard in the school?

4. Do learners participate in all decisions to be made in the school? If yes give examples of these decisions. If no, why?

5. Do you view class captains as learner leaders? If yes, in what ways. If no, why?

6. Do you think class captains are given enough opportunities to effect change in the school. If yes how. If no, why?

7. What do you think is promoting or hindering the leadership roles of class captains in your school?

8. What do you think should be done to enhance the leadership of class captains within the school?

Appendix M: Document Analysis Guide

Date of analysis------------------------------------- **week no**---

Document to be analysed	How are the documents relates to element of second generation activity system of class captains (elements)
The education Act 16 of 2001 and its Regulations	
2. The school internal policy document	
3.The School Development Plan (SDP)	
4School caledar of activities (year plan)	
5 School rules	
6.Plan of Action for Acadermic Improvement (PAAI)	
7.Any other relevant document	

Appendix N: Change Laboratory Workshop Observation Schedule

Stages of expansive learning	Findings
1.questioning: Old practice , current practice and future practice on class captainship practice	
2. analysis: finding out the causes and explanatory mechanisms of class captainship practice.	
3. modeling the new solution: offer a solution on the issue of class captaiship practice	
4. examining and testing the new model: planning for an intervention	
5. implementing the new solution: running an intervention	
6.reflecting on the process: interviews, focus group interviews, photographs, video recording.	
7.consolidating and generalising the new practice: redefining class captainship practice making class captains equally important learners in the school	

Appendix O: CLWs Presentations

Presentation on Key Findings of the Study

By: Ms J Nehunga

MEd, ELM student, Rhodes University

XXXXX Combined school

Educational leadership and management (ELM)

- Traditional style of leadership- top down hierarchical leadership style.
- Contemporary views:
- distributed leadership- leadership is shared.
- Transformative leadership- the need for social betterment, for enhancing equity, and for a thorough reshaping of knowledge and belief structures.

Continues...

- Management defined as processes undertaken by persons holding formal administrative roles in the organization.
- Management aimed at planning, organising, and controlling organizational structures, policies and operations.

Understanding of the concept learner voice and learner leadership

- Learner leadership: involves interactions and building relationships with other learners, peer leaders and other members of the school.
- P: Learners elected to represent others in the school.
- Learner voice: "focuses on the many ways in which learners can actively participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers" (Mitra, 2006, p. 315).
- P: understood as the ability to stand up and speak on behalf of other learners.
- P: Learner leadership equated to LRCs.

To what extend do class captains participate in school leadership?

- Planning of fun days and valentine days
- NB class captains do more managerial roles than leadership roles.
- Ensure cleanliness
- Collect and submit activity books
- Keep law and order in the class
- Report cases and emergencies etc

Thank you!

JOHN A PANDENI CS TEAM

Resolutions to class captains' leadership at the school.

- To develop a school-based guiding document for class captains.
- To establish a class captainship club at the school to promote the working relationship between class captains and other leaders of the school such as LRCs, SMTs, SB, teachers as well as school committee
- Class captainship yearly election campaign/ induction programme and identification.

Constraining factors or challenges to the leadership practice of class captains

1. Election of class captains (one year tenure)
- Appointed by class teachers.
- Elected by fellow learners.
- Elected by class teachers together with learners.
2. Disrespect by other learners, bullying, insulting and beating of class captains.
3. Lack of support i.e. no guiding document(s), no training/ workshop or induction programme for class captains.
4. LRCs leadership overshadow class captainship i.e. not recognised, disregarded, just there by title, lack of motivation, lack of identification.
5. No formal structure for class captains at school i.e. class captains working in isolation.
6. Lack of understanding of the concept learner voice and learner leadership

Enabling factors to the leadership practice of class captains

- Provision by election (one year tenure which is not fixed).
- Opportunity afforded to manage their classrooms and lead others.
- Support from class teachers.
- Provision by the mission and vision statement of the school.

To what extend do class captains participate in school leadership?

- Planning of fun days and valentine days
- NB class captains do more managerial roles than leadership roles.
- Ensure cleanliness
- Collect and submit activity books
- Keep law and order in the class
- Report cases and emergencies etc

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Leadership roles relationship between class captains and other members in the school

- Class captains as leaders at the classroom level.
- Relate to LRCs- yes we all maintain the order in the school and make sure the school rules are fulfilled.
- Class captainship relate to school board- yes, we are all leaders of the school , we are working to keep the school in order.
- NB class captains currently working in isolation.