A formative intervention study of how learner voice and leadership can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

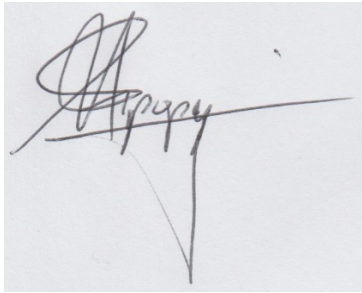## MASTER OF EDUCATION

(Educational Leadership and Management)

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Declaration

I, Salomo S. M. Shipopyeni, hereby declare that this thesis is a product of my own effort, written in my own words that has not previously been submitted at any university for assessment or examination board. The ideas, work or words of others is acknowledged according to Rhodes University 2019 Reference Guide.

7 December 2019

Abstract

The Namibian Education system, after the country gained independence, introduced various reforms to ensure the attainment of the educational goals of access, quality, equity and democracy in schools. One of the policies introduced to promote democracy in our schools was *The Educational Act 16 of 2001*, which gave birth to the establishment of Learners Representatives Councils (LRC) in schools. The LRC body is the legal learner leadership body established to ensure learners are represented in school leadership. However, various studies have revealed that this legal body of learners in many schools has been merely 'rubber-stamping' decisions made by teachers; learners have had very little input in decisions that affect them as learners. Thus, I was prompted to conduct this formative intervention study on learner leadership at an urban combined school in Namibia. Informed by distributed and transformative leadership theories, the study aimed to develop leadership within the LRC members and the needed expansive transformation regarding leadership practices in school. The intention was for learners to be enabled to practice their democratic right in decision-making processes in matters that concerned their schooling and learning. This study was theoretically and analytically framed by second generation Cultural-Historical Activity Theory.

The participants included 12 LRC members, the LRC liaison teacher, the class register teacher, three school management team members and the principal. The research method was a case study, underpinned by the critical paradigm to bring about the fundamental expansive transformation in learner leadership practices at the case study school. This qualitative study was divided into two phases, a contextual profiling phase and an intervention phase. Data were generated through document analysis, observation, questionnaires, focus group interviews and Change Laboratory Workshops. The data were generated to answer the over-arching question: *How learner voice and leadership can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia.* The data were analysed inductively and abductively. The key findings were: first, there were a variety of understandings of the concept learner leadership; second, the involvement of LRC members in decision-making processes was limited to involvement in organising extra-

curricular activities and controlling of other learners at school; third, leadership development opportunities for learners at the case study school were only provided through training at the beginning of the year and the LRC carrying out various activities and roles at the case study school. Several challenges that constrained the LRC voice and leadership development were surfaced and, through Change Laboratory Workshops, the participants of the activity system together with me (the researcher-interventionist), identified the expansive learning opportunities to develop leadership amongst Learner Representative Council (LRC) members.

In the final analysis, this study will contribute to the production of knowledge on the concept of learner leadership in the context of Namibia. Fellow scholars, professionals, colleagues and policy makers in education are requested to engage with this thesis to contribute to our understanding of this important aspect of our field and speak back to policy.

Key words: Learner leadership, learner voice, CHAT, distributed leadership, transformative leadership, Change Laboratory Workshops

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late mom Aina Indongo, late father Amon Shipopyeni, my wife, Meme Shipopyeni Nandjilah Loide, our sons Immanuel Tukwatha Page Shipopyeni and Alfeus Mweno Shipopyeni for bringing the best out of me in every situation and for being my inspiration in climbing the ladder towards completing my educational journey.

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List of Acronyms

CHAT – Cultural Historical Activity Theory

ELM – Educational Leadership and Management

HOD – Head Of Department

LRC – Learner Representative Council

MBESC – Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture

MEC – Ministry of Education and Culture

SDP – School Development Plan

SMT – School Management Team

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the aim of the thesis and it introduce the research study that I undertook at an urban combined school in one of the four northern regions in Namibia. For ethical reasons, a pseudonym was used to protect the case study school's identity and for confidentiality reasons. The title of the study is: *A study of how learner voice and leadership can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia.*

Firstly, the chapter begins with the context and background of the study to provide the reader with a brief history of educational leadership and, particularly, learner leadership in the context of Namibia. Secondly, the reader is informed of my interest to investigate learner leadership at a local school in the rationale section of the study; this follows the context and background section. Thirdly, the chapter presents the research goal and questions the study intends to answer. Finally, the study provides a brief description of the research methodology used and provides an outline of the entire thesis.

1.2 The Study Background and Context

Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) research has, for the past decades, focused on principals and, more recently, teacher leadership in educational institutions such as schools (Grant, 2015). However, the learner leadership research "is limited, and particularly so in African countries such as Namibia" (Grant & Nekondo, 2016, p. 13). This highlights the need for formative interventionist research that will develop learner leadership in schools in order to promote "spaces of leadership from which young people can speak back regarding what they consider to be important and valuable about their learning" (Smyth, 2006, p. 282).

During the colonial era, schools in Namibia had, what they called at that time, prefects, today known as the Learner Representative Council (LRC) (Uushona, 2012). These "so-called prefects

were not democratically elected by learners, they were selected by teachers" (Uushona, 2012, p. 1). This clearly indicates that indeed learners were not given a voice to participate in decisions that affected them and their learning environment and the fact that these prefects were elected by teachers reduced the autonomy they had in the decision-making structures of schools. However, this is no more the case. These representatives of fellow learners are now elected by learners themselves in our Namibian schools. This is provided for in the current *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* which states that "the principal must appoint an election committee consisting of four members, a senior teacher as a chairperson and another teacher, both nominated by the teaching staff, and two learners nominated by the learners" (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MOE], 2001, p. 18). The *Education Act No. 16 of 2001*, further suggests that "the election committee must organise and conduct the election referred to in regulation 30, count votes and announce the results of the election at a time and place approved by the principal" (ibid.). It is evident that learners have a voice in deciding who their representatives at schools should be, which is in line with the focus of the study, to develop learner voice and leadership. However, for the past 12 years since I have been in the education profession, and despite the new democratic dispensation, many LRC's at schools are not given opportunities to share their views on school matters concerning them. My experience is supported by the literature. For example, Smyth (2006) states that "the group most affected by the direction of educational policy, namely students and young people, have no official voice" (p. 282).

After Namibia gained independence, just like any new democracy, there were a lot of reforms in terms of policies to improve the country. Education was one of the sectors where the reforms happened. One such policy is the policy of *Learner Centred Education* (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education and Culture [MBEC], 1999) which advocates for learners to be more involved in their own learning, with the teacher a facilitator of the teaching and learning process. However, this policy does not advocate for learner involvement in deciding what to learn or participation in the decision-making of the learning competencies in the curriculum. Another policy is *Towards Education for All* (Namibia. MBEC, 1993). This policy advocates the following four national goals of education; access, quality, equity and democracy (ibid.). This policy's fourth major goal is democracy. Under the goal of democracy, it is suggested that "democracy must therefore be not simply a set of lessons in our schools but rather a central purpose of our education at all levels"

(Namibia. MBEC, 1993, p. 41). The policy further points out that "a democratic education system is organised around broad participation in decision-making" (ibid). However, this policy is silent on the specifics of learner democratic participation in decision-making processes in schools. This is despite the fact that the policy argues that "our learners must also understand that they cannot simply receive democracy from those who rule their society" but "instead, they must build, nurture and protect it" (ibid). Once again, the policy does not provide guidelines on how learners can 'build, nurture and protect' democracy.

In addition, another reform policy, the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MOE], 2001), makes provision for all schools offering secondary education (grades 8 to 12), to have LRC's at school and highlights that "the LRC's must promote the interest and welfare of the school and its learners" (p. 19). However, the Namibian studies by Amadhila (2017), Da Silva (2017), Haipa (2017) and Kapuire (2017) found that LRC members were practicing more managerial roles than leadership roles, their voice was silent in school board's decision-making processes and there was only minimal training offered to empower LRC members with leadership capacity in ensuring their voices and learners' voice were heard at schools.

Interventions to promote learner leadership are thus needed in our Namibian schools. Therefore, my intention in this study was to intervene as a researcher in a school to develop leadership skills, knowledge and attributes in LRC members, the primary participants in my study. I also investigated how the participants practiced leadership in their everyday life at school and the levels of democratic participation in school decision-making processes.

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

With all the relevant policies and reforms of Namibia since independence mentioned earlier, Namibia's educational institutions, in particular schools, still lag behind in learners' leadership development. Grant and Nekondo (2016) testify to this by saying "Learner leadership is not common as a concept or a practice in the majority of schools in African countries such as Namibia" (p. 26). The majority of the schools lack innovations in developing learner leadership; the schools are just busy implementing principal and teacher leadership where decisions are made by adults on matters that concern learners' learning and schooling. Only a handful of unpublished research

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studies on learner leadership development have been undertaken in Namibia. These studies, many under the auspices of Rhodes University, including Shekupakela-Nelulu (2008) and Uushona (2012), focused on the participation of LRC members in leadership, while Kalimbo (2017), Vaino (2017) and Amadhila (2017) focused on learner leadership development. This prompted me to research the leadership development of learners which will hopefully contribute to policy formulations at a national level and educational reforms in our education system.

Having been a teacher for the past 12 years, and for five of those years serving as a school management team member, my experience reveals that LRC members have limited involvement in decision-making on matters affecting their schooling and learning. Furthermore, my Honours study (Shipopyeni, 2016) which focused on the leadership development of learners, revealed similar tendencies. Against this backdrop, I opted to carry out a study on how I can develop learner voice and leadership in the LRC at a school through an interventionist approach. I am therefore of the opinion that leadership in schools should be practiced by everyone in order for educational goals to be achieved and for learners to improve their own learning environments. This has the potential for schools to change into knowledge production centres that improve learners learning and enhance their problem-solving skills as well as promote their democratic participation in school leadership and governance.

This study therefore provided me with the opportunity to contribute to the infant ELM field in Namibia (see Hallinger, 2017) and I look forward to publishing my findings as a knowledge resource for other researchers, academics, education planners and relevant stakeholders. In line with Dantley and Tillman (2006), as a school principal and a post-graduate researcher, I was, and continue to be, encouraged to "serve as a social activist who is committed to seeing a greater degree of democracy practiced in schools as well as in the larger society" (p. 17).

1.4 The Research Goals and Questions of the Study

To achieve the main goal of the study, I sought answers to the following questions during data collection:

1. How do the LRC members, teachers and SMT understand learner leadership?

2. To what extent and how are LRC members involved in decision-making at the school?

3. What kind of training or programmes does the LRC undergo to develop their leadership capacity?

4. What are the factors enabling and inhibiting the development of leadership within the LRC?

5. How can learner voice and leadership be developed within the LRC at the case study school, through a formative intervention?

1.5 Research Orientation and Methodology

This study was conducted at a single case study school, to investigate how learners' voices and leadership can be developed within the LRC members of the case study school. Case study is defined by Simons (2009), as quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p. 375), as "an in-depth investigation of a specific, real-life 'project, policy, institution, programme or system' from multiple perspectives in order to catch its 'complexity and uniqueness'". Additionally, Yin (2009 as cited in Yamagata-Lynch 2010, p. 78), points out that "case study research is an appropriate qualitative methodology to pursue when the phenomena and related variables are impossible to separate from the context". The study used the qualitative case study research method to carry out an in-depth study of learner leadership at the case study school. As the investigator, my aim was "to understand the relationship between the phenomenon, variables, and context within a specific bounded system" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 78). This made it possible for me to carry out an interventionist study, following the activist agenda of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). As researcher-interventionist, my role was to intervene and work towards the required change in the leadership practice through the collective effort of the participants of the study, whilst simultaneously researching the process 'with' my participants. This is because, according to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), "this method can help investigators make sense of complex real-world data sets in a manageable and meaningful manner" (p. 5). Furthermore, CHAT "provides a valid framework to use as a guide while building reliable interpretations of the data" (ibid.).

The whole population of LRC members as well as the principal, the LRC liaison teacher, one class register teacher and three heads of department were participants in the study. The participants were allocated codes to protect their identity and confidentiality was assured.

The data generation process was divided into two phases: phase one and phase two. In phase one, the study provided answers to the first four research questions of this study while phase two generated data for the fifth research question.

The study used document analysis, questionnaires, two focus group interviews (one with LRC members and the other with teacher participants), observation and Change Laboratory workshops. Documents including the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001*, the *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002), *School Development Plan*, *School Internal Policy*, minutes of school board meetings and minutes of staff meetings were all used to generate data on how learner leadership was implemented as per the policy documents at school. The questionnaires were administered to all the participants mentioned earlier. There were two focus group interviews that were conducted; one for the whole population of LRC members and the other for teacher participants which involved the principal, the LRC liaison teacher, one class register teacher and three heads of department. The observation was unstructured, it was carried out during phase one. All these was done in phase one to generate data for the contextual profiling. During phase two, three Change Laboratory workshops (CLWs) were conducted with the aim of uncovering or surfacing contradictions in the LRC activity system through a Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) lens and then suggesting feasible solutions. In phase two again, the expansive learning cycle was used to transform the leadership practice of LRC members at the case study school. The CHAT, CLWs and expansive learning cycles are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

The data analysis was carried out using the inductive method for the data generated during phase one while data generated in phase two, was abductively analysed using CHAT as the analytical tool. According to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), activity systems analysis provides researchers with "a method for communicating the results" (p. 8).

1.6 Thesis Outline

The table below illustrate the six chapters of this study.

Table 1.1 The structure of the study

Chapters	Topics
Chapter One	Background and context of the study
Chapter Two	Literature review
Chapter Three	Methodology
Chapter Four	Data presentation and discussion of findings – phase 1
Chapter Five	Data presentation and discussion of findings – phase 2
Chapter Six	Conclusion and recommendations

Chapter One: This chapter provided the background and context of my study. I started with the introduction of my study, provided a contextual background followed by the rationale and significance of the study, the research goals and questions and a brief discussion on the methodology I applied to generate data. The ethical considerations were only briefly discussed, as they are comprehensively discussed in Chapter Three and in the findings chapters, to some extent. Finally, the chapter ended with a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter Two: The chapter is a literature review. It begins with an historical overview of leadership in education and a discussion of the phenomenon of learner leadership as the main focus of this study. The reader is briefly informed how the traditional construct of leadership evolved to the contemporary construct of leadership. In the section on the contemporary construct of leadership, the distributive leadership theory as the conceptual framework of the study is discussed.

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Furthermore, the chapter provides, in detail, the discussion of CHAT as the theoretical and analytical framework of the study. Finally, the chapter also provides a discussion on transformative leadership (as the conceptual framework of the study) and links this leadership theory to the CHAT concept of transformative agency. The distributive and transformative leadership were my substantive theories for this study.

Chapter Three: In this chapter, I discussed the research orientation and methodology of this study. The various tools used to generate data during both phases of the study are clearly outlined and discussed in this chapter. In addition, the participants of the study are also discussed and how they were sampled is clearly indicated. Furthermore, the chapter provides the reader with information on how the data generated was analysed. Issues of ethics and trustworthiness are also discussed.

Chapter Four: The chapter provides a discussion on the presentation and findings from phase one of the study. These findings are from data generated in response to the first four research questions of the study. Furthermore, I discussed the data from the first four research questions and draw conclusions applying the relevant literature reviewed in chapter two.

Chapter Five: This chapter provides a discussion on the presentation and findings from phase two of the study. The CHAT lens was used to surface contradictions that were used during the Change Laboratory to transform the activity system expansively.

Chapter Six: This is the conclusion and recommendations chapter in which the overall main summary of the research findings is outlined. In this final chapter, I discussed the value of the study, the study's limitations and then provided suggestions for further research and recommendations for the sustainability of the transformative agency and innovations of the activity system. Finally, I provided a brief experience of my personal journey in carrying out this study. Finally, I closed the chapter with the final conclusion for the study.

The next chapter is Chapter Two which focuses on the literature review of the leadership concept in education and the phenomenon under study, which is learner leadership.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, there is indeed a need for more radical research on learner leadership in Namibia. This is more especially in research that focuses on changing leadership practices at schools to improve school performance and equip learners with leadership skills that will allow them to implement their democratic right in decision-making processes on matters that affect their schooling. I focused my study on the leadership development of LRC members at an urban combined school in Namibia with the aim to give voice to learners on matters that concern them. In support of this, Bush (2007) states that "there is great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century; this is because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes" (p. 391). However, Harris and Lambert (2003) caution us that "school leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role and discrete set of individual behaviours" (p. 16). They further state that "it needs to be imbedded in the school community as a whole" (ibid.). The point of leadership being practiced all over the school will be emphasised throughout this study.

In this chapter, to understand the concepts of leadership and management, I look at how leadership and management are applied interchangeably even though there are differences in terms of meaning. For the reader of this research to get a clear picture of how literature on leadership has evolved from the traditional constructs of leadership to the contemporary constructs of leadership, I provide a historical overview of leadership in education. The key concepts of learner voice and learner leadership are also discussed for the reader to get a broader understanding on what my study focuses on. Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) as the theoretical and analytical framework of my study, will be discussed towards the end of the chapter.

2.2 The Misconception of the Interchangeable Usage of Leadership and Management

In the education fraternity, leadership and management as key concepts are at times used interchangeably even though they have different meanings. In our schools, teachers refer to leaders at school as those who are part of the school management team (SMT), especially the principal and Heads of Department (HODs). Agreeing to this is Bush (2007, p. 392) who points out that "the concept of management overlaps with that of leadership, a notion of great contemporary interest in most countries in the developed world". He further states leadership and management should come together in schools, "ideally, schools should be replete with good leadership, at all levels; they should be managed in unobtrusive ways; and principals should integrate the functions of leadership and management and possess skills in both" (ibid.). It is a point that is also supported by Bush (2007, p. 2) that "leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve objective".

Besides the equal importance of both leadership and management, Astin and Astin (2001) show the contrast of the two terms when they state that "leadership is a process that is ultimately concerned with fostering change while management suggests preservation or maintenance" (p. 1). For more clarity, I discuss the difference between leadership and management in the next section.

2.3 The Understanding of the Key Concepts of Leadership and Management

It is important that in this section of the chapter I discuss the concepts of leadership and management in education to assist in clearing the misconception of interchangeably applying leadership and management as the same in meaning, as stated earlier, between the two concepts. There are different explanations of leadership and management in education. According to Bush (2007), "leadership is influencing others action in achieving desirable ends and management is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements" (p. 392). Similarly, Christie (2010) suggests that management "designates a structural position which carries with it responsibilities and accountabilities" (p. 696). She further points out that "the power of leadership is expressed through influence" (ibid.). From the above explanations, I conclude that leadership is more about influencing and motivating others towards achieving common goals while

management is more about ensuring that policies and plans are carried out as documented. It is important to distinguish the differences so that the reader of this research can have a broad understanding of the concepts. In any group of people, leadership will emerge as they go along and relationships will be bound towards achieving a common goal. A point also raised by Whitehead (2009) is that, "leadership is complex and tugs on emotional interaction between humans." (p. 847). Whitehead further suggests that "it is a complex moral relationship between people based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good" (ibid.). On the other hand, I must emphasise here that although leadership and management have different meanings, both are needed for a school to achieve its goals and operate effectively (Christie, 2010).

However, although both are needed as mentioned earlier, my study is conceptually framed by distributive and transformative leadership and the focus is on developing leadership within LRC members, thus this chapter from here onwards will focus only on leadership. Therefore, in the section below, I will discuss the historical overview of leadership starting from the traditional constructs of leadership to the more contemporary constructs.

2.4 The Historical Overview of Leadership in Education

It is important that in this chapter I explain the historicity of leadership theories for the reader to get a better understanding of how leadership theories have evolved over the years. The field of leadership traditionally focused on the principal position in schools. Equally, Grant and Nekondo (2016) state that "there is a vast literature on educational leadership but much of it focuses on the person of the leader and attempts to identify trait and attributes this person is endowed with" (p. 14). In my Honours study (2016) findings, learners expressed the idea that leadership results from position. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) emphasise this when they write that "the literature on leadership, regardless of tradition, has focused mostly on those in formal leadership positions in the case of school, the principal" (p. 6). In contrast, and in line with Grant (2015) and Christie (2010), I believe that leadership is not limited to formal positions. Instead, like these authors, I believe that it is infinite and it can be found at any level of an organisation, such as a school. In most of our Namibian schools, principals and HODs who are the minority, are seen as the only leaders at schools, who make decisions on behalf of learners without involving or listening

to their concerns. Writing about learner involvement in leadership, Grant and Nekondo argue that "all-too-often we denigrate their [learner] participation in decision-making and do not value them as knowledgeable, intuitive and discerning members of the school community" (2016, p. 15). Therefore, and as discussed in the opening chapter, the focus of my research is on developing leadership skills and learner voice within LRC members in order for them to be heard and be part of the decision-making team on matters affecting them and other learners in the school.

2.4.1 Traditional constructs of leadership

In our communities and schools, it is still believed by some that leaders are only those who possess certain characteristics and positions. Agreeing with this, Coleman (2005) stipulates that "early discussions of leadership tended to identify leadership with quality or qualities of the individual" (p. 9). Trait theory is one such traditional construct and it assumes that people inherit certain qualities and traits that make them better suited to leadership. Dwibedi (2016, p. 12) state that "the trait theory assumes that people inherit certain qualities or traits make them better suited to leadership". Dwibedi (2016) goes further to explain that "trait theories often identify a particular personality or behavior characteristics shared by leaders" (ibid.). Thus I conclude that the understanding of the idea that leaders are born was influenced by two theories known as great man and trait theories. The great man theory implies that "leaders are not made but born" (Coleman, 2005, p. 9). This is against the notion of effective training of leaders and learner leadership development. Coleman (2005, p. 10) suggests that "the Great Man and Trait theories of leadership have limited impact on theories of leadership today".

Although this is a popular concept of leadership, it is not without challengers. Dwibedi (2016) argues "if particular traits are key features of leaders and leadership" (p. 12). Than raises an important question: "How do we explain people who possess those qualities but are not leaders?" (ibid.). These theories are out-dated and are no longer being applied as the literature on leadership, informed by research, has expanded and improved over the decades. This is also highlighted by Amadhila (2017) that "leadership scholars shifted away from trait theories and instead turned to a leader's desirable behaviours" (p. 13). These shifts in leadership gave birth to theories of leadership such as contextual, situational and contingency theories.

Leaders in schools are always dealing with different issues that keep on changing as different people are involved in different situations which calls for leaders to deal with each situation differently as it arises. This is suggested by Cunningham and Cordeiro (2003) that "time available, task specificity, competence and maturity of the staff, need for involvement, authority, and dynamics of the situation determine what style should be used" (p. 153). Since the great man and trait leadership theories were based on individual characteristics, "the contingency and situational leadership theorists reject the conclusion that there is one best approach to leadership" (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003, p. 153). In a situation where the school is not performing and a drastic change is needed, situational leadership will be suitable for a quick implementation of a decision to produce needed results. In support, Coleman (2005) writes "when schools have been identified failing, a more directive leadership style seems to work well initially, and this style can be modified as the situation improves" (p. 10). She further elaborates that these theories are "those that relate the leader to the situation in which they find themselves, these theories allow for the fact that the leader does not operate in isolation but will be affected by his or her circumstances" (p. 10). On the contrary, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2003) state that "what contingency and situational approach ignore is the Pygmalion effect – the power that expectations and treatment have on behaviours of others" (p. 153). This is the case in our schools, leaders in our schools ignore the fact that their lack of trust in the leadership qualities of learners ensures the low morale of learners when expected to demonstrate leadership.

All these traditional theories are indeed referring to leadership being in the hands of the principal of the school which excludes others, such as teachers and learners, to practice leadership. A call supported by Kalimbo (2017, p. 12) is that "although these theories may be applicable to the context of education, they still do not heed the call for a distributed approach to leadership". The distributed leadership theory is one of the two theories of leadership underpinning my study, which focuses on development of leadership in LRC members.

Having looked at the traditional constructs of leadership, I will now discuss the contemporary constructs of leadership to give the reader an overview of how leadership has evolved.

2.5 Contemporary Constructs of Leadership

My study is conceptually framed by distributive leadership as one of two substantive leadership theories. This is because, from a distributive leadership perspective, learners' voice will be encouraged and a space created for learners to be heard in the school. Similarly Grant (2017) states that "the right to be represented and have a voice within a school constituency aligns well with the concept of distributed leadership" (p. 5). However, Grant (2017) argues that "distributed leadership is not 'the answer' to the leadership woes in present day school; it is not necessarily the right way to lead" (p. 8). Thus the need for transformative leadership to also underpin this study since it is the radical transformation that is needed to promote learners' democratic participation in the decision-making processes of the school. Starratt (2007) emphasises that schools should produce "fully functioning human beings who can participate, contribute, and find fulfilment in the various dimensions of democratic public life" (p. 181). A discussion of distributed leadership follows while a brief discussion of transformative leadership will follow later in this chapter.

2.5.1 Distributive leadership

Distributive leadership is one of the contemporary theories that helps us explain how learner leadership takes place in schools. Distributive leadership is defined as "leadership practice being stretched over the school" (Gronn, 2003, p. 35). Similarly, Timperley (2005) explains that distributed leadership is "not the same as dividing task responsibilities among individuals who perform defined and separate organizational roles but rather it comprises dynamic interactions between multiple leaders and followers" (p. 396). Harris (2013, p. 11) explains that "distributive leadership implies a shift in power, authority and control". In support is Spillane et al. (2004, p. 11) stating that " rather than seeing leadership practice solely a function of an individual ability, skill charisma and or cognition, we argue that it is best understood as a practice distributed over leaders, followers and their situation". This leadership theory equates with the leadership practice that is contributed to by everyone in a school set up and willingness of members to take decisions in school towards achieving educational goals. This is emphasised by Harris and Spillane (2008) that "a distributed model of leadership focuses upon the interaction, rather than the actions, of those formal and informal leadership roles" (p. 31). With the current education situation in

Namibia where schools are not performing to the expectations of the ministry and community at large, the "work of leadership will require diverse types of expertise and forms of leadership flexible enough to meet the challenges and new demands" (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31). In stressing the relevance of distributed leadership during these current difficult moments in educational leadership practices at schools, Coleman (2005) suggests that "there is growing belief that leadership should and can be shared throughout an organization" (p. 10). In agreement, Harris and Spillane (2008) write "there is increasing evidence that distributed leadership makes a positive difference to organizational outcomes and student learning" (p. 32).

Distributive leadership is an approach to determine the ways in which learner leadership might take place in the LRC members who will be expected to interact with each other when carrying out certain activities in which power in decision-making will be distributed amongst them. A distributed model of leadership focuses upon the "interaction, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles," (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31). Similarly, Harris and Lambert (2003) caution us that "school leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role and discrete set of individual behaviours; it needs to be imbedded in the school community as a whole" (p. 16). However, Amadhila (2017) warns us to be careful with all these definitions since "there are competing and sometimes conflicting interpretations of what distributed leadership actually means" (p. 14). In the context of my study, I will define distributed leadership as leadership that is practiced by all the LRC members to contribute in creating a learning environment that ensures positive educational outcomes for all learners and opportunities for all learners to raise their voice.

In highlighting the relevance of distributed leadership during these current difficult moments in educational leadership practices at schools, Harris and Spillane (2008) write "there is increasing evidence that distributed leadership makes a positive difference to organizational outcomes and student learning" (p. 32). Through involving teachers and learners in decision-making, a lot of ideas might come up since everyone is expected to share their experience and knowledge on various matters. Harris and Spillane (2008) mention that distributed leadership also has "representational power and it represents the alternative approaches to leadership that have arisen because of increased external demands and pressures in schools" (p. 31).

Despite distributed leadership theory acknowledging "the work of all individuals who contributes to leadership practice" (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31) at a school, this leadership theory comes with constraints to leadership development and learner leadership practices at school. Below I will briefly discuss how it can constrain leadership development of learners.

2.5.2 The limitations of distributed leadership

The provision in the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* to establish an LRC body in Namibian schools provides learners "the right to be represented and have a voice within a school constituency aligns well with the concept of distributed leadership, giving it representational power" (Grant, 2017, p. 5). "We know that leadership makes a difference therefore, schools need many leaders at all levels" (Hartley, 2007, p. 203). Thus, the study is advocating for leadership development within LRC members through a formative intervention to ensure that learners participate in decision-making processes at school on matters that concern them and their learning. However, distributive leadership as a theory comes with its limitations. First is "the fact that different terms and definitions are used interchangeably to refer to 'distributed leadership' resulting in both conceptual confusion and conceptual overlap" (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 32), and "there is very little evidence of a direct causal relationship between distributed leadership and school achievement" (Hartley, 2007, p. 202). Secondly, the role of a school principal is paramount in ensuring that leadership is distributed or stretched over the school in such a way that the principal deals with any obstacle that will prevent leadership practices by learners and teachers. Equally important, according to Harris (2011) "the research evidence highlights that without the support of the principal, distributive leadership is unlikely to flourish or be sustained" (p. 8). While it is expected of a principal to relinquish power to learners and teachers, this might at times delay decision-making on urgent matters, since the principal is expected to allow learners and teachers to make their own decisions or give their concern to certain matters. Thus, school principals are urged to carry out a "personal transformation in leadership so that efforts to nurture the growth of others can succeed" (Harris, 2011, p. 8). Thirdly, there is a dark side to distributed leadership, which Harris (2013) stipulates, "if power, influence and authority are misused or abused, it represents a real challenge for those in formal leadership roles wishing to engage in distributed practice" (p. 11). Thus, Harris and Spillane (2008) warn, "school redesign is unlikely unless patterns of

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leadership practice are dramatically altered and flattened and that multi-agency, multi-school and multi-phase working is simply not possible without the reconfiguration of leadership as practice rather than role" (p. 32).

Next, I discuss the relation of CHAT to distributed leadership

2.5.3 CHAT and its relation to distributed Leadership

The distributive theory "by framing an analysis of leadership practice – and developing rich case studies of that practice – the distributed leadership practice is a tool that can enable change in leadership activity" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 4). This change is brought about in the activity system by a distributed leadership perspective on school leadership as it "raises questions about the location and exercise of power within a school and examines not only what is distributed but also how this distribution happens and who is included and excluded" (Grant, 2017, p. 15). The leadership practices within the LRC members is what this study aimed to transform at an urban combined school through a formative intervention (discussed later in the chapter) underpinned by the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). To elaborate briefly on CHAT, Engeström (2014) writes, "in sociocultural tradition more emphasis is placed on the analysis of participation and ways individuals function in communities, whereas in activity theory [AT], it is joint-mediated activity that takes centre stage in analysis" (p. 138). He further suggests that "initially, the roots of activity theory focused on individual behaviour and learning, whereas Expansive learning extended the theory to learning as a collective endeavor" (ibid.). Similarly, Grant (2017) points out that distributed leadership "as a form of leadership, it encourages the individual and/or the group to challenge issues of power and privilege, inclusion and exclusion, in relation to education leadership" (p. 14). The participants of the LRC members' activity system collectively worked towards producing change in the leadership practice at the case study school. It is this collective agency by participants to possibly change the leadership practice expansively that is present in both distributive leadership theory and CHAT. Thus Spillane et al. (2004) suggest that "we need to observe from within a conceptual framework if we are to understand the internal dynamics of leadership practice" (p. 4) of any activity system. Therefore, a distributive leadership perspective as a conceptual framework of this study "shifts the unit of analysis from the individual actor or

group of actors to web leaders, followers, and situation that gives activity its form" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 10). Similarly, CHAT provides me as an interventionist researcher the opportunity to "intervene by provoking and supporting the process led and owned by learners" (Sannino, Engeström, & Lemos, 2016, p. 2) through formative interventions.

According to Sannino et al. (2016) formative interventions "aim at generative solutions developing over lengthy periods of time in both researched activities and in the research community" (p. 1). As an interventionist researcher, I conducted a research on leadership practices of LRC members and intervened through a formative intervention together with the subjects of the activity system of LRC members to transform the leadership practice. In addition, Spillane et al. (2004) argue that "leaders' practice [both as thinking and activity] is distributed across the situational of leadership, that is, it emerges through interaction with other people and the environment" (p. 8).

Distributive leadership informed by CHAT is a useful theoretical tool. This claim is supported by Grant (2017) who writes;

> underpinned by strong conceptual of activity theory and distribution cognition, this distributed perspective on leadership speaks not only to 'who' is involved in the distribution of leadership and 'what' is distributed, but also 'how' the distribution happens and 'why' it happens in the manner it does. (p. 17)

Distributed leadership from the discussion above is understood as leadership practiced by everyone at school and it does not come with position neither with authority. However, in most of our schools, leadership is still understood to be position bounded and practiced traditionally. Thus, this study aimed to explore how to develop learner leadership that ensures learners raise their voice through participation in leadership practice at a school. Therefore, below I look at the discussion of learner leadership and how it can be developed to give learners a voice at the case study school.

2.6 Learner Leadership

My understanding of learner leadership is that it refers to learners who are in charge of creating a suitable learning environment for themselves and participating in decision-making processes regarding their schooling. According to Kalimbo (2017, p. 16) "There is no concise definition of the concept learner leadership", this may be due to the limited literature available, therefore he

refs to learner leadership as "learners' authentic and democratic participation in school". Mitra and Gross (2009) define learner leadership as "the concept that describes different ways in which youth have opportunity to share in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers" (p. 523). However, Mitra and Gross (2009) warn us that "even in healthy school climates, the sharing of power with students can be perceived as threatening to teachers" (p. 537). Thus the schools' principals as school heads to avoid a situation where teachers are threatened to learners practicing leadership at school, should ensure that teachers understand the benefits of learner leadership practice at schools. In support, Grant (2015) argues that "learners should be treated as people whose ideas matter" (p. 93) in order to achieve educational goals in schools.

In the sections below, I discuss learner voice and what it entails, the benefits and challenges of learner leadership in school.

2.6.1 Learner voice

Since the focus of this study is to develop leadership in LRC members, we are reminded by Kalimbo (2017, p. 22) that "learner voice is a crucial aspect of developing learner leadership". Mitra and Gross (2009) emphasise that "student voice highlights ways in which young people can learn democratic principles by sharing their opinions and working to improve school conditions for themselves and others" (p. 522). In agreement is Vaino (2017, p. 16) who states that "it is only by actively involving learners in the realisation of schools' undertakings that one can hope to make the kind of commitment necessary to foster continuous school improvement". This is also alluded to by Flutter (2006, p. 184) that "an alternative way of investigating the effects of the environment in school is to ask those who learn in them - the student themselves".

For school leadership and management to ensure that student voice is fully practiced and schools are benefiting from its fruits, schools should ensure that teachers "feel confident and secure in their environment, they are more willing to be supportive of student voice endeavors" (Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 537).

However, for teachers to support learner voice in schools and LRC members to have the courage to raise their voices and be heard regarding matters that concern them and others, below I discuss

the Mitra and Gross (2009) pyramid of student voice that illustrates how learners can be provided with the platform for their voice to be heard at schools. The following three stages will allow for LRC members to demonstrate leadership for social justice which "interrogates the policies and procedures that shape schools and at the same time perpetuates social inequalities and marginalization due to race, class, gender, and other markers of otherness" (Dantley & Tillman, 2006, p. 27).
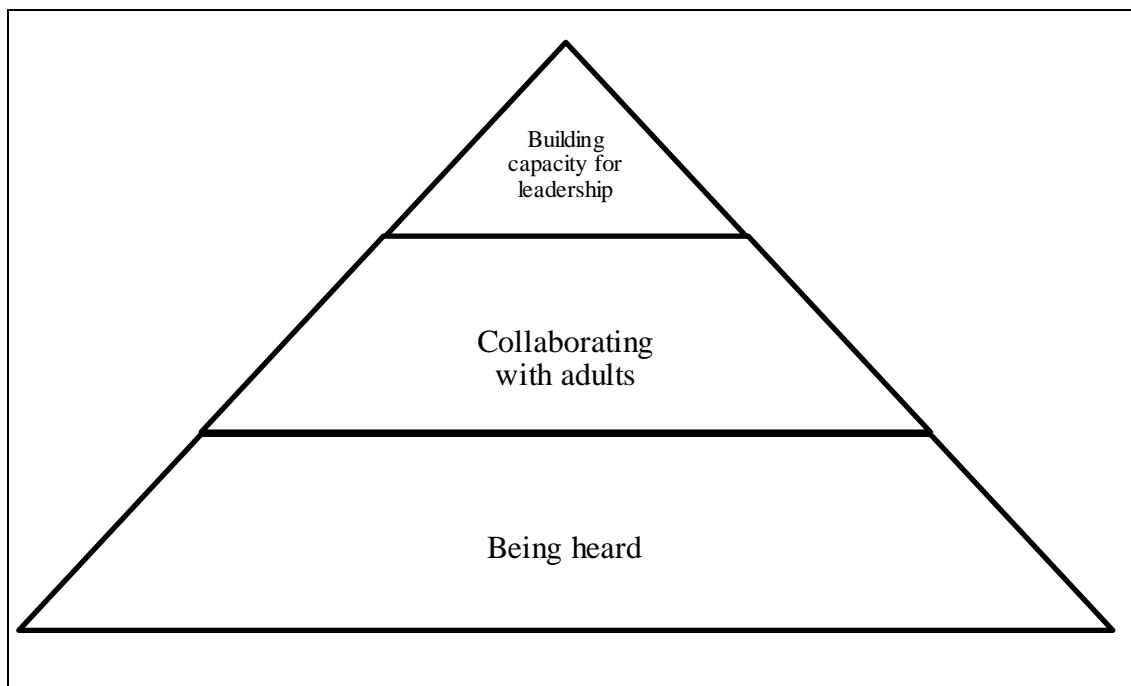
Figure 2.1: Pyramid of student voice (adapted from Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 523)

The level of *being heard* is encouraging LRC members to voice their concerns, opinions and decisions in matters of concern in their learning and school, as well as being listened to by the school leadership and management and teachers (Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 523). The second level of c*ollaborating with adults* implies that after being heard, LRC members and teachers (including the school's leadership and management) are expected to work jointly together to find solutions to

problems that concerns learners' learning and schooling (Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 524). Lastly the advanced level, *building capacity for leadership* provides opportunity for LRC members to openly raise their criticism of the school and contribute to decisions that are made in the school by participating in the decision-making process of the school on "matters that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers" (Mitra & Gross, 2009, pp. 523-524).

Since the study is underpinned by distributive leadership, by informing my study with this theory the learners' voice will be provided with an opportunity to go through the three stages of the pyramid. Equally important, Mitra and Gross (2009) suggest that "student voice efforts can provide a fresh or new way of seeing problems that had previously been ignored or misunderstood" (p. 523). All this will surface when learners are given a voice to be heard by those in authority.

Since learners are one of the main stakeholders and the majority in our school, I see it as important to have their voice heard by the teachers and school management to give them a sense of belonging to their school community. Providing testimony to learners at school being given an opportunity to be heard, Amadhila (2017) writes that "within the limited studies done on learner leadership, researchers have found it beneficial to learners and to the school at large" (p. 22) when learners' voice is heard at schools. The LRC at schools are expected to raise their fellow learners' voices at schools and ensure that their concerns are attended to by school management. Below I discuss the benefits of learner leadership.

2.6.2 Why learner leadership?

The involvement of learners in decision-making structures through distributive leadership as mentioned earlier, might bring the needed changes and reforms in our schools to yield the desired outcomes in education. Above all, Smyth (2006) informs us that "if we want a more realistic regime accountability for high schools that is likely to have a chance of success in making a difference in the lives of those most disadvantaged, then it will have to be one that includes the lives, expectations, cultures, family background, aspirations of young people themselves" (p. 288). In agreement with this view, Kalimbo (2017) states that "in pursuit of distributed leadership and leadership for social justice, a need exists for learners to be developed as leaders" (p. 17). The

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consequence of not involving students is highlighted by Flutter (2006, p. 186); "when students are not consulted about proposed changes to their learning environment, their response to improvements can sometimes be oppositional". Fielding (2001) warns of "the cost of ignoring students perspective that point to a significant area of professional concern could well turn out to have tangible consequences in an inspection report or public perception of the school's local and regional standing" (p. 124).

Through learner leadership development learners might acquire negotiation skills as well as increase in being responsible citizens. Mitra and Gross (2009, p. 522) describe that "student voice instead highlights ways in which young people can learn democratic principles by sharing their opinions and working to improve school conditions for themselves and others". I believe that school improvement in all aspects ought to be a desire of all stakeholders in education of which these improvements should be in favour of those mostly affected by changes and for this, Smyth (2006, p. 288) makes the point that "we need a more mature and nuanced approach that is more inclusive of those most affected, and by that I mean students". If this is not carried out, Smyth (2006) warns us that "when student feel that their lives, experiences, cultures, and aspirations are ignored, trivialized, or denigrated by school and the curriculum, they develop a hostility to the institution of schooling" (p. 279). To avoid this circumstance, Mitra and Gross (2009) reinforce that "student voice initiatives can broaden the scope of who has a voice in schools and can even lead to students' participation in developing school reforms efforts" (p. 538). To add to this Mitra and Gross (2009) inform us that "gathering student voice information can help to raise the turbulence level when necessary to increase the need for reform" (p. 523).

Having been a teacher and now a principal, I would like to agree with Fielding (2001, p. 130) who writes "contemporary teacher professionalism needs to incorporate an expectation that teacher learning is both enabled and enhanced by dialogue encounters with their students in which the interdependent nature of teaching and learning and shared responsibility for its success is made explicit". The moment that learners are not allowed to raise questions regarding the content that they are covering in class and being assessed in tests and examinations, no improvement of results will come out of it.

However, with all its benefits, learner leadership also has shortcomings which I will discuss below.

2.6.3 Challenges to learner leadership in schools

As mentioned earlier, there is a limitation in various policies of education in Namibia on learner leadership. Below are some of the challenges.

2.6.3.1 Cultural view that leadership is an adult phenomenon

Learners have for decades believed that teachers are the ones to take the lead and direct them, as well as make decision on educational matters on their behalf. Amadhila (2017, p. 23) states that "one of the major challenges hindering learner leadership in schools is the issue of authority and power being hierarchical, 'given' to learners through the perception of teachers being in control". Haipa (2017) also supports this by stating, "learners being at the grassroots of the leadership structure in the school, always find themselves having to adhere to the decisions made, even if they were not part of that decision" (p. 25). In most cases this not only happens at schools but also in their communities. Smyth (2006, p. 279) warns us that "when student feel that their lives, experiences, cultures, and aspirations are ignored, trivialized, or denigrated by school and the curriculum, they develop a hostility to the institution of schooling". Students can undermine or sabotage even the best intentioned reform efforts if they have not bought into it. Thus, school principals and teachers at schools should listen and buy into Smyth's (2006b) advice that "to promote learner leadership requires courageous forms of leadership that fearlessly promote the importance of student ownership and student voice in respect of learning" (p. 282), to ensure that students avoid sabotaging the good intentions meant for them.

In Africa, culture and tradition play a vital role in influencing our behaviour in different aspects of our lives. For a long time now learners have been ignored in decision-making at schools as mentioned earlier in this study. Haipa (2017) points out that "culture beliefs represent another factor constraining leadership and voice development within the LRC" (p. 24) and learners at schools. Traditionally and to date in schools, teachers are still making decisions without consulting learners to hear their voice and it is up to researcher-interventionists like me to advocate for learner leadership practices at schools to ensure that literature encourages schools and policy setters to

ensure distributed leadership happens in our lifetime. Smyth (2006, p. 291) emphasises that "if we are sincere about wanting to minimize the amount of negative identity formations and miscommunications between schools and their students that precipitate in failure for both, then we will have to be prepared to place relationships at the centre stage of everything at school".

2.6.3.2 Teachers threatened by learners' voice

Even in healthy school climates, the sharing of power with students can be perceived as threatening to teachers (Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 537). Amadhila (2017, pp. 23-24) states that "teachers do not trust learners; they fail to give full authority when deciding and acting on matters, and teachers are afraid that if learners are left to decide and act on their own without strict supervision, things will fall apart". Mitra and Gross (2009, p. 537) suggest that "learning how to enable youth to share their opinion and participate in decision-making is particularly challenging in a school setting because teachers are used to being in control". Osberg, Pope and Galloway (2006, p. 339) also assert this as follows: "The act of 'giving' implies that power or authority is the adults to give, and therefore, something that adults can reclaim anytime".

In order to avoid a situation where teachers are threatened by learner leadership, Mitra and Gross (2009) suggest that "for adults to empower students, they need to be empowered themselves by their broader institutional environment" (p. 537). This calls for school principals to ensure that continuous development programmes are available at schools to empower teachers and encourage teachers to enrol for further studies, as well as be role models to other colleagues by upgrading their qualifications with universities. In support, Smyth (1989) points out that "leadership in schools, therefore requires enabling capacity that incorporates [or empowers] those in schools to frame problems, and to discuss and work individually and collectively to understand and to change the situation that caused the problem" (p. 190).

To conclude this section, I would like to acknowledge the above-mentioned obstacles to learner leadership are not the only ones as there are many other obstacles such as misinterpretation of national policies, lack of capacity building for learner leadership development, limited studies on learner leadership, just to mention a few. It is for these reasons that as teachers we must ensure

that with every reform at school, learners' voice and participation should be involved to increase ownership of the reform among learners.

Next is a discussion on the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, the theoretical and analytical framing of this study.

2.7 Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (Chat)

2.7.1 CHAT as the theoretical framework

The study I conducted is underpinned by the second generation of CHAT, firstly because it focuses on the collective activity. As mentioned earlier, the activity system of my study consists of the LRC members as a collective working towards achieving the object which is learner voice and leadership development among LRC members. Secondly, CHAT allowed me to focus more on the activity of LRC members, as well as allowing me to explain human learning as a series of object-oriented activities (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). CHAT is used to intervene and investigate how learners' voice and leadership is developed as the object of the activity system of LRC members at the case study school. Foot (2014, p. 9) elaborates that "in CHAT, the idea of activity centers on human collective rather than individual, it involves people operating jointly in a persistent system of relations with other people and institutions as well as with the natural world". CHAT assisted me to carry out an in-depth study of how leadership development might be attained as the object of my study. According to Sannino, Daniels and Gutierrez (2009, p. xv) "Activity theory is both a practice-based theory and a historical and future oriented theory", as well as "a theory of object-driven activity" (p. 304). This theory ensures that the historicity of leadership practices is taken into consideration in changing leadership practice at case study school.

So what is the history of CHAT? I move on to this discussion next.

2.7.1.1 The evolution of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

CHAT is a theoretical lens derived from Germany philosophy and Russian social science theory (Gretshel, Ramugondo, & Galvaan, 2015, p. 51).

The significance of each word in CHAT is explained as follows:

> Culture' positions humans-the subject of activity theory- as beings shaped by their cultural views and resources. 'Historical' highlights the inseparable influence of our histories on our actions, and how this history shapes how we think. 'Activity' refers to the doing of people, together, that is modified by history and culture, and situated in context. 'Theory' refers to the conceptual framework that activity theory offers for describing and understanding human activity. (Gretshel et al., p. 52)

CHAT evolved through three generations (Engeström. 2001); the first generation drawing on Vygotsky's work of the 1920s and 1930s focuses on an individual activity; the second generation drawing primarily on the work of Leont'ev (1978/1981), focuses on the collective activity, mediational means and division of labour as basic historical process; and the third generation of Engeström (1983) focuses on two activity systems. This third generation is further explained by Yamazumi (2006), p. 80) that "a current third generation of activity theory aims to exploit and challenge new potentialities of activity theory by expanding on the two previous generations". Engeström (2001) highlights that "the limitation of the first generation was that the unit of analysis remained individually focused" (p. 134). Thus I did not use the first generation for this study, because of its focus on an individual. This was overcome by Leont'ev's (1978) second generation, which I discuss in detail below.

This second generation of CHAT started with Leont'ev who first expanded the unit of analysis from individual action to collective activity as alluded to in the previous section and it was again expanded by Engeström into a collective activity system. I will focus on a single activity system and not on multiple activity systems.
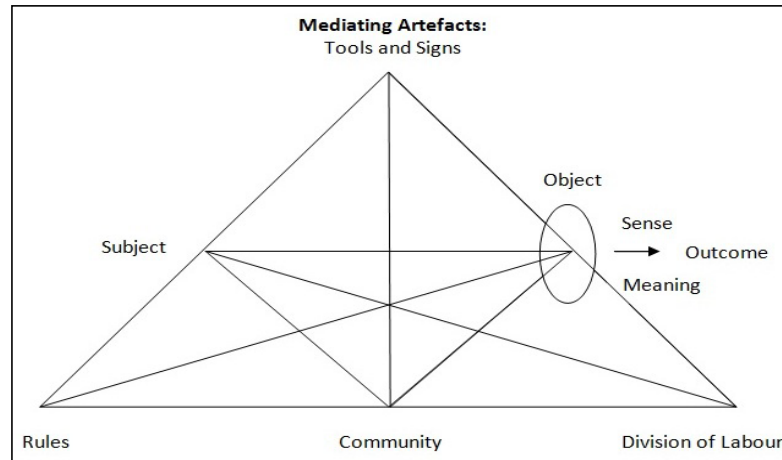
Figure 2.2: The structure of the human activity system (Engeström 2001, p. 135)

The top part of the activity system highlights the subject (the LRC members carrying out the activities) using the artefacts or tools (the classroom, *Education Act No. 16 of 2001*, charts or posters, stickers, the language, just to mention a few) to attain the object of the activity system (which is to develop leadership within LRC members). Similarly, Gretshel et al. (2015, p. 52) state that "in the uppermost triangle, collective activity is reflected as the action/s undertaken by people (subjects) who are motivated by a purpose or towards the solution of a problem (object), which is a process mediated by tools used in order to achieve the goal (outcome). Yamagata-Lynch (2010) stresses that, "Artifacts that function as tools are not conveniently handed to the subject" (p. 23). They are "created entities either by designed by individuals or gradually defined by multiple audiences in order to enable particular practices" (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004, p. 23). Thus, Yamagata-Lynch (2010, p. 23) states that "therefore, subjects may discover new tools across multiple activities and the value of a tool may change over time as they engage in new activities". The expansion of the second generation activity theory by Engeström, according to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), is the "incorporation of the rules, community, and division of labour components which add the social-historical aspects of mediated action that were not addressed by Vygotsky" (pp. 22-23). In addition, Sannino highlights that "the second generation of activity theory started with Leont'ev and is characterized by the expansion of the unit of analysis from individual action to collective activity" (p. 573). The rules are one of the six elements of the activity system. The

rules are described by Engeström and Sannino (2010) as "the explicit and implicit regulations, norms, conventions and standards that constrain actions within the activity system" (p. 6). The rules were the various policies at national and school level, as well as the school rules, which were included. Yamagata-Lynch (2010) states: "The community is the social group with which the subject identifies while participating in the activity". The community in the intervention were the school board, school management, teachers and other learners. The division of labour refers to "how the tasks are shared among the community" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 23). This will be roles of the participants, teachers and the school management.

To further explain CHAT, Vygotsky (1978 as cited in Foot, 2014, p. 3) states that CHAT centres on three core ideas "1st - human act collectively, learn by doing, and communicate via their actions; 2nd humans make, employ, and adapt tools of all kinds to learn and communicate; and 3rd community is central to the process of making and interpreting meaning - and thus to all forms of learning, communicating, and acting."

I used the second generation of CHAT as an analytical framework of my study because it allows researchers like myself to "unpack the complexities involved in human activities and help researchers and practitioners to engage in discussions about their observations and findings" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 31). The subjects use the contradictions to unpack the complexities within the activity system, hence I move on to discuss CHAT's central concept of contradictions.

2.7.1.2 CHAT's central concept of contradictions

Contradictions are explained by Engeström (2001) as "historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems" (p. 137). In the context of the study, the activity system will be analysed collectively using the interaction, contradictions or tensions between the various elements of the activity system. I will use the term contradictions and not tensions. Kuuti (1996) elaborates that, "Activity theory uses the term contradictions to indicate misfit within elements, between them, between different activities, or between different developmental phases of a single unit" (p. 34). Kuuti (1996) further states that "Activity theory sees contradictions as sources of development; activities are virtually in the process of working through contradictions"

(p. 34). Similarly, Foot (2014) states "contradictions reveal opportunities for creative innovation, for new ways of structuring and enacting the activity" (p. 16). However, Foot (2014) advises us that "the evolution of an activity system occurs when participants act to resolve or transcend the system's contradictions" (p. 17). To analyse any activity system's development, close attention to contradictions is critical, because by working out tensions and interactions between the elements of the system it becomes possible to explain and foresee the development of the system (Engeström, 1999b).

There are "four kinds of contradictions; primary – which happens within elements of an activity system; secondary – between elements of an activity system; tertiary – which happen when the object of the central system clashes with that of a historically more advanced activity system; and quaternary – which occur between central activity and its neighboring activity systems" according to Mukute (2009, p. 153-154).

For the activity system to produce transformation, the primary contradictions which are the contradictions within the elements of the activity system and the secondary contradictions which are the contradictions between the elements of the activity system need to be surfaced in order to achieve the object. This is highlighted by Engeström (2001) when he writes that "contradictions between and within activity systems are potential sources of change and development" (p. 137). As highlighted earlier, the LRC members who are the subjects of the activity system will collectively work together using the resolutions of the contradictions to enable a transformative change in leadership practices at the school. According to Foot (2014), "CHAT's attention to the contradictions, conflicts and breakdowns within an activity system is the reason it can be a helpful tool for social as well as institutional and organizational change" (p. 18). This is why during the first phase of my study which is the contextualisation phase, I undertook ethnographic research in which the contradictions surfaced through data analysis of information generated in this phase. Haipa (2017, p. 29) emphasises that "contradictions are central to the theory of CHAT". A point also eluted by Virkkunen (2012, p. 185) that "the contradiction is essential for directing people to search for certain solution which makes development possible". The focus of the study is to develop learner leadership within LRC members; this is a problem on its own. "In research and development we have the problem that we are searching for and the contradictions defines rather

well what we are searching" (Virkkunen, 2012, p. 185). To confirm this, Kuuti (1996, p. 34) suggests that "contradictions manifest themselves as problems, ruptures, breakdowns, and clashes". These contradictions need to be attended to work towards the object of this study.

Contradictions are not setbacks in the activity system, they are seen as the motives to produce the transformative agency within the participants of the activity system to collectively work towards transformative change in the object of the activity system. In agreement with this, Foot (2014) suggests that "contradictions are a sign of richness in the activity system (not weaknesses) and of mobility and the capacity of an activity to develop rather than function in a fixed and static mode" (p. 17). They are lenses through which "participants in an activity can reflect on the development trajectory of the activity system and understand its dynamics" (Foot, 2014, p. 17).

Furthermore, Sannino et al. (2009) suggest that, "central to Engeström orientation is the insight that although it is individuals who experience the dilemmas, contradictions, and performance shortcomings of the system of activity they work within, solutions can be developed only collectively" (p. 29). As an interventionist study, the LRC members collectively worked towards the transformative change in the object of the activity system. A point raised by Engeström (2001) is that "activity systems have potential for expansive transformations, which occur through relatively long cycles of qualitative transformations" (p. 137). Surfacing the contradictions in the activity system brought the needed transformation in developing leadership within the LRC members at the site. A point stressed by Engeström (2001) that "expansive transformation is accomplished when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualised to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of activity" (p. 137).

The contradictions were surfaced in the activity theoretical formative intervention discussed below.

2.7.1.3 Formative intervention

"Activity theory has an activist and interventionist history" (Sannino, 2011, p. 580). Intervention, in activity theory, is defined by Midgley (as cited by Engeström, 2011, p. 8) as "purposeful action by human agent to create change". Sannino et al. (2016) further suggest it that "in informative

interventions, the design is driven by historically formed contradictions in the learners' activity and is the result of their collective efforts to understand and face the contradictions and the problems they engender" (p. 3). According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) "formative interventionist methodology as embodied in the Change Laboratory is needed and viable for the three reasons:" (p. xvii).

- First all research intervenes.
- Secondly, interventions are taking place in any case; any human activity system or organisation is bombarded with deliberate and incidental interventions within or without.
- Thirdly, by intervening deliberately and methodologically we generate knowledge about what is possible.

In our schools there is a need of interventions that will bring about transformational changes in leadership practice at the work place. This is an interventionist research which required me to go into the case study school and intervene to bring about a transformational change in leadership practices.

In order for me as an interventionist researcher and the subject (LRC members) of the study to understand the development of leadership of the LRC members in the school, we had to understand the history of LRC leadership in the school. This was carried out during the contextual profiling phase of the data collection process. Meyers (2007) states that "cultural-historical activity theory addresses human activities as they relate to artefacts, shared practices and institutions, thus it goes beyond individual knowledge and decision-making into a developmental view of minds in context" (n.p.).

Yamazumi (2006) suggests that CHAT "must be involved in making changes in human practices, not just observe and analyzing" (p. 77). However, Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) warn us that "in this framework the end results are not predetermined by the interventionist or researcher" (p. xvii). Agreeing with this is Engeström (2011) who states that "in formative interventions, the subjects face a problematic and contradictory object, embedded in their vital life activity, which they analyze and expand by constructing a novel concept, the contents of which are not known

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ahead of time to the researchers" (p. 8). As a researcher interventionist in this research, I did not know the outcome of my research until the end.

A key goal of this study was to change practice by allowing learners to know and implement their democratic rights in decision-making processes at the school. In the formative intervention, in order to create a possible change in the learners' activity, the interventionist together with the LRC members surfaced historically formed contradictions within the activity system then provided possible solutions to transform the leadership practices at the case study school. This involvement of LRC members in matters that concern their schooling will only happen when schools' leadership implement a radical transformative leadership approach. As stated earlier, that apart from a distributive leadership approach, there is a need for a transformative leadership approach to assist with the radical change needed for effective leadership within the activity system of the study. There are also calls for "a new form of leadership which begins with issues of justice and democracy" (Shields, 2009, p. 54) to deal with injustices in schools (and in the broader society), and this is transformative leadership. Transformative leadership "critiques inequitable practices and offer the promise not only of greater individual achievement but a better life lived in common with others" (Shield, 2009, p. 55). Thus below, I discuss transformative leadership as leadership that can transform the activity system.

2.7.1.4 Transformative leadership

The tenets of transformative leadership align with an interventionist research methodology, which underpins this study. According to Shields (2009) the tenets of transformative leadership are "the need for social betterment, for enhancing equity, and for a thorough reshaping of knowledge and belief structures" (p. 55). I agree with Shields (2009) that transformative leadership is "a way of overcoming more narrow … visions of change and promoting a more, open, equitable and political vision of leadership for change" (p. 54). This form of leadership will help to identify the needed changes in schools and open up discussion about collective decision-making involving all stakeholders at the school in pursuit of social justice and inclusion.

The study is underpinned by a critical approach, which aimed for radical changes in the practices of leadership through LRC members' leadership development at school making transformative leadership one of the leadership theories informing this study. Transformative leadership approach may lead to positive changes in schools to ensure that leadership permeates the school, for collective decisions that involve all stake holders at school to be implemented in producing positive educational outcomes for schools. Shields (2009) explains that "transformative leadership begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others" (p. 55). This study through the change laboratory sessions questioned the leadership practice at school in order to bring about a radical transformative change in leadership practice to develop learner voice and leadership at school. To this Dantley and Tillmann (2006) stress that "leaders as transformative or public intellectuals serve as social activists who are committed to seeing greater degree of democratic practice in schools as well as in the larger society" (p. 17).

In line with this, Shields (2009) highlights "the potential of transformative leadership to effect change that is deeper and equitable, that it critiques inequitable practices and offer the promise not only of greater individual achievement but a better life lived in common with others" (p. 55). Through a transformative leadership, principals, teachers and learners will eliminate any systematic discrimination and distribute leadership equitable at all levels in the school. Shield (2009) further emphasises that "transformative leadership theory has particular power to address the continued impact of systemic discrimination" (p. 55).

Below is a brief discussion of constraints hampering transformative leadership towards learner voice and leadership development.

Transformative leadership approach has a particular power that ensures that leadership practice is transformed around the school. A point highlighted by Caldwell, Dixon, Floyd, Chaudoin, Post and Cheokos (2011), is that "the ethical standards and commitment to virtuousness of transformative leadership are worthy ideals that can have a profound impact on people and society and produce outstanding results" (p. 185). However, Caldwell et al. (2011) also stress that "transformative leadership may be difficult to achieve" (p. 185). This might be caused by a lack

of commitment and courage by participants towards bringing about radical changes to improve their schooling and school environments into democratic places. Transformative leadership requires a lot of energy from participants to advance their agenda and ensure that they are part of decision-makers on matters concerning themselves and other learners at school. To this Shields (2010) stresses that "it is sometimes believed to be too idealistic and too demanding" (p. 572). The participants might see the process of bringing about a radical change too demanding of their time and effort which they might want to invest in their school activities and personal activities. To which Shields (2010) elaborates that "some argue a focus on power equity, and social justice can only occur at the expense of intellectual development and accountability" (p. 572).

A last factor is that this study is one of the few studies that provides empirical research related to transformative studies. Thus, its implementation in contributing to learner leadership development might be challenging. This is supported by Shields (2010) that "there is little empirical research related to transformative leadership: few studies have operationalized transformative leadership and examined its effect in real-life settings" (p. 572).

The operationalisation of transformative leadership was done in the Change Laboratory, which as an instrument was used as a platform by the participants to transform the activity system. Below I discuss the Change Laboratory in details.

2.7.2 Change Laboratory: As a formative intervention

Change Laboratory Workshops are "a methodological tool used by Engeström and developmental work researchers to study the agentive learning process, and resultant changes" (Mukute, 2009, p. 154). According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2012), "In the Change Laboratory, a problematic situation in the practitioners' activity is brought to their attention through the mirror of their practice, these data are collected by the interventionist researcher through careful ethnographic research with daily work of the participants (excerpts from interviews, videos etc.) which are presented to the participants during the Change Laboratory sessions" (p. 187). It is the first stimulus (Virkkunen & Newnham 2012).

The Change Laboratory aim is to transform an activity system. In agreement, Virkkunen and Newnham (2012) state that "in the Change Laboratory, we intend to create something which produces new innovations and further development in an activity" (p. 186). Additionally, Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) suggest that "the Change Laboratory is a novel method and a set of instrument for formative intervention in work activities that is designed for meeting this need and supporting qualitative transformation and expansive learning within work activities" (p. xxiii). Mirroring data involves projecting data generated from the ethnographic research carried out in n activity system. I mirrored the problems to the LRC members during the Change Laboratory to provoke them into working towards the object of the activity system.

The figure below depicts the layout and instruments of the Change Laboratory:
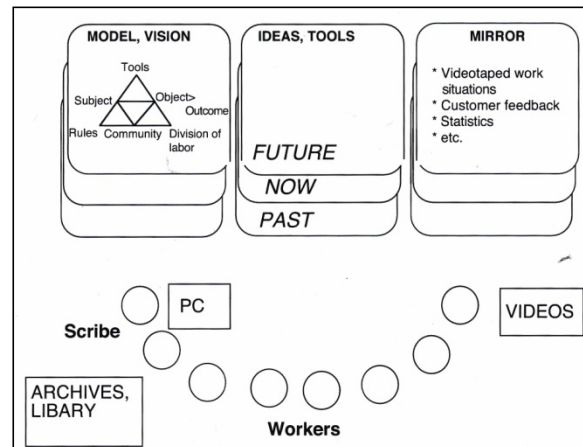
Figure 2.3: The layout and instruments of the change laboratory space (adapted from Engeström, Virkkunen, Helle, Pihlaja, & Poikela, 1996, p. 3)

In Figure 2.3, Engeström et al. (1996) emphasises that "the third surface in the middle is reserved for ideas and tools; In analysis of problem situations and design of a new model for the work activity, intermediate cognitive tools (Norman, 1993) such as schedules and flowcharts of processes, layout pictures and diagrams of organizational structures, categorizations of interview responses, formulas of calculating costs, or techniques for idea generation and problem solving,

including simulations and role playing, are often needed" (p. 3). It is further suggested by Engeström et al. (1996) that "the horizontal dimension of the surfaces represents different levels of abstraction and theoretical generalization; At one end, the mirror surface is used to represent and examine experiences from work practice, particularly problem situations and disturbances, but also novel innovative solutions, videotaped work episodes as well as stories, interviews, customer feedback and regular performance statistics are used in the mirror" (p. 3).

On the top left corner, the model/vision is used "for modeling the past, present and future structure of the activity and inner contradictions" (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 16). This part includes the triangular model of the second generation of CHAT, used as the second stimuli to further analyse the development within the activity system. In support, Virkkunen (2012) states that "the model of an activity system and other models are made available to the practitioners as possible second stimuli, with the help of which practitioners can plan their actions of structuring the problem situation and proceedings in solving the problem" (p. 187). Furthermore, Engeström et al. (1996) point out that "at the other end, the model/vision surface is reserved for theoretical tools and conceptual analysis. The complex triangular model [shown in Figure 2.3 above] is used to analyze the systemic quality and interconnections of work activity. Systemic roots of specific but recurring problems and disturbances are traced and conceptualized as inner contradictions of the activity system" (p. 3).

We are reminded by Virkkunen (2012) that "Change Laboratory participants are not just a group of individuals with many ideas for the future development but they are persons who work collaboratively to solve a contradiction and develop the activity in certain direction" (p. 184). The Change Laboratory will help me together with the participants to surface contradictions and work expansively towards the object of the activity system.

In conclusion of this section of this chapter, it is highlighted in Sannino et al. (2009) that "activity theory prioritizes the things or project that people are working to transform" (p. 27). As an researcher-interventionist, I ensured that CHAT as my theoretical framework contributed to the focus of the study to develop leadership in LRC members of the case study school. This is supported in Foot (2014, p. 20), that "CHAT could be used to identify the specific kinds of actions

that will be more or less likely to catalyze the kinds of organizational development that are desired". The solving of contradictions collectively by the subjects and me will lead to expansive learning, which is my next discussion. Engeström (as cited by Mukute, 2009, p. 158) states that "contradictions provide spaces for expansive learning".

As an interventionist researcher using the formative intervention, my action was to "provoke and support learning process" (Sannino, 2016, p. 2). These intentions are the initial points needed for practitioners or LRC members to learn something new (Engeström & Sannino, 2010) and this is what a "truly expansive learning process typically confronts and deviate from if the learners are to produce their own collective designs" (Sannino, 2016, p. 2). Below, I discuss the expansive learning process.

2.7.3 Expansive Learning

Expansive learning is new knowledge that is basically created by the subject during the Change Laboratory through identifying contradictions and collectively finding solutions to transform the object of the activity. This method was used in this study and in various other studies and interventions. Yamazumi (2006) defines expanding learning as "learning that creates culturally new patterns of activity that do not exist yet; it is learning for practitioners to master and then break through the inner contradictions in and between their activity system; therefore , it is learning used to master their own lives and future" (p. 83). In short, according to Engeström and Sannino (2010), "in expansive learning, learners learn something that is not yet there" (p. 2). Expansive learning based on an activity-theoretical framework is one of the most influential concepts regarding human collaborative learning activity (Yamazumi, 2006).

The learning process in expansive learning happens in two ways; through internalisation and externalisation. This is discussed in detail by Mukute (2009) that: "Externalisation happens when a person or group of people creates new knowledge or solutions. Internalisation, happens to take place when an individual makes sense of available cultural capital in his/her social interactions, thinking and actions" (p. 152). According to Engeström (as cited in Mukute, 2009, p. 152), learning that encompasses both internalisation and externalisation, is called expansive learning.

The expansive learning cycle is explained as "an 'ideal type' of an activity's development as any process of development includes contractions as well as expansions" (Foot, 2014, p. 19).

The concept of moving from abstract to concrete is explained as a "method of grasping the essence of an object by tracing and reproducing theoretically the logic of its development of its historical formation through the emergence and resolution of its inner contradictions" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 5). The expansive learning during the Change Laboratory as mentioned earlier, ascends from the abstract to the concrete, this process "is achieved through specific epistemic or learning actions" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 6). They further suggest "together these actions form an expansive cycle or spiral" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 6). The learning actions of expansive learning are shown below in Figure 2.4.
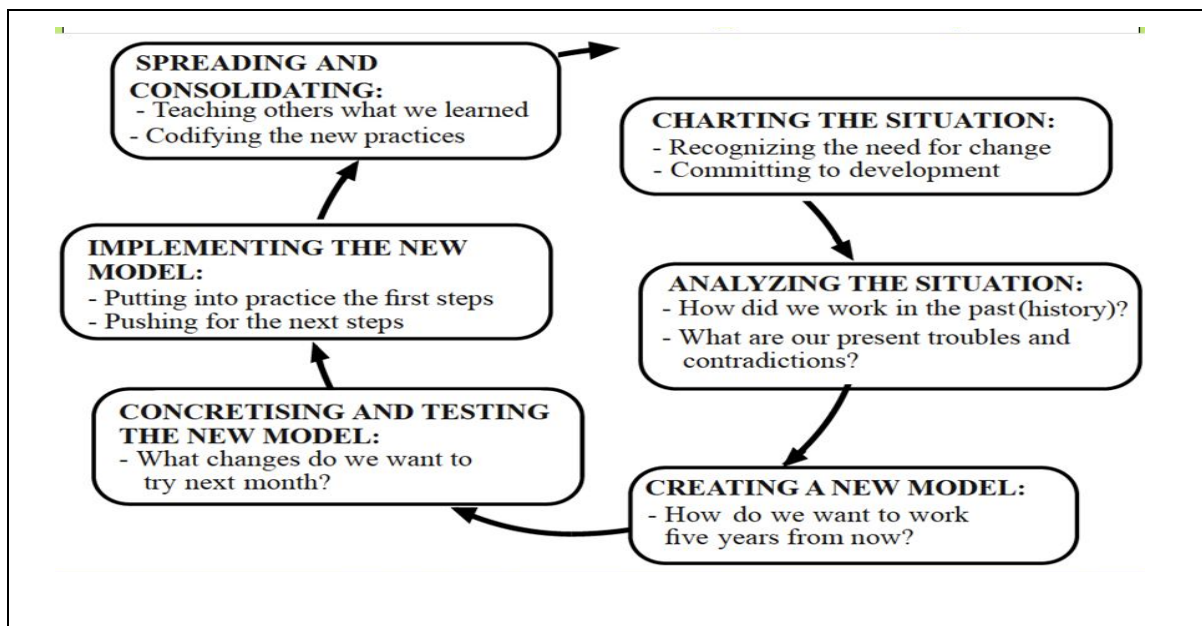
Figure 2.4: Expansive learning cycle (Adapted from Virkkunen and Newnham, 2013, p. 17)

In other words, the expansive learning cycle is learning that expansively takes place through learning actions in which humans are physically involved to change their practice in the object of an activity system. As illustrated in Figure 2.4, there are six learning actions, but this study did not

manage to complete all six learning actions, and only completed four learning actions. These four learning actions worked out as follows; the first learning action – participants criticised the challenges, which produced the transformative agency within the participants to create a change. The second learning action – participants analysed the challenges by tracing the history of the object. The third learning action – participants modelled possible solutions for the challenges. The last, learning action – participants prioritised the doable solution and experimented the new model. The LRC members during the Change Laboratory applied "the typical sequence of learning actions in an expansive cycle" (Foot, 2014, p. 19) described below.

The learning actions in the expansive cycle have no sequence or order that one has to apply and it is expected that the whole seven learning actions or steps may not all be completed. In support of this, Engeström and Sannino (2010) highlight that "one probably never finds a concrete collective learning process which would clearly follow the ideal-typical model" (p. 7).

In conclusion, I summarise this section with Sannino et al. (2009, p. xiii) who suggest that, "a transition from action to activity is considered expansive when it involves the objective transformation of the actions themselves and when subjects become aware of the contradictions in their current activity in the perspective of a new form of activity".

2.7.4 Critiques of CHAT

The activity theory as a theoretical framework is being used in many countries, a clear example being that Rhodes University students such as myself are using it. To this, Engeström (2001) explains that "when activity theory went international, questions of diversity and dialogue between different traditions or perspectives became increasingly serious challenges" (p. 135) and suggests using the third generation of activity theory to deal with these issues.

The second weakness of CHAT is the lack of a common understanding, application and expected outcome of CHAT for every activity system. Holzman (2006 as cited in Sannino et al., 2009, p. 1) argue that, "there is no unified perspective on activity theory" . Such a broad view of activity theory contributes to a misrepresentation of the theory as fragmented and scattered across multiple

perspectives (Sannino et al, 2009, p. 1). Every activity system produces a different transformative change towards its object.

2.8 Conclusion

Education in Namibia and all over the world is aiming to produce changes that result in positive educational outcomes through leadership. In agreement with this, Bush (2007) states "the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes significant difference to school and student outcome" (p. 391). The next chapter describes the methodology I used for my study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the research design and the methodology of my qualitative study as well as the various research techniques that I used. The focus of the study is: *To develop learner voice and leadership within LRC members of the case study school through a formative intervention study.* I went to the research site as a researcher-interventionist (Sannino et al., 2016) and collected my data for seven weeks during the months of February, March, June and September 2019.

The chapter begins with the research goal to explain to the reader what I wanted to achieve as a researcher. The research goals assisted me in attaining the main objective of this study, to develop learner voice within the LRC members at the case study school. The chapter goes further to discuss the research approach used, how data were generated using various research tools and how data was analysed. I then conclude with the trustworthiness of my study and the ethical considerations applied.

Below I highlight the research goals and questions of my research.

3.2 Research Questions

To achieve the main goal of the study mentioned earlier, I sought answers to the following questions during data collection:

1. How do the LRC members, teachers and SMT understand learner leadership?
2. To what extent and how are LRC members involved in decision-making at the school?
3. What kind of training or programmes does the LRC undergo to develop their leadership capacity?
4. What are the factors enabling and inhibiting the development of leadership within the LRC?
5. How can learner voice and leadership be developed within the LRC at the case study school, through a formative intervention?

I now turn to the research approach and data generation methods I used to attain my research goal and methods.

3.3 Research Approach

Under this section of methodology I had to make a decision on how my study would be designed, especially as this study was informed around the transformative and distributive leadership theories using CHAT as the theoretical and analytical framework. The research approach that orients this study is critical theory, designed as a formative intervention to bring about the transformation in how leadership is perceived at the case study school and to develop leadership in LRC members in ensuring that their voice is heard in the school. The critical theory aligns with the transformative intent of my study. A study with a critical orientation criticises traditional education research because of "its social reproduction function where traditional power relations are maintained and nourished" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 60). This happens when teachers, the school management team and the school board make decisions on behalf of learners or prevent learners from taking decisions on schools matters that concern them. The aim of the critical theory, is to expose such power relations through critique of the system and CHAT will surface these contradictions that will be dealt with through the expansive learning cycle. Expansive learning, according to Engeström and Sannino (2010) "is manifested primarily as changes in the object of the collective activity, this eventually leads to a qualitative transformation of all components of the activity system" (p. 8).

A formative intervention is described by Engeström and Sannino (2010) as "a purposeful action by human agent to create change" (p. 15). The object of the activity system of the study is to develop leadership within the LRC members and this will be possible once a radical transformation is carried out. This was carried out through a Change Laboratory method as a formative intervention methodology. Virkkunen (2012) states that "in the change laboratory, we intend to create something which produces new innovations and further development in an activity" (p. 186).

As a researcher, I went into a school to study and investigate the phenomenon of learners' voice and leadership development of the LRC members' activity system. As mentioned earlier, this research method is a case study research, which I discuss below.

3.4 Research Method

The research method that I used is a case study which Rule and John (2011) explain "is adopted when researchers want to portray rich, textured and in-depth accounts of the case" (p. 61). The case study assisted this formative intervention to achieve its aim of producing "generative solutions" (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 10) after participants with the assistance of the research-interventionist, used the tensions and contradictions that emerged in the activity system to model the solutions. As a researcher-interventionist I intervened and collaborated with the participants with the aim to transform learner voice and leadership within the activity system. This is highlighted by Sannino et al. (2016) that "in formative interventions the researcher-interventionists offer participants theoretical and methodological resources to engage in practical experiments that can lead to generative, novel outcomes" (p. 10). This method therefore offers "a multi-perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation, but also views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 75). Learners in our Namibian schools, as mentioned earlier, are seldom given an opportunity to be heard, so the case study promoted the acknowledgement of learner voice which was advocated for through this intervention study. To this, Nieuwenhuis (2007) explains that learner voice "opens the possibility of giving a voice to the powerless and voiceless, like children or marginalized group" (p. 75). This is supported by Rule and John (2011) who mention that "data sought in case study research can be located with people, in action or practices [naturally occurring events], in various media such as document, film, and artefacts such as tools, buildings" (p. 63). Moreover Cohen et al. (2011, p. 289) emphasise that "case studies recognise and accept that there are many variables operating in a single case, and hence to catch the implications of these usually requires more than one tool, for data collection and many sources of evidence". Thus, in my study I used a variety of sources to generate data in order to ensure that all variables considered come to a meaningful conclusion.

Next, I discuss the research site of my study.

3.5 The Research Site

The intervention was carried out at Elumbu Combined School which is situated in a town; it offers grade 0-12, and has a population of 960 learners. The school has eight blocks of classrooms with 27 classrooms, 32 teachers, three Heads of Department, two administrative officers and five cleaners. The school is a state school that provides free education and it offers science and commerce as fields of study. I chose the school because it is in the same town where I reside which was very convenient for me as a researcher. I made an explicit decision not to carry out my study at the school where I am working as a principal which is deep in a rural area. I chose an alternative school where I was a stranger, to avoid the influence I might have on participants. The fact that I was an outsider reduced my influence as the participants perceived me as a relatively neutral researcher rather than as their principal, which could have been the case at my duty station. The other reason why I chose this school was that it was having discipline problems and learners were not performing well. This challenge, I believe, aligned with the need for a critical approach to intervention, to bring about the transformation needed to improve the school, the relationship of learners among themselves and with the staff of the school. In this interventionist study, the subject were the LRC members at the school, which make it easy for me to work with them to build leadership capacity through having an intervention with a focus on leadership development within LRC members. The next section discusses the participants of this study.

3.6 Profiles of Participants

3.6.1 Learner Representative Council members

There are 12 learner LRC members who were elected by the whole school. They are from grade 10 to 12, and the majority are 16 to 18 years old. There are six girls and six boys who represent other learners as LRC members at school. They serve in various portfolios including head boy, head girl, deputy head boy and deputy head girl, academic, information and publicity, sport and culture, entertainment, and treasurer.

3.6.2 School Management Team (Principal, 3 Head of departments), Liaison teacher and Class register teacher

The school has a principal and three heads of department who serve as the school management team (SMT). The four SMT members are discussed below.

The principal (P)

The school principal has been in the profession for 27 year and in the managerial position for 12 years. He teaches Social Science to one grade 10 class, due to a lot of administration work to be done at school. He spends most of his day performing managerial and leadership roles such as class visits, attending to parents and visitors, supervising the teaching and learning process and supporting staff at school, as well as ensuring that the school is functioning as per the ministerial norms.

School Management Team 1 (SMT1) - She is the head of department for the Junior Primary Phase (grade 0-3), has teaching experience of 16 years of which 6 years is in the management position and has been with the school all of those 16 years. Her role is to assist the principal to supervise and manage the school, implement what is delegated to her by the principal, conduct class visits, ensure departmental goals are achieved and serve in various committees at school.

School Management Team 2 (SMT2) - He is the head of department for Mathematics and Science grade 4 to 12, which is a big department like the languages department. He has 13 years of experience in teaching and was promoted in 2015 when he came to this school to start as a head of department. His duties are the same as SMT1 above.

School Management Team 3 (SMT3) - He is the head of department for English and Oshindonga grade 4 to 12 and has teaching experience of 15 years of which 8 years in the management position. He was also teaching at another school where he was also serving as ahead of department and was transferred to this school in 2013. He is a school board member and carries out all the duties as per the other two SMT members mentioned above.

Liaison teacher (LT) - He is a teacher for Life Sciences and Physical Science and started teaching 10 years ago at the school. He was assigned the duty of being the liaison teacher for the LRC members at the school since 2016.

Class Register Teacher (CRT) - She is a register class teacher for grade 8 who teaches Accounting and Entrepreneurship to grades 8 and 9 at school. She started teaching at this school in 2001. She serves on the school's financial committee and academic committee.

In my presentation of findings chapters, and for ease of reading, I used codes for all participants and a pseudonym (Elumbu Combined School) for the research site. For example, P stands for principal, SMT stand for school management team, LT stands for liaison teacher, CRT stand for class register teacher and L stand for learner. This was done for ethical reasons and to protect the identity of the school and participants as agreed in the consent and assent letters provided to the participants and gatekeepers during the initial days of my study at the research site.

3.6.3 Selection of participants

During phase 1 of my study, I invited through assent letters (see appendix H) the entire population of LRC members to be the participants of the study. In this case, this population of 12 LRC members are the subject of the activity system with the object of developing leadership within them; the main research objective of the study. I was interested in developing LRC members' leadership skills, knowledge and attributes, as well as give them a voice to be heard, seek collaboration with teachers and develop leadership capacity to take the lead in their lives. In addition, I purposively sampled one class teacher and then selected the LRC's liaison teacher and four school management members (the school principal and three heads of departments) who were also invited to participate in this study. These additional participants represented the community of the activity system of LRC and were also consulted to share their rich experience on leadership around the school during the intervention. The teachers were selected based on a minimum experience of three years in teaching at the research site and their involvement with the LRC members. The liaison teacher, by virtue of his position, was automatically invited to participate in the study while the sampling of the management team was based on a minimum of two years'

experience in the management position at the school.

3.7 Data Generation (During Phase 1 And Phase 2)

As mentioned earlier, this was a case study research method carried out to gather data on the phenomenon of learners' voice and leadership development of the LRC members' activity system. In this section, I outline the data generating tools I used during the two phases of my study. The two phases are briefly discussed below and in detail later in this chapter. The collection of data was during the last week of February 2019 and three weeks of March 2019 (phase one)/ I then went back again in June 2019 (phase two) for the two sessions of Change Laboratories at the case study school. During September 2019, I went back for the final Change Laboratory workshop (this details is provided later in this chapter).

3.7.1 Phase one

This was the contextualisation phase involving contextual profiling which entailed the ethnographic data generation. I explained to the participants what the study was all about and negotiated informed consent. During this first phase, I collected data for research questions 1 to 4 using document analysis, observation, questionnaires and interviews, to capture participants understanding of the concept learner leadership and how learner voice is heard at the school, as well as the historicity of leadership practices at the school.

Next, I discuss the data generating tools I used during phase one and phase two of my studies.

3.7.1.1 Documentation

Document analysis is a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic material" according to Bowen (2009, p. 27). Document analysis (see appendix I) is a useful place to start data collection in a case study, particularly if the design includes other methods such as interviews and observations (Rule & John, 2011). Similarly, Bowen (2009) emphasises that "document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation" (p. 28). I carried out focus interviews with the participants to complete in order to confirm information I generated through document

analysis. However, Bowen (2009) warns us that "documents are produced for some purpose other than research; they are created independent of a research agenda, consequently they usually do not provide sufficient detail to answer a research question" (p. 31-32). Nieuwenhuis (2007) reminds the researcher to "take care to evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of the records before using them - not all information placed on the internet is accurate and authentic, and not everything that gets written in a report is factually correct" (p. 83). Thus, I ensured that all documents at my disposal were up to date and valid. The following policy documents - *Regulation of Education Act of 2001*; *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* and *School Internal Policy*, *School Development Plan*, school board and staff members minutes of meetings and year plans – were analysed to collect secondary data. However, among all these documents the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* was the only document containing data relating to learner leadership and the rest did not have any or limited data on learner leadership relating to LRC members.

The secondary data process is described by Pacho (2015, p. 50) as "a way of collecting data by reviewing existing documents". Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 97) describe secondary data as "data collected by others or even derived from existing data". While Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 82-83) describes primary sources as "data that is unpublished and which the researcher has gathered from participants or organisations directly, for example minutes of meetings, reports, correspondence, etc". A need does exist to analyse documents. As Bowen (2009) posits, "Like any other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (p. 27). I used document analysis as indicated earlier to capture the understanding of leadership at the school and how leadership is practiced with regard to learner leadership development. Since the document analysis did not provide much data in terms of learner leadership and I failed to analyse minutes of LRC meetings as there were none available, I therefore relied more on the questionnaires (discussed in detail in section 3.7.1.3 below), interviews and observations as my other data collection tools that I discuss in the sections to come. Below is the discussion on observation.

3.7.1.2 Observation

As a researcher I used an observation schedule (see appendix J) during both phases of my study to collect first hand observation data during this six-week period. Pacho (2015) explains observation, stating that "during this period, social researchers immerse themselves in the lives and situations" (p. 50) of the participants. Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 84) further explain observation as "the researcher goes to the site of the study, which may be a school, classroom and observes what is actually taking place there". I used observation to report on what I witnessed and not what respondents said to me as an interventionist. Observation is suitable for collecting qualitative data since actual data and information that derive from non-verbal expressions are observed.

I used structured observation (see appendix J) since the core research questions provided clear guidance or direction on what I was looking for in the case study. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) agree with this by stating that "observation is suitable if a researcher has clear idea of what he is looking for in a case study" (p. 85). The observation process enabled me to observe different LRC members' actions (Appendix J) during the intervention. I particularly observed the following activities: how they conducted themselves at school during breaks and extra mural activities; during the LRC meeting with the liaison teacher; how they conducted themselves; how they were involved in the decision-making process; and how their voices were heard when they were dealing with learner late coming and grievances, as well as matters affecting learners' learning and schooling. These were all formal and informal observations carried out to take note of all behaviours and actions that would be significant to the report. In support, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that "observation enables the researcher to gather information about a wide range of phenomena" (p. 85).

However, Rule and John (2011, p. 68) warn us "to be aware of how their presence as researchers who make observations may be influencing the behaviour and responses of research participants". I tried my very best during the familiarisation process to clarify my intentions and during my interpersonal contact with the participants, I conducted myself in an ethical and open manner to ensure that my presence did not influence participants' behaviours during the research process.

During this process of observation, I used a research journal to take field notes. However, as a human being I missed some situations, more especially since I did not video record situations that I observed. There were other challenges I faced. One was that the time was never enough; I could not be everywhere to observe the various school activities simultaneously. Thus, I also used other tools to generate data for my study and I discuss the questionnaire below as one of the other tools I used to generate and triangulate data.

3.7.1.3 *Questionnaires*

I used questionnaires (see appendix K) to confirm and triangulate data I generated during the first week through document analysis and observation. A questionnaire is a "printed sets of field questions to which participants respond on their own or in the presence of the researcher" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 66). The questionnaire allowed me to get participants' personal opinions and understanding of learner leadership, learners' voice and leadership practice at the case study school. I administered two different questionnaires with a combination of open- and closed-ended questions; one questionnaire with the subjects (whole population of LRC members at school) and the other questionnaire with the community (four SMT members, class teacher and LRC liaison teacher) of the activity system. The questionnaires were administered during phase 1 during the second week of data collection and were in response to my first four research questions mentioned earlier. Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that open questions enable respondents to answer in their own words and are therefore suitable for sensitive topics. Questionnaires are favourable because they may be completed without the presence of the researcher and they are moderately easy to analyse (Cohen et al., 2011). I am aware of the fact that asking someone to complete questionnaires can be bothersome to them and may require their precious time. Therefore, participation in filling out the questionnaires was voluntary and subject to the respondents' informed consent (Cohen et al., 2011). In addition, I piloted the questionnaires with three LRC members at the school where I was working to ensure that questions were not ambiguous and that they provided data needed to answer the research questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The questionnaire tool allowed participants to freely express their opinions and understanding with limited or no influence on participants.

However, as a researcher I struggled to get these questionnaires back from participants because as I mentioned earlier, the time was not enough. The participants took their time to complete the questionnaires, despite a request for a two-day turnaround time. As an interventionist, I had to make sure that they all completed and handed back the questionnaires for me to do the analysis. At the end, it took the participants four days to complete the questionnaires. Only a few questions were left unanswered especially by some the LRC members, as either they did not understand or they opted not to complete them.

Next I discuss the focus group interviews I used to generate data.

3.7.1.4 *Focus group interviews*

I conducted two focus group interviews. The first one was the Focus Group Interview 1 (see appendix L) with all LRC members and the second one was the Focus Group Interview 2 (see appendix M) with the principal, the SMT participants, the LRC liaison teacher and class register teacher. An interview is defined by Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 87) as "a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviour of the participants". Before these focus interviews, I emphasised ground rules to the participants in order to ensure that all participants were given an equal chance to respond and to limit power relations between participants during the interviews. This is what Pacho (2015) warns about: "The focus group discussion can be dominated or distracted by few individuals" (p. 48). As mentioned earlier, this is a qualitative research, and I used qualitative interviews in order for me "to see the world through the eyes of the participants, and they can be a valuable source of information, provided they are used correctly" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 87). The focus group interview of the principal, the SMT members, the LRC liaison teacher and class register teacher generated more information based on the participants' experience on the phenomenon of learner leadership, leadership practice and learner voice at school. The focus group of LRC members also provided me with relevant information on their understanding of the learner leadership concept and how leadership is practiced at school. This enhanced the multi-voicedness of the participants in the activity system of the study. Pacho (2015, p. 49) reminds us that this process of "interviews may be time-intensive evaluation activity". Indeed, it was quite a

struggle to get a suitable time which allowed participants to be available for the interview, since participants were busy during lessons and I could only conduct these interviews after school hours at the school. Data collected from interviews during phase 1 was in response to research questions 1-3. This was to get clear views from participants on the historicity of leadership practices and their own personal thoughts about leadership as mentioned above. It also allowed me to ask follow up questions thereby enhancing the richness of data.

The interviews conducted were open-ended. Brenner (2006) elaborates that "open-ended interview often also called a qualitative interview, gives an informant the space to express meaning in his or her own words and to give direction to the interview process" (p. 357). The semi-structured interview with open-ended questions allowed the participants to respond in their own way. This is also supported by Rule and John (2011) "this style of interview allows for more flexibility during data collection and creates space for the interviewer to pursue lines of inquiry stimulated by the interview" (p. 65). Brenner (2006) also supports the semi-structured interview protocol "as it has the advantage of asking all informants the same core questions with the freedom to ask follow up questions that build on the responses received" (p. 362). I tried my best to create an open relationship with participants and was honest from the familiarisation phase of the research to reduce the influence I might have on participants. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) support this claim by stating that "researchers need to be aware of how their position may influence the type of information that the respondent volunteers" (p. 83). Thus, power relations can influence the process of an interview. In using a focus group, Rule and John (2011) warn us that "the demands of questioning, listening and being sensitive to group dynamics require good facilitation skills" (p. 65). Thus, I used recording technology (cell phone) to capture the focus group data, following my request for their consent. I recorded the interview process then transcribed the audio captured. Agreeing to this is Nieuwenhuis (2007), who states that "preferably, a tape recorder should be used to record the interview, but remember to get permission from the participant before you begin recording" (p. 89). Bertram and Christiansen (2014), however, warn that "this can be overwhelming unless the researcher has a very clear idea of how data will be analysed" (p. 83). The interviews were done in English for all my participants since none had a problem with communicating in English.

The above tools were used to generate ethnographic data during phase one of my study and this was used as the first stimulus during the first Change Laboratory Workshop in phase two of my study to further generate data that responded to my research question 5: *How can learner voice and leadership be developed within the LRC at the case study school through a formative intervention?* The Change Laboratory Workshops of phase two are discussed below.

3.7.2 Phase two: Change laboratory workshops

I initially planned to conduct four Change Laboratory Workshops with the participants but only managed to carry out three workshops in the allocated time. Change Laboratory Workshop 1 was carried out on the 6th of June 2019 while Change Laboratory workshop 2 was carried out on the 13th of June 2019 and the last one (Change Laboratory Workshop 3) was carried out on the 19th September 2019 in order to intervene and possibly transform the LRC members' leadership practice at the researched school by the participants through an expansive learning cycle. The participants who were part of the Change Laboratory Workshops were the 12 LRC members, the class register teacher, the liaison teacher and SMT3, while the principal, SMT1 and 2 were not part of the Change Laboratory Workshops. The fourth Change Laboratory workshop failed to materialise as was initially planned, due to time and unforeseen reasons.

3.7.2.1 Change laboratory 1: Introduction and overview

Figure 3.1: Participants of the first change laboratory workshop

The first Change Laboratory Workshop discussed the purpose and modalities of the Change Laboratories, the process of and number of Change Laboratories, and the in-house rules. Than introduced the activity system of the study to only 15 participants (the LRC members, the Class Register Teacher, the Liaison Teacher and SMT3, in absence was; the principal, SMT1 and SMT 2). The teacher participants were given permission by the LRC members to attend all the Change Laboratory Workshops and they all agreed to attend all the workshops. I explained that my role as an interventionist was that of a facilitator, and asked the LRC members to elect a secretary and chairperson of the sessions among themselves. Then I clarified each participant's role in the Change Laboratory session and emphasised the ethical considerations that were discussed in the consent letters and assent letters during phase one of the study.

3.7.2.2 Change laboratory 2: Learning actions 1 and 2 (questioning and analysing stages)

Figure 3.2: The mirroring of data in CLW 2 and discussion of possible solutions in groups during the CL workshop

During CLW two, I mirrored the data generated during phase 1 to expose the challenges and contradictions experienced by LRC members in the activity system. The 15 participants collaboratively began to question the past and present practices and analyse the data; i.e. the first and second steps of the expansive learning cycle were carried out at this stage. The first learning action (step 1) involved questioning: this includes "criticizing or rejecting some aspects of the accepted practice existing wisdom" (Foot, 2014, p. 19). The second learning action (step 2) "is that of analyzing the situation" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 7). According to Engeström and

Sannino (2010), analysis involves "mental, discursive or practical transformation of the situation in order to find out causes or explanatory mechanism" (p. 7). The participants were busy with the why questions. The third learning action (step 3) "is that of modeling" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 7). Participants modelled the possible solutions to the contradictions with the aim of transforming the practice towards a new object of the activity system. This meant "constructing an explicit, simplified model of the new idea that explains and offers a solution to the problematic situation" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 7). This is the transformative agency that can develop "when practitioners solve conflicts and disturbances during the development of their local activity and work practices" (Haapasaari & Kerosuo, 2014, p. 37). Participants collectively produced concrete solutions to the contradictions regarding the transformative changes they wanted in the activity system. Similarly, Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) point out that at this stage, the participants "develop a vision of the future form of their activity … and decide on a few new, key forms of actions and new tools with which they will begin to experimentally realize the vision" (p. 19).

I handed out note pads, posters and marker pens to the participants to use during their discussion on how they would resolve the contradictions on the screen. The participants collaboratively suggested possible solutions to the contradictions during the Change Laboratory Workshop 2. This involved the third step of the expansive learning cycle, which is modelling what they could do as possible solutions to the contradictions. During the Change Laboratory Workshop 2, I generated data by taking field notes in the research journal while the participants were presenting the solutions to the contradictions.

3.7.2.3 Change Laboratory 3: Prioritising solutions and Implementation
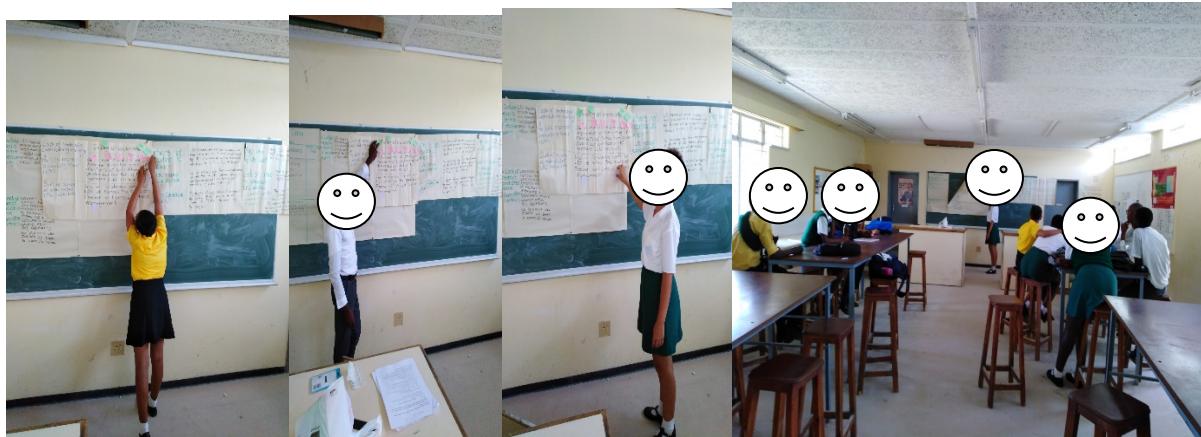
Figure 3.3: Participants priotitising the contradictions and possible solutions during the CL Workshop.

The third Change Laboratory workshop was attended by all 17 participants who attended the first Change Laboratory workshop on the 7th September 2019 in the same venue as the other two workshops. I explained to the participants the reasons for coming back and that there were time issues as schools would be closing earlier due to the election process at the end of November 2019. Thus we were granted permission by the school principal (the gatekeeper) to conduct only one last Change Laboratory and that the LRC learners' and teacher participants' efforts were much needed in this Change Laboratory. During this third workshop, the participants collaboratively prioritised the solutions to the contradictions based on what mattered to them most. This involved modelling in terms of coming up with an action plan as per the expansive learning cycle. The prioritising was done by using different colour cards (Figure 3.3) and the contradiction with the suggested solution with the most cards was chosen as the doable solution.

The fourth learning action (step 4) involves "examining the model in order to grasp its dynamics, potential, and limitations" (Foot, 2014, p. 19). The modelling of new solutions and, examining and testing the new model was carried out during this Change Laboratory Workshop 3. The established committee was given an action plan that was produced by all participants (including the LRC

liaison teacher, class register teacher and SMT 3) in the CLW 3, indicating the participants' roles and timeframe to complete the various activities.

I generated data during the Change Laboratory Workshops using unstructured observation by writing what I observed as observation notes in my reflective journal. Additionally, I used my cell phone to capture pictures during the CLWs as evidence to add to the richness of my data.

All the data I generated during phase 1 and phase 2 of my study was analysed using the various approaches that I discuss below.

3.8 Data Analysis

I analysed data as soon as I started generating data during the first week of phase one. After I collected data as a researcher I had to "interpret the case" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 75). This means I had to do data analysis. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), data analysis means "a close or systematic study or the separation of a whole into its parts, for the purpose of study" (p. 115). In addition, Rule and John (2011) explain data analysis as "a highly creative and intellectual process where you work the data to find patterns of meaning" (p. 75). While Meriam (1998) elaborate that "making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read" (p. 178). In other words, I had to find meaning out of the huge data I collected. I had "to construct thick descriptions, to identify themes, to generate explanations of thought and action evident in the case, and to theorise the case" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 75). I had to also make a decision on how I would organise the huge volume of data to do an effective analysis. The issue of analysis is "pertinent throughout the development and implementation of a research project" (Brenner, 2006, p. 366).

I first used inductive analysis (categories/themes emerging from data using content analysis) and thereafter the abductive approach, drawing on the relevant concepts and principles of CHAT to analyse my data to make sense after I organised and prepared the data first.
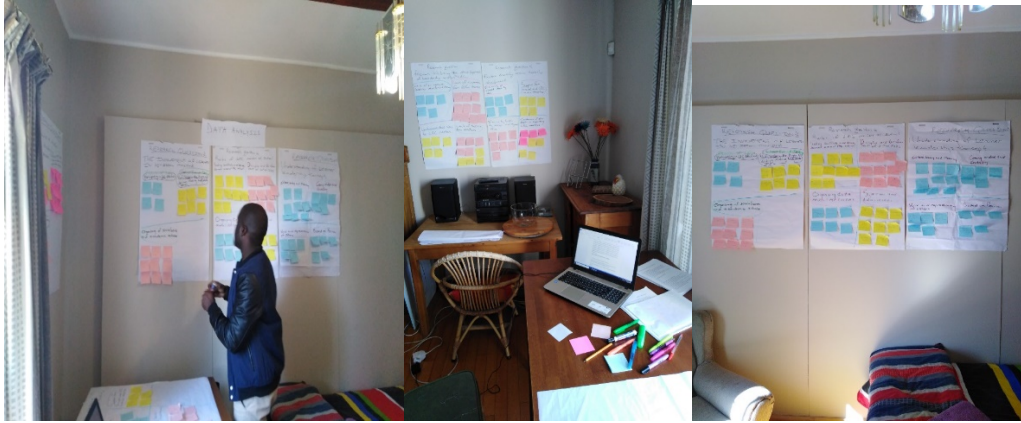
Figure 3.4: The interventionist researcher, analysing data

3.8.1 Organising and preparing data to analyse

Before I started with data analysis, I first had to organise and prepare how I was going to make sense out of the huge data I generated. The "steps taken to organise and prepare the data constitute of a preliminary phase of making sense of data" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 76). During the preliminary phase I transcribed the focus group interviews of both interviews. Then I typed a summary of these interviews and also typed the summary of all the questionnaires of the research participants. I backed up all the pictures I took during phase 1 and 2 of my study on the laptop for security reasons. I then prepared materials such as flipcharts, note book, marker pens, pens and pencils to use. After all these I started to engage with my data in order to get my data to make sense as elaborated earlier. Merriam (1998) explains that "data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 178).

3.8.2 Inductive approach

As I mentioned earlier, I had to analyse the huge amount of data I generated from the various research tools. I firstly inductively analysed the data. The induction approach "refers to approaches that primarily used detailed readings of raw data derives from concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from raw data by an evaluator or researcher" (Thomas, 2016, p. 238).

Similarly, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define an inductive approach as "a process of organising the data into categories and identify patterns [relationships] among the categories" (p. 117). I had to reduce the huge data first to understand how the data responded to my research questions. An inductive analysis by categorising data into themes "is the first step in data analyses which helps to reduce the data and organize it so that the researcher can start to see the patterns or themes that emerge" (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 119). In support of this, Cohen et al. (2007), state that "data analysis is a key element of qualitative analysis, performed in a way that attempts to respect the quality of the qualitative data" (p. 475). This can only be achieved through content analysis. This is what I used to analyse my data. Content analysis is "the process of summarizing and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 475). I read all the focus group interviews transcribed, the summary of questionnaires, my field notes and documentation analysis to come up with themes and categories emerging from the data. I did these through coding similar data with similar colour highlighters as seen in Figure 3.4 above.

Coding is defined by Rule and John (2011) as "a process of choosing labels and assigning them to different parts of data" (p. 77). This is "either decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 480). I first allocated different colours to the first four of my research questions. I highlighted the data for a specific research question with a similar colour across the data in my various research tools I mentioned earlier and field notes. I retyped all the data responding to a specific research question as seen in figure 3.4 . This process provided me with "a good opportunity to get more closer the data" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 77) generated. As I was moving back and forth reading the summary of the data, it allowed me to categorise my data. Cohen et al. (2007) argue this by stating that "words and single codes on their own have limited power, and so it is important to move to associations between words and codes" (p. 481). The next chapter, which is Chapter Four is the result or outcome of me using the inductive approach. Thomas (2016) talks of this outcome of inductive analysis as "the development of categories into a model or framework that summarizes the raw data and convey key themes and processes" (p. 240). This is as the result of analysing participants' raw data and making sense of that raw data to produce the findings in Chapter Four of this research.

3.8.3 Abductive approach

While in the inductive approach "research starts in relatively prejudice observation of reality without being bound to a specific theory" (Danermark, Ekström, Jacobsen, & Karlsson, 2002, p. 82), with the abductive approach the production of knowledge is not directly observable and it "requires concepts and theory" (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 88). In support of this, Reichertz (2004) emphasises that "on the one hand it [abduction] is logical inference [and thereby reasonable and scientific] and on the other hand it extends into the realm of profound insight [and therefore generates new knowledge]" (p. 159). However Danermark et al. (2002) consider the different modes of inference as "complementary in research practice" (p. 79). Thus, as a researcher I used both of these analytical approaches to complement the data findings of the study.

I used the second generation of CHAT theory as the analytical tool to assist me as a lens to surface the tensions and contradictions that constrained learner voice and leadership development of the LRC members' activity system at the school. CHAT was also used in my research to dig deeper into the tensions and contradictions between and within the elements of the activity system of LRC members. All this was carried out to respond to my research question 5: *How can learner voice and leadership be developed within the LRC at the case study school through a formative intervention?* As this was an interventionist study, the aim was not just to understand but to bring about possible changes through collaboration with the participants using expansive learning actions as an analytical tool to model solutions to the contradictions that emerged in the study.

To enhance validity and trustworthiness I triangulated the data using data from the research instruments described above. My attention now turns to addressing concerns of validity and trustworthiness.

3.9 Trustworthiness of My Study

The trustworthiness of a study is very crucial. Nieuwenhuis (2007) highlights the following points that I could use as a researcher to enhance trustworthiness of my study: "using multiple sources; verifying raw data; keeping notes of research decisions, greater trustworthiness in coding data; stakeholders checks; verifying and validating your findings; controlling for bias; avoiding

generalisation; choosing your quotes carefully; maintaining confidentiality and anonymity; and stating the limitation of your study upfront" (pp. 113-115). To fulfil these requirements described by Nieuwenhuis, and as previously mentioned, the use of multiple data collection sources facilitated the crystallisation of data and hence enhanced trustworthiness. Stewart, Gapp and Harwood (2017) suggest that "physically it is not possible to encompass all views at all points in time, yet crystallization provides the methodology to genuinely follow the trails to gain the richest and deepest account possible" (p. 5). Crystallisation is described as "the perceptive seer delving deeply into the mysteries with a solid belief that discovery must be rich, credible and trustworthy" (Stewart et al., 2017, p. 2). The use of document analysis, questionnaires, focus group interviews, observation schedules and Change Laboratory Workshops as research tools assisted me in this regard. Thus, I used a variety of data generating tools "to ensure accuracy such as the use of many sources to verify a theme" (Soiferman, 2010, p. 11-12). I also piloted my data generating instruments and sought for supervisor approval in terms of appropriateness of the data generating instruments. Furthermore, the research participants included LRC members, a class teacher, a liaison teacher, two HODs and the principal. Having different research participants contributed to a multi-voiced and expanded understanding of the phenomenon. I spent additional days at the research site after I finished collecting data for member-checking and provided feedback to participants and the school community. The case study school will be provided with the final copy of this thesis.

The following procedures: "credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (Thomas, 2016, p. 243) are described as four general types of trustworthiness in qualitative research by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Thomas (2016) further highlights that:

> Among the procedures they described, those applicable to performing data analysis include conducting peer debriefing and stakeholders checks as part of establishing a research audit [comparing the data with the research findings and interpretation] for dependability. Other procedures that can be used for assessing the trustworthiness of the data include consistency checks or interrater reliability [e.g. having another coder take category descriptions and find the text that belongs in those categories] and member or stakeholder checks. (p. 243)

As a qualitative researcher I was "interested in the accuracy of the final report" (Soiferman, 2010, p. 11). I used different methods "to ensure accuracy such as member-checks [where the participants get to review their comments]" (Soiferman, 2010, pp. 11-12). Member checking, "involve[s] opportunities for people with specific interest in the evaluation, such as participants, service providers, funding agencies, to comment on categories or the interpretations made" (Thomas, 2016, p. 243). I carried out member checking after I transcribed the focus group interviews, the transcriptions of observation and summaries of the questionnaires of participants whereby I called participants to verify and confirm what was documented in order to minimise misinterpretation(s). This was during and at the end of my research at the case study school.

3.10 Reflexivity and Positionality

As mentioned earlier, this study was an interventionist study that required me as a researcher to intervene into the activity system of LRC members at the case study school. It was important to understand that "the first step of the crystallization journey is the understanding of 'the self' before going out to understand the surrounding world" (Stewart et al., 2017 p. 1). As a researcher-interventionist coming from outside the school, carrying out a formative intervention study on how to develop learner voice and leadership within the activity system, it was very important for me to practice what is termed reflexivity. According to Mann (2016), "Reflexivity is a conscious process of thought and articulation centred on the dynamics of subjectivities in relation to the interviewer, the interviewee(s) and the research focus and methodology" (p. 15). Applying reflexivity assisted me to "close the illusion gap between researcher and researched" (Etherington, 2004, p. 32). I was an outsider (from the Omusati region) who came into the case study school (in the Oshana region) as a relatively unknown researcher and carried no position of authority over the school and participants.

However, as an adult, I had influence on the research process since I worked with minors who were eager to know who I was and whether I came to investigate them. To reduce this influence, I had to explain the purpose and objective of the study to the participants which made them freer with me as a researcher. This was "an ethical obligation to seek consent" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 79) and it was crucial for me to ensure the "transparency of my positionality and my intent as a

researcher" (Bourke, 2014, p. 7). Additionally, Stewart et al. (2017) suggest that "crystallization centers on understanding the research and researcher position to intimately view the process with an openness that allows discoveries to unfold that would otherwise be lost" (p. 1).

Thus, throughout the research I worked hard to ensure that my relationship with the participants avoided influencing the behaviour of the participants while generating data for my study. This is emphasised by Etherington (2004) that "by viewing our relationship with participants as one of consultancy and collaboration we encourage a sense of power, involvement and agency" (p. 32). As a researcher, I demonstrated my professionality throughout the research. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2011) recommend that researchers "have to demonstrate they are worthy, as researchers and human beings, of being accorded the facilities to carry out investigations" (p. 81). Hence, I remained professional and ethical throughout the study.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

For ethical clearance, I applied to the Rhodes University Ethical Standard Committee (RUESC) and obtained ethical clearance certificate (see Appendix N) from the Faculty of Education Higher Degree Committee. Then I proceeded to write a consent letter of permission to the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture through the Oshana Educational Regional Office to get their permission (see Appendix D) which I attached to the consent letter to the gate keeper (research site school principal) who gave me the final permission (see Appendix E) to get access to the case study school. This was emphasised by Cohen et al. (2011) that "the first stage thus involves the gaining of official permission to undertake one's research in the target community" (p. 81). In support, O'Leary (2004) states that, "anytime a study calls for interaction with human participants, you are likely to need ethics approval" (p. 93). He further explains that an ethical study "is the one that takes responsibility for integrity in production of knowledge; acknowledges responsibility for researched; and ensure that the mental, emotional, and physical welfare of respondents is protected" (p. 93). This was ensured when I wrote a consent letters (see Appendix F) to the principal, SMT, liaison teacher, the class register teacher, as well as to parents of the minors. The minors, in this case the LRC members, completed assent letters (see Appendix H) after the parents signed the consent letters (see Appendix G) on their behalf. Fraenkel and Wallen (1994) advise

us that, consent form "signers must be provided all necessary information in appropriate language and must have the opportunity to refuse" (p. 43). The participants were clearly informed of their right to communicate their dissatisfaction and unwillingness to continue with the research at any time and stage of the research in the consent letters and during the introduction stage of my study. Other ethical issues are discussed in various sections of the research report.

I first allowed my supervisor to check and approve my data collection instruments, then piloted these instruments to ensure their accurateness and validity in generating suitable data for the study. Triangulation of data that I collected was done to compare the data collected to ensure validity once more as mentioned earlier. As the case with any study, there will be limitations, and this study was not different from other studies.

3.12 Conclusion

Due to the size of the data sets I generated, there was a need to split my findings into two chapters (Chapter Four and Five) in order to present, discuss and make sense of these large data. Next, in Chapter Four of my study, I present the findings for phase one: Scoping of the contextual profile.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FOR PHASE ONE: CONTEXTUAL PROFILE

4.1 Introduction

To remind the reader once again, the purpose of this study was to intervene and investigate learner leadership development of LRC members at an urban combined school in Namibia. In this chapter I focus on the presentation and discussion of findings for phase one of the study – a description of the case. To generate data during phase one of my study, I was guided by the following four research questions:

1. How do the LRC members, teachers and SMT members understand learner leadership?
2. To what extent, and how, are LRC members involved in decision-making at the school?
3. What kinds of training or programmes do the LRC undergo to develop their leadership capacity?
4. What are the factors enabling and inhibiting the development of leadership within the LRC?

In the next chapter, I focus on the presentation and discussion of findings for phase two of my study, the intervention phase, and in response to my fifth research question.

In this, the first of my findings chapters, the following themes are used as an organising framework:

- Different understandings of learner leadership
- The involvement of LRC learners in decision-making
- The opportunities provided to develop learner leadership
- Factors enabling learner leadership development
- Factors inhibiting learner leadership development.

Before I discuss and present the analysed data, I remind the reader of the codes for the various tools used in my study.

- Focus Group Interview – FGI

- Observation Notes – O

- Questionnaires – Q

- Document one – Education Act No. 16 of 2001 – D1

- Document two – Regulation made under Education Act 2001 – D2

- Document three – School Development Plan – D3

- Document four – School Year Plan – D4

- Document five – School Internal Policy – D5

- Document six – Minutes of school board meeting – D6

- Document seven – Minutes of staff meeting – D7

- Document eight – LRC members Regional Training Invitation letter – D8

Next, I present and discuss the data I generated over the period of four weeks to understand the current leadership practices of LRC members at the case study school. I start with the first theme: how participants understand the concept of learner leadership.

4.2 Different Understandings of Learner Leadership

Learner leadership was understood differently by the participants; four themes were evident across the data sets: Leadership as the ability to lead, influence and motivate others; the giving of orders and having power to control others; leadership as a representation of other learners; and leadership as based on position. The majority of participants viewed learner leadership as influencing, leading and motivating of others by fellow learners in a school. The second most common view was leadership as based on position in terms of learners being LRC members, class captains and captains of various sport teams at the school. In line with the literature discussed in Chapter Two, it shows that the understandings of learner leadership differed at the case study school.

I discuss each of the themes mentioned above separately.

4.2.1 Leadership as the ability to lead, influence and motivate others

Learner leadership was viewed by most participants as the ability to lead, influence and motivate other learners to achieve goals. Many participants (SMT2, SMT3, LT, L1, L2, L7, L8, L9, L10, L11) referred to learner leadership as "*leading, influencing and motivating other learners*" (Q). To be a leader, it was understood that a learner needs to demonstrate leadership qualities to other learners that encourages, influences and allows them to follow their leader towards achieving a common goal. In agreement, the principal described learner leadership as, "*the class captains and LRC members who are leading other learners at school and motivating them to achieve their goals as well as ensure discipline is kept at school*" (Q). One other example is when the class register teacher said: "*Sport teams' captains are also leaders in their own right, when they are playing sport they are leading the team to win*" (Q). During a focus group interview, one of the participants indicated that learners who are leading "*are motivating and influencing other learners to work hard and produce good results in the subjects at school*" (FGI-2). From the data analysis, it was evident that learner leadership was understood to be associated with leadership skills such as influencing, guiding and motivating others to work towards a common goal. The LRC members were entrusted with influencing their fellow learners into being disciplined and committed learners towards achieving educational goals and obeying school rules. According to Christie (2010), leadership "may more usefully be framed in terms of a social relationship of power whereby some are able to influence others" (p. 695). It is in this social relationship of power that LRC members are seen to have influence and can motivate other learners towards achieving educational goals.

The data also revealed that the school learners were motivating each other to perform in their school. This was indicated by an LRC member who explained that, as leaders, they were "*leading other learners at school and motivating them to study and pass with good marks and be good learners*" (FGI-1). The same point was also highlighted by the principal in the questionnaire, as "*leading other learners at school and motivating them to achieve their goals.*" L8 wrote in the questionnaire that these are learners who are "*able to motivate and encourage others on what they have to do*" at school. In agreement, Bush (2007) writes, "leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others" (p. 392). The motivation and support in terms of leading and influencing other learners boosted the relationship between LRC members and fellow learners.

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4.2.2 The giving of orders and having power to control others

The participants also understood learner leadership through LRC members as giving orders and controlling other learners. The data revealed that leadership was viewed in terms of the execution of management tasks such as organising, leading and controlling at the case study school. In this regard, Haipa (2017) points out "Monitoring and control are central to management" (p. 54). To demonstrate the controlling of fellow learners by LRC members, L1 responded that learner leadership involves those learners who are helping teachers in ensuring that learners, "*wear appropriate uniform and making sure that learners are in classrooms on time*" (Q) during school hours. In agreement, L2 wrote that "*every year learners at our school vote for Learner Representative Council members who manage and control other learners at school, for the school to run smoothly*" (Q). During the data collection phase of my study, I observed LRC members at the gate, supervising and controlling other learners (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: LRC members at the gate to control the late comers and ensure learners have full school uniforms

The LRC members were recording names of late comers and controlling the wearing of uniform by fellow learners. This morning supervision ritual was also confirmed by one of the participants:

"*LRC members were recording late comers at the gate during the morning hours and supervising study in the afternoon after school*" (FGI-2).

Furthermore, a learner revealed that during study and break time they are "*controlling learners and making sure they obey the rules*" (L8, Q). This is in line with the findings of Jansen, Moosa and Van Niekerk (2014) that "learner leaders in many instances become an extension of management, and simply serve as assistants in a quasi-policing role of the teaching staff and management of the school" (p. 4). The data generated revealed that LRC members were indeed viewed as police officers who were carrying out managerial roles in ensuring other learners were behaving accordingly; L3 indicated: "*We deal with any learner who misbehaves in classrooms and around the school*" (Q). Similarly, in the question asked about LRC roles, one of the LRC members said they are "*controlling other learners to ensure they behave when the teachers are not around*" (FGI-1), be it in class or outside class. This was confirmed by L11, that "*we have the right to tell others what to do at school and around the school*" (Q). The principal shared a similar understanding that learner leadership included "*those learners in different class groups who control their individual classes when teachers are not around or during school hours around the school*" (Q). To confirm this, I observed that, "*LRC members are most of the time visible around the school, telling learners what to do and ensuring learners remain disciplined during school hours*" (O, 08.03.2019). This shows that LRC members were using the power vested in them to control other learners towards achieving set goals or values of the case study school. Related to this finding, Christie (2010) suggests that leadership involves "an exercise of power, which is directed towards achieving goals, and it is associated with vision and values" (p. 695). One of the goals of the school was to improve performance among learners, and the school performance was seen as possible when LRC members ensured that learners were disciplined and adhered to the learners' code of conduct at the school.

Figure 4.2: LRC members carrying out the role of disciplining fellow learners at school

Christie (2010) makes the useful distinction between leadership and management when she explains that "leadership is characterised by influence and consent rather than coercion" (p. 695). This implies that leadership is not to persuade others to do something by force or threats. This was not the case with the LRC members in relation to this theme. For example, in Figure 4.1 it can be seen that LRC members are drawing on their legitimate power when disciplining other learners, by forcing learners to do odd jobs as punishment at school.

4.2.3 Learner leadership as a representation of other learners

At the case study school, some participants in my study viewed learner leadership as a representation of learners by LRC members who ensure that learners' voice is heard at school. By representation, it is when the LRC members are the voice of other learners at school. One participant referred to learner leadership as follows: "*It is when the LRC are representing other learners at school in different issues*" (FGI-2). With a similar understanding, another participant, referring to the LRC at the school, described how learner leaders "*are learners serving to represent other learners when conflicts arise between learners and teachers at school*" (FGI-2). This was also indicated by L3 who explained the term learner leadership as learners who are "*representing other learners at school when it comes to the learners' problems at school*" (Q). The principal too indicated that it "*is when learners take a role of becoming leaders when they represent others*" (Q). Data from another question in the questionnaire indicated the principal stressing that learners who are leaders ensure that "*problems concerning learners are solved and the school is performing*

well" (Q). Leren (2006) similarly contends that "the student council is a permanent way of organizing student voice" (p. 365).

The understanding of LRC members as representatives of other learners derives from the functions stipulated in the Regulations made under the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002). This Namibian document stipulates that the LRC is "the highest body of elected leaders of the learners" (D2, p. 19). Here LRC members are viewed as leaders of other learners, who represent other learners at school in all school related matters. However, criticising the representation of other learners by LRC members, Mabovula (2009) indicates that the "process of debate and decision making in school governance often marginalizes learners because the norms of discussion are based towards expression that is favourable to educators" (p. 221). In my study, and from the school management's understanding of leadership at the school, there were certain matters (enrolment of learners at school and disciplining of teachers) which were only discussed and decided by teachers, while other matters, such as the organisation of extra mural activities, were the domain of the LRC. This was revealed by SMT 3: "*The LRC members are only representing learners in minor issues such as in organising sport tournaments, fun activities at school and hair styles decisions*" (Q). Similarly, the principal responded that, "*LRC members cannot be allowed in sensitive matters concerning disciplinary issues of teachers and appointment of teachers or support staff such as cleaners at school*" (Q).

4.3.4 Leadership as based on position

Learner leadership was also associated with the leadership structures at school such as the LRC and class captains who were seen as having the authority to lead others at the case study school. The following participants (liaison teacher, class register teacher, School Management Team 2, learner 1, learner 8, and principal) all referred to learner leadership as learners who are class captains, LRC members and sport's team captains when they responded during the focus group interviews. Foster (1989) discussing the bureaucratic-managerial model describes leadership as "a function of organizational position; the 'leader' is the person of superior rank in an organization" (p. 43). With the similar understanding in the questionnaire, and in response to research question 1, SMT1 wrote that learner leadership is "*a group of learners elected by the school learners'*

community to serve as leaders for others such as LRC members and in the class we have class captains" (Q). L3 similarly stated: "*These are learners who are elected by learners and teachers decide for them to be LRC members and class captains*" (Q). However, Christie (2010) dismisses this stance and argues that "leadership in school is not preserve of any position, and can be found and built throughout the school" (p. 696). During a focus group interview, I asked whether leadership was only for teachers at school or for everyone. One of the participants responded, "*learners are also leaders especially the ones that are given the roles such as class captains and LRC members*" (FGI-2). The data in this section indicates that learner leadership was viewed as formal positions, such as learners in the LRC. This is in line with the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* which stipulates that "Every state secondary school must establish a body of learners to be known as the Learners' Representative Council" (D1, p. 33). But must learner leadership be restricted to those learners in formal positions of leadership? This is the question that needs pursuing.

Having discussed the four different conceptualisations of learner leadership that emerged in this study, I now move on to discuss *the involvement of learners in decision-making* at the case study school, in response to my second research question.

4.3 The Involvement of LRC Learners in Decision-Making

The second research question of my study focused on the involvement of learners in decision-making processes and structures at the case study school. During phase one of my study, I discovered that learners, through the structure of the LRC, were involved in decision-making of extra-curricular activities and controlling of other learners at school. However, when it came to decisions such as of appointment of staff members or allocation of subjects or serious matters concerning learners' schooling, they were not involved. In this regard, Haipa (2017) argues that "learners should be provided with opportunities to participate in school affairs and that their voice should be recognised" (p. 56). Below I discuss how learners were involved in making decisions at the case study school.

4.3.1 Participation in LRC members' election

The data generated revealed that learners played a major role in the election process of LRC members at the case study school. The participation of learners in voting and deciding who their representatives would be in the LRC is explained as "student democracy in practice" (Leren, 2006, p. 365). In the context of the case study school, SMT1 explained that the LRC is "*a group of learners elected by the school learners' community to serve as leaders for other learners*" (Q). In agreement, the register class teacher also replied that "*learners elect LRC members who contribute to the various activities around the school*" (Q). This was confirmed by a participant who said: "*Every year learners at our school elect LRC members of their choice*" (FGI-1). The participants in the second focus group interview, similarly, revealed that "*learners annually decide who must be the LRC members at school by voting at the beginning of the third term*" (FGI-2). This finding is common in the international literature; for example, Leren (2006) suggests that "by electing the student council and the management this way, you get as many students as possible involved in the election process, and the student democracy reveals itself" (p. 365).

This is a clear indication that the stipulations embedded in the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* are being implemented in the case study school regarding this matter. It is clearly stated in the *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002) that "The LRC must be composed as follows - an equal number of elected boys and girls" (D2, p. 18). The election is to be constituted annually in the third term, preferably during the month of September before the final examinations start (D2). Data revealed that the election of LRC members is carried out annually in the third term at the case study school as per the Act, and learners' voice is heard and implemented through voting for their preferred candidates (D4). The top six boys among the candidates of boys and the top six girls among the candidates of girls are selected after the votes are counted to become the LRC members at the case study school (FGI-1 & 2).

Next, I discuss the *participation of some of the LRC members in the school board* at the case study school after they were elected as LRC members.

4.3.2 Participation in the school board (SB)

The school board is one of the highest decision-making bodies in any school in Namibia. It consists of parents, teachers, the principal and learners as its members. It is the norm at the case study school that two learners are part of the school board meetings represented by two LRC members. The case school, in line with the requirements of the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001,* implemented the requirement of two LRC members being part of the school board meetings. This was indicated by one of the LRC participants that "*two LRC members are in the school board and both are allowed to attend meetings*" (FGI-1) where they contribute to these meetings. The participants in the same focus group interview, further indicated that the two LRC members "*participate in the decisions made there in the meetings of school board*" (FGI-1). In the questionnaire, L2 responded that: "*I and one learner are part of the school board meetings*" (Q). Similarly, L6 revealed that, "*there are two of us who attend the school board meetings where matters relating to schooling are discussed and decided upon*" (Q).

The data revealed further that indeed, LRC members are part of the school board. When the principal, SMT1, SMT2, SMT3, the liaison teacher, and the class register teacher were asked in the questionnaire whether learners are part of the school board, they all responded "*yes*". In a focus group interview, a participant responded that: "*Two LRC members are included in school board meetings to contribute on behalf of other learners during some meetings*" (FGI-2). This is evidence that two learners are part of the school board of the case study school and are allowed to contribute in meetings. However, this information could not be verified since the minutes of school board meetings were not handed over to me during the contextual profiling, as they were regarded as having sensitive information. The principal, in his response, indicated that "*The Education Act is instructing schools to have LRC members who must be part of the school board body at school which is the highest decision-making body at school*" (Q). The involvement of learners in the highest decision-making body, the school board, is one of the ways that schools can ensure that learners are being heard (Mitra & Gross, 2009). In addition, Grant and Nekondo (2016) suggest that "participation in decision-making processes relate to a change initiative, whatever it might be, is likely to develop learner agency and competences necessary to lead" (p. 27).

The Regulation made under the *Education Act No. 16, 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002) highlights that "The LRC, as a highest body of elected leaders of the learners of the school, must liaise between learners and the school management" (p. 19). Through participation in the highest decision body, LRC members can raise the concerns of learners and share in decision-making at school; they can collaborate with adults (Mitra & Gross, 2009) to solve different matters at school during school board meetings. In support, Leren (2006) suggests that "by letting two or more students attend groups and executive committees, one will at least provide a more comfortable setting for the student to put their opinions forward" (p. 367).

4.3.3 Participation in problem solving and conflict resolution

Matters that affect learners' schooling, as well as various problems that are dealt with by the LRC members are channelled through the LRC members to the school management, in the case of serious matters that need the principal's attention. The Regulations made under the *Education Act No.16 of 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002) indicates that the powers and functions of LRC members is to "promote the best interest and welfare of the school and its learners" (D2, p. 19). One of the participants revealed that the LRC "*ensures that all learners have epistemological access and are not denied the right to enter the class especially with teachers who chase learners out*" (SMT1, Q). Similarly, the class register teacher also mentioned that, "*LRC members assist learners around the school in matters such as when chased out of classes, bullying, discrimination and their personal problems with individual teachers* (Q)." L7, responding to the involvement of LRC in the decision-making question that was posed to LRC members, stated that they "*find problems concerning learners in the school and find ways to solve these problems*" (Q). L9 concurred: "*LRCs bring the bigger problems of other learners to the principal for solutions*" (Q). Grant and Nekondo (2016) mention that "learners are central to school life, they are best placed to bring about school change" (p. 27). The LRC members were trying to ensuring that they bring about a positive change to the various circumstances that they and other learners found themselves in at the case study school. In addition, one of the LRC members claimed that "*as LRC members we are there to solve conflicts between teachers and learners*" (FGI-1). At schools, like any other institution, there are always conflicts among learners, teachers and support staff which need to be resolved before they make the school an unsuitable place for both learners and teachers.

In raising learners' voice at school, L5 mentioned that they are there to "*ensure that LRC is a voice for learners and conduit to the principal*" (Q). Similarly, one of the LRC members indicated that they "*support learners in dealing with their problems at school*" (FGI-1). L8 indicated they are there "*to bring learners views and ideas to the teachers and principal (Q).*" The staff members from the participant group also indicated that LRC members are responsible "*to help around the school because teachers cannot do all the work alone, such as dealing with learners' problems they face at school*" (FGI-2).

4.3.4 Participation in organising and deciding on social and academic activities

For any school to completely prepare and mould a learner into a responsible citizen ready for life after school, schools ought to fully implement the formal curriculum and informal curriculum. The majority of the LRC members indicated that they are organising various events at school and this was also confirmed by teachers and the school management team. One of the LRC members responded that, "*LRC members are mostly making decisions when it comes to organising sport events at school*" (FGI-1). L2 in the questionnaire wrote that "*we come up with class tournaments in soccer and netball as well as debates*" (Q) around the school. In agreement, L8 indicated: "*We organise different events around the school*" (Q). The examples of these events were provided in both focus group interviews: "*beauty contest, tournaments and debates*" (FGI-1), as well as "*fundraising activities, sport, cultural events and matric farewell*" (FGI-2).

This clearly shows that, with reference to the LRC, the case study school was implementing the Regulation made under the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002), which states that "with approval of the principal, undertake projects and programmes aimed at – providing cultural, sport and social environment and facilities" (p. 19). The literature also makes mention of learner involvement and organisation in school activities. For example, Flutter (2006) writes, "through the experience they [learner leaders] discover creative and life skills such as problem-solving, negotiation and citizenship, all of which gender self-belief and confidence" (p. 188).

Apart from the *participation in organising and deciding on social and academic activities* being an involvement of learners in decision-making, it was also categorised as a role for LRC members

at the case study school. The data revealed that LRC members were mandated and entrusted by the school to organise extra mural activities at school as mentioned earlier. This was also revealed by the principal: "*LRC members are also given the responsibility to organise all extra mural activities such as sport and other events around the school*" (Q). These other events included the "*matric farewell and cultural events*" (SMT3, Q); the organisation of "*extra mural activities to make the school fun for other learners*" (FGI-2), "*cleaning campaigns and soccer and netball tournaments*" (FGI-1), "*sports, debates and fun day at school for other learners*" (FGI-1), as well as "*assist teachers during events like prize giving ceremonies and organising competition games during fun day*" (FGI-1). On the 13th of March 2019, a Wednesday, I observed how "*the LRC members organise class tournaments, the games were played after school*" (O). This sports tournament is captured in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: The sport tournament for different grades organised by LRC members

4.3.5 Participation in discipline and re-enforcement of the school rules

Every school wishes for its learners to be well disciplined around the school and in classrooms in order for the teaching and learning process to run smoothly. This was also the case at the case study school, in that teachers had high expectations from LRC members to take decisions and discipline learners.

Apart from the extra mural activities and academic activities, the LRC members also made decisions regarding the school rules and hairstyles. The class register teacher explained that LRC members were "*calling up meetings with the principal about hair styles and contributing to the decision-making of which hairstyle is suitable*" (Q) for learners at school. Similarly L6 claimed that, "*we make decisions on hairstyles*" (Q). Apart from hairstyles, LRC members indicated that they "*meet with teachers, principal and parents to discuss absenteeism of both learners and teachers*" (FGI-1). Another LRC member indicated in response to the same research question that they "*are involved in drafting school rules with teachers*" (FGI-1). SMT2 indicated that LRC members initiated ideas such as "*protesting on corporal punishment by teachers*" (Q).

This section discussed the involvement of learners in decision-making at the case study school. In the next section I present and discuss the leadership development opportunities that were provided to the LRC members at the case study school.

4.4 The Opportunities Provided to Develop Learner Leadership

The leadership development opportunities were the different programmes, activities and events that contribute to the development of learner leadership at the case study school. The data generated to identify leadership opportunities were responses to research question 3. Through carrying out activities such as supervising study, organising extra-curricular activities, enforcing school rules and recording late comers to school, LRC members were exposed to leadership development opportunities.

4.4.1 LRC leadership preparatory training

The LRC members after election into office and, as expected, receive training to prepare them in practicing leadership at school. The Regional Directorate of Education provides training to LRC members from all schools in the region to capacitate them with leadership skills (D8). Officials working at the regional offices facilitate the regional training. The invitation from the regional educational office strictly only allows four learners per school to attend the training. This was revealed by a number of participants (SMT1, SMT2, SMT3, LT, CRT) that "*the regional office provided training to four LRC members*" (Q) per school. In the focus group interview 2, one

participant said: "*The regional office provides training to four LRC members, who come back to school to share the information with the rest of the team*" (FGI-2). Learners also confirmed that they attended training outside the school. L6 specified that, "*the head boy and head girl attends training with two extra LRC members*" (Q). Similarly, a number of learners (L1, L2, L3, L4) mentioned, "*the school sends a few of us*" to attend the regional training. The regional training was held as from the 20th March 2019 up to the 24th of March 2019 (D8) at a local lodge. Aspects of this regional training are captured in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.4: LRC members attending the training offered by the regional office of education

However, despite this training, the data revealed that the four LRC members who attended this training were never provided a formal platform, other than through meetings and their informal

interactions, to share what they had learnt at the regional training of LRC members. During the focus group interview 1, a participant indicated this by pointing out that: "*The LRC who attend the training only share with us when we are having private conversations*" (FGI-1), while another participant revealed that "*those LRC who attend only brief us during a meeting what happened there*" (FGI-1). This was due to financial constraints; the other reason was that "*the school provides an internal training to LRC members to prepare them for their task*" (P, Q).

Furthermore, during the focus group interview, those who were part of the LRC the previous year indicated that, "we *attended the same training last year as well*" (FGI-1). This shows the regional office provides the training annually. Moreover, it was revealed that "*those who attended the previous years were not allowed to attend the next year*" (FGI-1); this was revealed in response to a follow up question. Ensuring that LRC members attended the external training, provided them with an alternative approach in gaining various leadership skills. Similarly, Bush (2007) supports this by stating "awareness of alternative approaches is essential to provide a set of tools from which discerning leaders can choose when facing problems and dealing with day-to-day issues" (p. 393). I believe from the training mentioned earlier above, LRC members were provided with various tools to enhance the development of leadership.

4.4.2 On the job learning: Formal and informal

The school itself also provides its own internal training, which in this section is discussed as on-the-job learning since LRC members acquired various leadership skills through different leadership practices at the case study school. The principal and LRC liaison teacher provide formal on-the-job learning, while informal on-the-job learning is provided through the different practices of learner leadership in the school.

4.4.2.1 Formal on-the-job learning by the principal and LRC liaison teacher

The principal and the liaison teacher do this training for new LRC members at the case study school during LRC meetings. The principal revealed this: "*The support teacher and myself always have a meeting with them to explain their roles and expectations of my office from them*" (Q). Similarly, the liaison teacher indicated that, "*during meetings we share with them by advising them*

what their roles as LRC members are at school and how they must handle themselves as LRC members at school" (Q). Additionally, the LRC members revealed: "*The school gives us as LRC members a framework how we should operate and it is done by the principal and our support teacher during our first meetings*" (FGI-1). In support, the class register teacher further revealed the same, that "*the principal and liaison teacher provides guidance to LRC members on roles and responsibilities of LRC members in their meetings*" (Q). The meetings provided a platform for LRC members "to reflect upon institutional arrangements, to reveal the taken-for-granted features of institutional life and to allow for commentary on ways and means that the institution either restrain or promote human agency" (Foster, 1989, p. 54).

These internal training sessions were done during meetings held after school. Learners themselves revealed this also, when L2 mentioned, "*we are trained by the principal and support teacher at the beginning when we start to be LRC members and during different meetings sometimes*" (Q). The first meeting was at the beginning of the year and on the 12ᵗʰ March 2019 as seen in Figure 4.5 below, showing LRC members with the LRC liaison teacher in one of their meetings during the afternoon. These meetings were, "*held twice per term or in case of an urgent matter, we call up meetings*" (FGI-1).
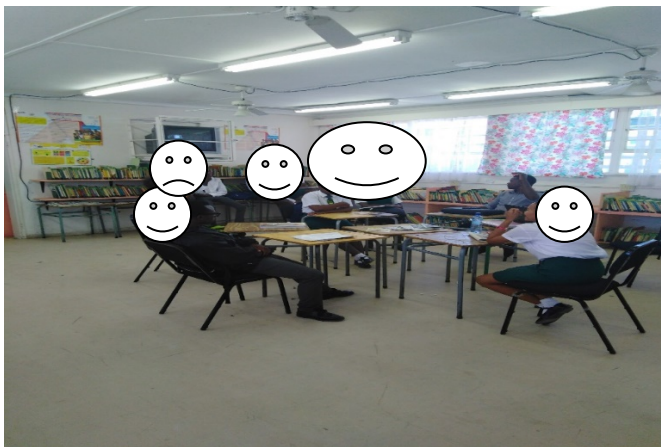
Figure 4.5: The LRC liaison teacher with the LRC members in one of their meetings

Through a schedule of meetings to develop leadership that the LRC members shared with the principal and LRC liaison teacher as indicated in the data, it was evident that the LRC orientation and training, provided opportunities for LRC members to share ideas and learn while improving and developing leadership skills. Learner 1 indicated: "*Through the meetings with the principal and the support teacher, we are learning more about our roles*" (Q). With a similar view, L4 revealed: "*The guidance and instructions we get in our meetings with the support teacher, sometimes with the principal assist us a lot*" (Q).

The data generated from the focus group interviews confirmed what was written in the questionnaire, that "*most of the time we receive guidance during our meetings how to carry out our roles*" (FGI-1). Furthermore, the same group indicated: "*During the meetings we discuss how we should approach problems while carrying out our roles*" (FGI-1). In the second focus group interview, it was revealed that the "*meetings on various issues affecting LRC members provides room for them to enhance their leadership*" (FGI-2).

4.4.2.2 Informal on-the-job learning

The organisation of social and academic activities by LRC members at the school exposed learners to different leadership practices and these developed learners' leadership skills while on-the-job. In their questionnaires, Learner 4 indicated: "*Through organising various events at school such sport activities, debates and fun day leadership skills are developing.*" In agreement, L10 wrote "*we learn leadership skills when we organise tournaments, cultural activities and other activities at school*" (Q). This aligns with Grant and Nekondo (2016), that "one such way to invoke learner voice and develop agency is to expand opportunities for learners to work in participatory ways with their peers on issues that are of concern to them" (p. 16). Similarly, and as discussed earlier, the principal highlighted that one of the roles of LRC members is "*during the involvement in coming up with extra mural activities and academic activities is when they demonstrate their leadership and enhance their leadership skills when they implement these activities*" (Q) at school.

Furthermore, the development of leadership skills was revealed by SMT 3, when she responded that "*during the process of coming up with the activities such as fun day, beauty contests, sports*

these learners are getting opportunities to learn how to lead and work together" (Q). This was confirmed in a focus interview that, "*the involvement of learners in organising extra mural activities and assisting with academic events provides them opportunities to practice and develop leadership such as interpersonal skills, imitativeness, commitment*" (FGI-2). Here we can see a range of effective leadership development strategies, aligning with the work of Whitehead (2009) who writes that "the literature suggests there are differences in effective leadership development strategies and associated outcome, these differences are not only due to gender and ethnicity, but personal behaviour patterns of student participation and involvement in extra activities" (p. 858).

My observation at the case study school revealed that the LRC was active. During the focus group interview, one of the LRC members indicated: "*Being LRC members provided us the opportunity to practice leadership and to learn how to work with other people as leaders*" (FGI-1). Another participant further mentioned: "*If one is an LRC, you develop into a leader and you will get more knowledge on how to lead others*" (FGI-1) at school. This view was echoed by one of the teacher participants: "*When the learners are elected to become class captains, soccer team and netball team captains or LRC members at school, they get a chance to gain leadership skills and enhance their leadership skills while they continue leading other learners*" (FGI-2). Similarly, the class register teacher also responded that "*the election of learners to be LRC members, class captains or captains for various sport teams are opportunities for them to become leaders and learn how to lead*" (Q).

In fulfilling and carrying out these activities, learners are provided with an opportunity to learn and develop leadership on-the-job. This point is raised by Flutter (2006, p. 188) who contends that allowing LRC members to carry out activities around the school "inspires pupils by putting them in the driving seats, giving them control and responsibility as clients". Indeed, from my observation, it was clear that the learner participants, because of their LRC status, were inspired to serve their fellow learners.

In respond to research question 3, in the questionnaire, L1 wrote that, "*the position we get as LRC at school give us a chance to develop leadership*" (Q). With a similar response, the liaison teacher revealed that "*the various leadership groups at school such as class captains, LRC body, different*

clubs and sport team captains are all leadership opportunities" (Q) at school to develop their leadership. Furthermore, in support, L9 also revealed that "*serving in the various positions of various committees provides learners a chance to practice and develop leadership*" (Q). Thus it could be seen that over and above the preparatory and the formal on-the-job training, LRC members learnt a lot informally on-the-job while carrying out various tasks, according to the revelations from the data in this section. This on-the-job learning, Amadhila (2017) argues, is important; it is "significant to the LRC members to acquire leadership knowledge and skills relate to their portfolios, because leadership skills were not explicitly taught in the school" (p. 61). LRC leadership training is one of the most successful ways to develop learners' leadership, especially as these learners are expected to demonstrate leadership when carrying out their roles at school.

Having discussed the various opportunities provided to develop learner leadership development at the case study school, I now turn to responses to the fourth research question. The data revealed a number of factors that enabled the LRC members to carry the roles identified earlier in this section. These factors that enabled LRC members' leadership development are presented and discussed below.

4.5 Factors Enabling Learner Leadership Development

Leadership development of LRC members will only be possible if opportunities to enable leadership development are provided to them. Whilst there were opportunities to develop leadership development at the case study school (as discussed in the previous section), the factors that enabled leadership development were limited. The enabling factors which emerged from the data included: Provision to implement social and academic activities, support and guidance from principal and LRC liaison teacher, as well as on-the-job learning.

4.5.1 A supportive and trusting school culture

The management, through trusting LRC members to initiate various activities around the school both extra mural and academic, in itself enabled LRC members to develop leadership through planning, organising, leading and controlling these activities.

In response to the question on factors enabling LRC members' leadership development at school, SMT1 said: "*Teachers render LRC members support when they organise their events at school and this encourages them to carry out their tasks*" (Q). L2 revealed that, "*we enjoy the freedom we have to initiate extra mural activities at school*" (Q). Similarly, in the focus group interview, a LRC member revealed that "*the trust teachers have in us motivates us to organise more extra mural activities freely*". LRC members further revealed in the same interview, that "*we are always the ones to come up with different ideas about extra mural activities at school*" (FGI-1). This whole process provided LRC members with opportunities to develop their leadership while organising and implementing the various activities at school. This was confirmed by a participant who claimed that, "*each learner has the opportunity to develop leadership skills through participating in organising and carrying out the various extra mural activities*" (FGI-2). This process of allowing LRC members to provide leadership in social and academic activities, is in line with the perspective of distribution leadership, as the LRC members collectively provide leadership by using initiatives and experience to engage in activities across the school on their own and seeing to it that these activities are successful in this way contributing to the educational goals of the school. Additionally, the process of LRC members providing leadership in organising social and academic activities indicated that the school was implementing the *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002), that reads "to provide cultural, sport and social activities for learners" (p. 19) at schools. This allowed and promoted leadership practices at the school especially for LRC members.

4.5.2 Support and guidance from principal and LRC liaison teacher

However, by mining the data further, it soon became evident that the LRC members were primarily receiving support from the principal and the liaison teacher in carrying out their roles at school. According to Hine and Lavern (2013, p. 7) "whatever the degree of involvement, whether direct or indirect, it is important the principal takes lead in the philosophical understanding of student leadership at his or her school". Data revealed that this was the case at the case study school. In the focus group interview 2, the participants indicated the regular support and guidance offered by the principal and LRC liaison teacher as an enabling factor assisting LRC members to practice leadership at the school. The focus group interview 2 revealed that "*there were meetings between*

the principal and LRC liaison teacher with LRC members to hear their challenges and to discuss solutions to these challenges". In support, the LT revealed that "*together with the principal we explain their roles to them, motivate and guide them regularly*" (Q).

The majority of LRC members confirmed the support from the principal and liaison teacher. L1 said "*the principal and our support teacher are ever encouraging us to do our work during our meetings*" (FGI-1). Similarly in the focus group interview, a LRC member revealed that "*the school management and teachers always welcomes our ideas to come up with debates, tournaments, fun day and other activities at school*" (FGI-1). Another participant responded that, "*the meeting with the principal and support teacher helps us to focus on our roles*" (FGI-1). Whitehead (2009) suggests that "an integrated effort to develop adolescent leaders under authentic paradigm is beneficial and urgently needed" (p. 867) in schools, to ensure a positive change towards the attainment of educational goals.

Furthermore, L10 revealed that, "*the principal and support teacher tell LRC members what to do during the meetings and they always make sure we are respected by other learners and teachers at school*" (Q). Similarly, L2 wrote: "*Whenever we have a problem or we need something, we always go to the principal or our support teacher and we get assisted*". The assistance from the principal and LRC liaison teacher boosted the confidence of LRC members in carrying out their duties and practicing leadership at the case study school. To this, Grant and Nekondo (2016) suggest that "confidence is central to the development of learner voice and leadership" (p. 23).

Data further revealed that leadership skills such as communication skills, problem solving skills, interpersonal skills and assertive skills were developed while implementing the LRC's plans for these various activities at school. Whitehead (2009) suggests that "practical application and practice of leadership is one of the best way to grow authentic leadership" (p. 864). He furthermore indicates that "sports, clubs, and student led school activities are excellent experiment methods" (ibid.) in achieving authentic leadership within learner leaders such as LRC members at a school.

Having discussed factors that enabled LRC members' leadership development at the case study school in this section, I move on to present and discuss the factors that inhibited the LRC members' leadership development at the case study school, in the section below.

4.6 Factors Inhibiting Learner Leadership Development

There were a number of factors inhibiting learner leadership development at the case study school. This was likely because the school was overly reliant on the meetings between the principal, liaison teacher and LRC members to develop learner leadership among LRC members. The inhibiting factors that emerged from across the data sets are discussed below: *Lack of support from teachers,* and *Undocumented roles of LRC members.*

4.6.1 Lack of support from teachers

The data revealed that in most cases, the LRC members in carrying out their functions as the LRC relied heavily on the principal and the LRC liaison teacher, to the exclusion of other members of staff. It was revealed in focus group interview of LRC members that, "*most teachers do not support us LRC when we approach them*" (FGI-1). The focus group interview further revealed that, the only two people who regularly assisted LRC members with any issues related to the operation were the principal and the LRC liaison teacher: "*Discipline at school is mostly carried out by the principal and the LRC support teacher*" (FGI-1). This seemed to have contributed to the lack of cooperation between LRC members and fellow learners which has led to learners not listening to LRC members. L10 revealed that, "*when we approach teachers for assistance, we are always referred by these teachers to get assistance from the support teacher or the principal*" (Q). While L11 indicated that, "*learners are aware that teachers are not cooperating with the LRC and they do what they want*" (Q).

This finding concurs with the research of Mitra who contends that "before youth can be accepted as important players in decision making, the concept of student voice must first gain acceptance among powerful stakeholders in the school" (p. 315). In other words, teachers need to be briefed about the importance of learner leadership in schools. They need to be able to recognise and accept the LRC as a body entrusted by the school to deal with various issues concerning learners and they

need to understand their pivotal role in assisting LRC members. Mitra explains that "partnering with students to identify school problems and possible solutions reminds teachers and administrators that students possess unique knowledge and perspective about their school that adults cannot fully replicate" (2006, p. 315).

The lack of knowledge of the teachers' role in supporting the work of the LRC was revealed in the response from SMT3, who indicated: "*We have a teacher who deals with LRC members at school, meaning all issues concerning LRC he must deal with them*" (Q). Similarly, in the focus group interview 2, one participant indicated that, "*we have a lot of work and we expect LRC members to ensure that school rules are obeyed by fellow learners*". The principal responded: "*When I am not around, there is always a lot of complaints from LRC members or their support teacher regarding misbehaving learners*" (Q). He further explained that, "*it shows that teachers expect the support teacher of LRC members to deal with discipline issues, while we have a discipline committee*" (Q). Duma (2011) expresses that "student leaders and educators often hold one another at arm's length, unsure of the role that each should play" (p. 72). He further emphasises that "compounding these uncertainties are the perceptions that educators and student leaders often have about the roles that the other should play" (ibid.). This calls for an intervention that will enlighten and remind both of these parties on their roles at school. Haipa (2017) urges schools to enhance teachers' agency by developing a policy that could facilitate the development of learner leadership at schools.

Surprisingly, the participants suggested, during the LRC focus group interview, that *"all teachers should be involved"* – and not just the principal and LRC liaison teacher – in order for the LRC to function effectively as expected. In support of this statement, the focus group interview 1 revealed that, "*we need support from all the teachers and not just very few of them*".

In addition, one of the LRC members pointed out that, "*teachers during break must be visible around the school ground and not just be in the staff room*" (FGI-1). Another one revealed that "*during study, few teachers must be moving around the classes or do their marking in classes for learners to be aware of their presence*" (FGI-1). Teachers were in the staff room during break time either marking, having tea or conversing with each other as indicated earlier at the research school. As I observed: "*It is break time and the only visible people who are supervising learners are the*

LRC members around the school" (OB. 26.03.2019). I can claim that teachers shifted the function of the supervision of learners outside the classroom to LRC members.

Regarding this issue, one of the participants suggested that, "*we need to call up a meeting of teachers to discuss how we should assist LRC members*" (FGI-2) in regard to the lack of support from teachers. In support, another participant during the focus group interview 2 responded that, "*as teachers it is expected that we assist LRC members in carrying out their activities and when they refer disciplinary issues to us.*" In the *School Internal Policy*, teachers are expected to be the custodians of discipline and supervision around the school (D5). This is a general practice at the school, in that teachers are the ones expected to be the ones ensuring that learners adhere to the school rules and are under supervision of adults at all times when they are around the school. Similarly, one of the LRC indicated that: "*Learners need to see that all the teachers are involved and working together with LRC members*" (FGI-1). In support of the teamwork between the teachers and LRC members, it was revealed by one participant during the focus group interview that, "*Learners must be aware that there is a strong cooperation between us with LRC members*" (FGI-2). In regard to creating and maintaining an orderly and disciplined school environment conducive for learning (D2), both the teachers and LRC members should play a role and cooperate to achieve this goal.

4.6.2 Undocumented roles for LRC members

The school expects LRC members to carry out different roles effectively while these roles are not documented for LRC members to revert to when needed. These roles are just explained verbally in meetings where the principal and the LRC liaison teacher discuss the roles with the LRC members. The data from the questionnaire of LRC members reveals that the roles are not documented. This was revealed by all LRC members, that "*the school has no book that guides LRC members how to operate*" (Q). In other words, the school has no manual for LRC members to use as a guide to assist them in carrying out the expected roles at school. This was also revealed in the focus group interview 1, that "*we are only told of our roles verbally, there is no booklet*". Another participant in the same interview indicated that: "*It is very challenging not having any written guidance on paper what we must do as LRC members*" (FGI-1). SMT1 indicated that "*there*

is no document book with roles to assist LRC members in carrying out their roles at school" (Q). To confirm this, participants indicated that: "*There is a lack of a manual book to guide LRC members at school*" (FGI-2) in fulfilling their responsibilities. The principal responded similarly when he said: "*The school currently has no written constitution for LRC members*" (Q). Furthermore, the LRC liaison teacher explained that, "*we rely on the Education Act when explaining to LRC members what their functions are at school*" (Q). The powers and functions of LRC members are stipulated in the *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002). However, the case study school failed to make use of these powers and functions to come up with an LRC constitution that would provide guidelines to LRC members in delivering their services at school. Moreover, the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* stipulates, that the LRC should be established "in accordance with the prescribed guidelines which must determine the composition and duties and functions of such a council" (p. 33). The lack of guidelines and procedures regarding the LRC's duties at the case study school, contributed to the factors inhibiting the leadership development of LRC members.

4.6.3 Lack of cooperation from fellow learners (disobedience and lack of respect)

One can only carry out LRC roles successfully and achieve the main aim of having an LRC at school, if learners are obedient and respectful towards LRC members. However, it was not the case at the case study school. The LRC members revealed that fellow learners misbehaved when around them. L5 revealed this by stating that, "*not all learners listen to what you are telling them to do and most of the time they will disrespect us LRCs*" (Q). A word of advice to avoid this is from Foster (1989), who suggests that "leaders normally have to negotiate visions and ideas with potential followers" (p. 42). The LRC members at the case study school should ensure that they share the same vision and ideas with their fellow learners with regards to what needs to be done by all stakeholders to promote a conducive schooling environment.

The lack of respect from fellow learners was another factor raised by L7 who mentioned that, "*some learners do not respect you because you are their friends or they do not like you*" (Q). The "*lack of respect from other learners*" was also revealed by L10 (Q) and L11 (Q). L9 and L12 were both of the view that, "*some learners disobey LRC members* (Q)". During a focus group interview,

one LRC member revealed: "*The school has stubborn learners who have no respect for LRC members at all*" (FGI-1). In agreement, another LRC member responded that the "*attitude and respect of learners towards LRC members is still a problem with some of the learners especially the big ones*" (FGI-1). Another participant expanded on this problem: "*The older boys threaten these young boys and the girls are more afraid of the older boys*" (FGI-2). The liaison teacher had this to say, "*The lack of respect from other learners is one of the factors affecting LRC leadership at school*" (Q). Another participant from the focus group interview also revealed: "*The school has ill-discipline learners, which makes it difficult for LRC members to deliver as expected*" (FGI-2). The principal further revealed, that "*when LRC members are being bullied by other learners it is disrupting the LRC from doing their work*" (Q).

Smyth (1989) warns us that "when participants unknowingly collude with those who hold power, they succeed in frustrating even their own interest" (p. 183). The voice of all learners at school might be affected when there is no cooperation between the learners and their representatives, who in this case are the LRC members.

Havin presented the contextual profile of learner leadership at the case study school, I now move to surface the contradictions that emerged from the CHAT analysis of my data.

4.7 The Contradictions that Surfaced within the Activity System of LRC Members

In this section, I briefly highlight the contradictions and tensions that inhibited learners' voice and leadership development within the LRC members' activity system at the case study school using CHAT as my analytical tool. I used CHAT to surface the primary and secondary contradictions within the activity system of the LRC members at the case study school. To remind the reader, contradictions "are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). The difference between primary and secondary contradictions is that, primary contradiction is located within an element of the activity system for example within the subject(s), while the secondary contradiction is located between two or more than two elements of the activity system, for example, the community and object or among the subject, community and rules (Karanasios, Riisla, & Simeonova, 2017, p. 3).

4.7.1 One primary contradiction

The study surfaced one primary contradiction. The first challenge was: *the LRC members' personality clashes* located in the subject (LRC members) which inhibited the emergence of learner voice and leadership development within the LRC activity system. Whilst social and academic activities were implemented effectively and efficiently, there was a primary contradiction within the subject element of the LRC members' activity system of this study. The contradiction: *the LRC members' personality clashes* which was caused by the tension observed among the LRC members as a result of a lack of interpersonal skills; not accommodating each other's personalities; and their different cultural backgrounds, due to the multi-cultural nature of the committee. The same was echoed by one of the participants in the focus group interview 2 that, "*they themselves have different personalities and their cultures are also different*" so one can expect a clash in LRC members' relationships with each other. This made it difficult for the LRC members to demonstrate cooperation and team work, which in return made it difficult for the object (learner voice and leadership development) to be expanded within the LRC activity system.

4.7.2. Secondary contradictions

The second challenge surfaced from data was: *lack of effective communication channel* as the first of the four secondary contradictions. Ineffective communication channels surfaced between the community (teachers and SMT) and the rule (school policy/culture). The ineffective communication channel, refers to the procedure or the way LRC members were expected to communicate their grievances or learners' grievances and educational issues to the school management members. The LRC members revealed that: "*The communication process between us as LRC members and the office of the principal is a long process*" (FGI-1). When I asked them to clarify this, LRC participants indicated that: "*Only the head boy and head girl are asked to report or contact the principal's office … The rest of other LRC are only allowed to report straight to the principal during meetings*" (FGI-1). During the same interview, it was also revealed that "*the liaison teacher is also responsible to take over the LRC members messages to the principal*" (FGI-1). In agreement, the principal responded: "*The liaison teacher is liaising between the LRC members and the office of the principal*" (Q). The principal further indicated that, "*in case of*

emergency or the liaison teacher not being around, only the head boy and head girl are allowed to communicate straight" (Q) with the principal's office. This process inhibited all LRC members in raising their voices directly to the school management at any time at the school, suppressing learner voice and leadership development at the school.

The analysis of the following documents; the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* (D1) , *Regulation made under Education Act, 2001* (D2), and the *School Internal Policy* (D5) revealed that the policies were silent on the procedure of communication to be used at the case study school for LRC members to have an effective communication channel with the office of the principal. Thus, when asked about the communication channel, the participants indicated that, "*as a school, we decided that LRC members should communicate through the LRC liaison teacher or only the head boy and head girl are allowed to report straight to the office*" (FGI-2). Similarly, in the focus group interview 2, an LRC member indicated that, "*we are only allowed to communicate through the liaison teacher*" (FGI-1). Another LRC member added that, "*when the liaison teacher is not around, only the head boy and head girl are allowed to communicate straight to the headmaster*" (FGI-1). Essentially, the case study school management opted to have control of the communication channel through identifying the individuals responsible for communicating directly with the office of the principal. In other words, the school created its own culture, which was accepted over the years as best practice even though this was surfaced as a challenge towards learner leadership development at the case study school.

The third challenge, *the lack of respect and discipline towards LRC members from fellow learners*, was surfaced as the second of the four secondary contradictions that emerged from the data. This was a contradiction between the subject (LRC members) and the community (learners at school). This was also revealed by learner 5 that, "*not all learners will listen to what you are telling them to do and most of the time, they will disrespect you*" (Q). In support, one of the LRC members responded in a focus group interview that one of the factors inhibiting LRC members' leadership practices at school are "*stubborn learners, learners have pride of we cannot tell them what to do.*" Even the principal had this to say in the questionnaire, that LRC members are "*being bullied by other learners*" and that there were "*ill-disciplined learners around the school*". It was clear that

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learners were ill-disciplined and therefore did not adhere to LRC members rules or instructions. The *School Internal Policy* was clear on the school rules, however, the lack of policy implementation and teachers not supporting LRC members and only relying on the principal and the LRC liaison teacher has had a negative impact on discipline around the school. This encouraged learners non-cooperation with LRC members, and the ability to continually get away with ill-discipline, which ultimately leads to learners' misbehaviour infringing on school rules.

The contradiction was deeply rooted in the lack of cooperation between the community (learners) and the subjects (LRC members). The tradition at the school was that teachers are the authority figures, and this also contributed to learners not respecting LRC members as they perceived them to be fellow learners and not authority figures. In agreement, Da Silva (2017) argues that "the traditional teaching methods have negatively influenced learners' attitude by only teaching them to listen and follow the instructions of the teachers" (p. 107). The LRC members were discouraged by the negative attitudes of fellow learners. In other words, the leadership practices at school were inhibited by the cultural perception that the adults were the only ones to tell learners what to do; this led to a lack of respect and discipline between learners and LRC members at the school. Discipline at any school contributes to a friendly learning environment and a positive healthy relationship between the teachers and learners.

The fourth challenge, *teachers not supporting the LRC members*, was the third of the four secondary contradictions surfaced from the data. This secondary contradiction was between the community (teachers and SMT) and the object (learner voice and leadership development). Even though the data revealed LRC members receiving support from the principal and liaison teacher, the data also revealed that other teachers and the SMT did little or nothing to support LRC members in fulfilling their responsibilities as LRC members at the case study school. One LRC member revealed that, "*teachers undermine LRC members and are not backing them up*" (FGI-1). SMT1 in the questionnaire shared a similar concern that, "*the LRC members do not get the necessary support from majority of staff members in terms of maintaining good discipline among fellow learners.*" A participant in the focus group interview 2 supported this by stating that "*sometimes problems presented by the LRC members to the SMT are ignored and not attended to.*" This is a big concern that can demoralise LRC members in disciplining other learners at school,

if those they entrust to be championing discipline at the school are ignoring it. This can ultimately lead to a situation where learner voice and leadership development will be minimally practiced.

The relevant policies such as the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* (D1), *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001* (D2), an *School Internal Policy* (D5) are silent on the guidelines on how teachers can provide support towards the LRC members at school. Thus the school leadership has throughout the years, according to the historicity of the school, never provided any workshop or induction to the staff on how teachers can provide guidance to LRC members. It was revealed by the class register teacher that, "*ever since I joined this school, we were never provided with training on how to support LRC members*" (Q). The LRC liaison teacher revealed that: "*I was just appointed by the principal to assist the LRC members with no training or induction provided to me on how to work with LRC members*" (Q). It is clear that teachers were not prepared by the school management on how to assist LRC members and this over the years inculcated into teachers a culture of not working together with the LRC members. In the *Regulations made under the Education Act No. 16 of 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002), it is clearly states that "a teacher designate by the principal from amongst the senior staff members of the school to be the liaison teacher between LRC and the school management" (p. 18). Consequently, the appointment of one of the teachers as the LRC liaison teacher contributed to the culture of teachers leaving the responsibility of assisting LRC members with discipline and other matters, to the liaison teacher and the principal. Similarly, Duma (2011) points out that "some educators are resistant to collaborate with student leaders because they have become accustomed to functioning without student leaders being central to their work" (p. 72). He further urges that "they feel that they have enough mounting professional strain without the additional pressure of entering into partnership with students" (ibid.).

The fifth challenge, *lack of a LRC manual (constitution),* was surfaced as the last of the four secondary contradictions. This was a secondary contradiction between the artefacts (policies) and the object (learner voice and leadership development). The data revealed that LRC members were only instructed verbally what their roles are at school during the meetings with the principal and liaison teacher.

The lack of a manual where the roles and relevant guideline procedures are stipulated for the LRC members to read and use as guidance, prevented the development of learner voice and leadership within the LRC members at the case study school. The *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002) provides the powers and functions of LRC members at school, but the school management and the liaison teacher failed to provide duplicates to LRC members to use as a reference. This might be because of the school culture that was created by the SMT, that the roles of LRC members be reduced to only keeping learners quiet during study, ensuring discipline among learners and organising extra mural activities, as revealed in the questionnaires and interviews. The participants in the focus group interview 2 indicated that "*LRC members over the years were only entrusted with certain roles at school during their term*" (FGI-2). In addition, it was revealed that "*since the LRC members were fulfilling what the teachers expected from them, the school saw no need to develop a manual or make copies of the powers and functions of LRC members stated in Education Act*" (FGI-2). Over the years, the case study school understood learner leadership of LRC members as leadership practice by coordinating extra mural activities and policing around the school. Thus, after giving LRC members the power to coordinate and police around the school, the school management over the years continued with the same culture which became a routine. The other reason is that the *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001*, (Namibia. MBESC, 2002) indicates that "the LRC may establish committees for specific functions or projects of the LRC, which may include learners who are not members of the LRC as members, and must designate a member of the LRC as chairperson of such committee" (p. 19). The policy document is not clear on the setting up of manual books that will provide LRC members at schools with guidelines and procedures on how to carry out their roles to enhance LRC leadership practices at schools. Thus the school management over the years trusted LRC members with the organising of extra mural activities and policing around the school only. This led to the school not having a manual for the LRC indicating their roles and guidelines, which would enhance the leadership practice of LRC members at the school.

4.8 Conclusion

The data presented and discussed in this chapter as findings were generated during phase 1 of my study. In the next chapter, I report on Phase 2 of my study, where data were gathered during a Change Laboratory Workshop process – the intervention phase of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF PHASE TWO FINDINGS: THE CHANGE LABORATORY WORKSHOPS PROCESS

5.1 Introduction

To remind the reader, the data from the first phase of my study, the contextual profiling phase, provided me as an interventionist researcher and the participants with an understanding of the current leadership practices at the case study school, as well as the factors inhibiting the voice and leadership development of LRC members. From this phase, contradictions were surfaced as inhibiting the development of the voice and leadership of the LRC members at the case study school. These systemic contradictions were used in the CLWs to provoke the transformative agency within the participants using the expansive learning cycles underpinning the Change Laboratory Workshop process. In other words, the Change Laboratory Workshops were carried out with the intention to produce a transformative change within the leadership practices of LRC members at the case study school. The CLWs provided the participants a chance to collectively collaborate in working towards the object of the activity system and try to produce a novel outcome, and, in so doing, answer the last research question of my study: *How can learner voice and leadership can be developed within the case study school through a formative intervention?*

5.2 Phase Two: Change Laboratory Workshops as Formative Intervention

As discussed in Chapter Two, my study is underpinned by activity theory. Sannino et al. (2009) highlight that "activity theory involves the researcher throughout the course of the development, stagnation, or regression of activities under scrutiny, as well as in the activities of the research subjects" (p. 3). As an researcher-interventionist, I was involved throughout the three Change Laboratory Workshops I conducted. Even though I was involved throughout, Sannino et al. (2016) point out that "CLs leads to outcomes that cannot be fully anticipated by the interventionist" (p. 3). This is because CLWs are formative interventions "which do not have predetermined end results" (Engeström & Sannino, 2016, p. 90). They are "formative in a sense that also what is generated actually takes place in the intervention" (ibid.). The data in phase two was generated by taking pictures (photographs) as evidence. I also made field notes of what I observed during the

Change Laboratory Workshops which were recorded in my observation journal, represented as O in this chapter.

Below, I discuss the first Change Laboratory Workshop.

5.2.1 Change laboratory 1: Introduction and overview

Figure 5.1: Participants of the first change laboratory workshop

The first change laboratory workshop was conducted on Thursday the 6th of June 2019 in the Physical Science laboratory classroom. This first Change Laboratory was attended after school from 13h50 up to 15h30 by all the LRC members, the class register teacher, the liaison teacher and SMT3, while the principal, SMT1 and 2 were all excused, as they were either busy at school or attending to personal matters.

As an interventionist researcher, I welcomed the participants by reintroducing myself to them. Thereafter participants introduced themselves. This was done to welcome every participant, letting them get to know each other, as well as creating a good relationship within the CLW. Participants with my assistance, set up the workshop rules and procedures to avoid conflicts and misunderstanding in the CLW. During this CLW, I highlighted the focus of the study and purpose

of Change Laboratory Workshops, as well as the number of Change Laboratories that I anticipated to have in my study. I explained to the participants what CHAT is and how it is analytically framing my study, and how distributed and transformative leadership theories are informing my study in terms of LRC members' voice and leadership development at the case study school. All the necessary ethical matters, as indicated in Chapter Three of this thesis, were dealt with during this specific CLW.

During the workshop, participants elected a chairperson and a secretary and allocated responsibilities among themselves to take the lead in the remaining CLWs. This was done because my role as a researcher-interventionist was merely to "intervene by provoking and supporting the process led by and owned by learners" (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 2). Furthermore, Sannino et al. (2016) write that the "collectives conduct formative on themselves to address unsustainable contradictions and transform their activities" (p. 2). They call such efforts "intraventions" (ibid.).

Finally, at the end of the session, "*participants decided the date of the next Change Laboratory Workshop*" (O, 06.06.2019). However, there was a debate as "*some participants were of the opinion that Thursday was far*" (O, 06.06.2019), whereas others suggested that "*Tuesday was a better date as it was nearer*" (O, 06.06.2019). Eventually, SMT1 reminded participants that "*next week Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday there were test series to be written and Thursday was the only day the learners were not writing*" (O, 06.06.2019). Finally, participants ended agreeing on the 13th June 2019 (this date was on a Thursday) as the date for the next Change Laboratory Workshop.

I now move on to discuss Change Laboratory Workshop 2.

5.2.2 Change laboratory 2: Learning actions 1 and 2 (questioning and analysing stages)
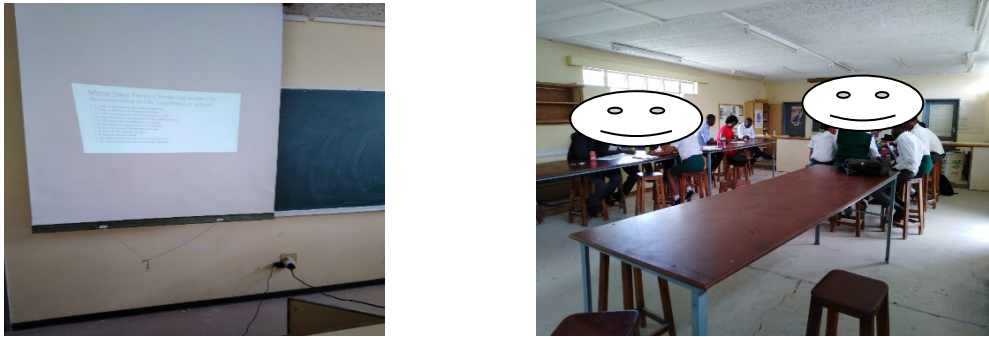
Figure 5.2: The mirroring of data in CL workshop 2 and discussion of possible solutions in groups during the CL workshop.

This CLW 2 was attended on the 13th of June 2019 by the all participants who attended CLW 1; the SMT1, SMT3 and the principal were busy with their administrative duties. I mirrored the data generated during phase 1 using a PowerPoint presentation, as discussed earlier, to the participants to surface the contradictions inhibiting the voice and leadership development within the activity system of LRC members at the case study school.

The following are the challenges I presented as mirror data to the participants:

- First challenge: LRC members' individual personalities
- Second challenge: Lack of effective communication channel
- Third challenge: Lack of respect and discipline from other learners
- Fourth challenge: Lack of support from teachers
- Fifth challenge: No LRC manual indicating their roles (PowerPoint Presentation x)

The mirroring of the data fulfilled its purpose as it "*gave participants an opportunity to get a holistic picture of the current leadership practice and what contradictions are inhibiting the voice and leadership development at the case study school*" (O, 13.06.2019). Significantly, Sannino et al. (2016) write that "these intentions, however, are seen as only starting point, which truly expansive learning process typically confronts and deviate from if the learners are to produce their

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own collective designs". This process is the first of the seven stages of the expansive learning cycle. It is called questioning and involved the participants questioning and interrogating the presented current leadership practices at the case study school. Engeström (2014) describes this stage as "Charting the situation – questioning and challenging using 'mirror data' about every action at work" (p. 140).

This was the first stimuli of the double stimulation to provoke the participants' agency to collaboratively work towards possible solutions of the surfaced contradictions. This first stimuli is described as "the problematic situation which triggers a paralysed conflict of motives" (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 8). Haapasaari and Kerosuo (2015) describe this transformative action as "criticizing the current activity and highlighting the need for change" (p. 39). The participants used the contradictions presented to them to critique the leadership practices at the case study school, and to understand the challenges that were inhibiting the development of leadership within the LRC activity system. The criticising provoked participants' agency to transform the current leadership practices at the case study school. Thus the principle of double stimulation was applied in the Change Laboratory Workshop with the intention to transform the leadership practices at the case study school through a transformative agency of developing voice and leadership within the LRC members. As a matter of fact, Haapasaari and Kerosuo (2015) point out that "transformative agency manifests itself when practitioners solve conflicts and disturbances during the development of their local activity system and work practice" (p. 37).

The "*participants agreed with the mirror data depicted*" (O, 13.06.2019) as factors inhibiting the leadership practices at the case study school. I observed that: "*Participants agreed on the findings on mirror data presentation*" (O, 13.06.2019) regarding the factors that emerged as inhibiting the voice and leadership development within the subjects of the activity system. This transpired during the first and second stages of the expansive learning cycle which involve questioning and analysing the current leadership practices at the case study school. As the researcher-interventionist, I offered participants the triangular model of the activity system (Engeström, 2015) as the second stimulus of the double stimulation, which was the "transitory analytical device, to be replaced by mediating means that participants find or construct themselves" (Sannino et al., 2016, p. 5). As a second stimulus, the model of the second generation activity system, provided by me as the researcher-

interventionist, was used by participants to trace the historicity of the object by identifying the causes and origin of the tensions or contradictions in the activity system. This process involved the second step of the expansive learning cycle called: Analysing the past and current state. Here the participants analysed how they were doing things in the past, how things are done currently, as well as WHY things are done the way they currently are. Engeström (2014) describes this stage as "analysing the situation – using conceptual tools based on the principles" (p. 141).

The mirror data ignited a discussion where a range of problems were raised; this involved the agentive action: explicating new possibilities or potentials in the activity (Haapasaari & Kerosuo, 2015, p. 39). In relation to the first challenge that was raised in phase one, *LRC members' individual personalities*, the LRC members confirmed that their individual personality differences brought tension among themselves to a point that, "*we end up not talking with each other for a number of days*" (OB, 13.06.2019). In support of this, the other LRC member mentioned that, "*this brings them to be divided into groups*" (O, 13.06.2019). Responding to this, the Liaison Teacher mentioned that "*I always have to counsel or make them understand that conflicts are part of any organisation or where you find a group of people*" (O, 13.06.2019). It was revealed that these personality clashes were influenced by the fact that the LRC members were from different cultures and backgrounds.

Additionally, in relation to the second challenge, *the ineffective communication channel* was confirmed as inhibiting the voice and leadership development of the LRC members. The suggestion that was agreed to in principle by participants, is that "*any LRC members to approach the principal's office during break time and after school in case of an urgent matter, and to hand in a weekly report of learners concerns or issues to either the principal or liaison teacher*" (O, 13.06.2019). It was further revealed that important matters from LRC members that needed to be deliberated by staff members, be placed on the agenda of the next staff meeting.

Furthermore, in relation to the third challenge, the participants confirmed that *the lack of respect from other learners* was evident as the school was experiencing "*disciplinary issues among learners*" (O, 13.06.2019) and it was referred to the school management to find a permanent solution to this. In addition, it was also agreed that the lack of teachers not supporting LRC

members in their LRC functions, was an issue that the office of the principal needs to discuss in conjunction with the code of conduct of teachers with the staff members. The SMT 3 who was present agreed to take this up later with the principal.

In addition, in relation to the fourth challenge, the participants confirmed that *the lack of support from teachers* was one area that needed a change in order for the LRC members' leadership practices to improve at the case study school. The LRC participants revealed that "*only the principal and the LRC liaison teacher were assisting LRC members around the school*" (O. 13.06.2019). The teacher participants agreed that, "teachers left the disciplining of learners around the school to LRC members and the principal" (O. 13.06.2019). This was condemned by the SMT participants: "*It is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure discipline around the school*" (O. 13.06.2019). Participants agreed that "*the code of conduct for teachers be revisited by teachers during a meeting or workshop on Continuous Staff Development activity*" (O. 13.06.2019).

Finally, in relation to the fifth challenge, all the participants confirmed that *the lack of a manual book* in a form of an LRC constitution that provides guidelines and further information on duties and functions of LRC members, was another factor inhibiting the voice and leadership development of LRC members. One of the LRC members indicated that: "*All our roles are described to us verbally*", to which all LRC members indicated that it "*makes it difficult for them to fully deliver learners with leadership that ensures their voices are heard*" (O, 13.06.2019). The LRC members further revealed: "*It was better to always read and refer to the document with information about LRC functions and responsibilities at school*" (O, 13.06.2019). The Class Register teacher indicated that "*there is a need for LRC roles and functions to be documented to ensure that they operate within the parameters of their jurisdiction*" (O, 13.06.2019) as per the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001*. However, it was revealed that even though few LRC functions are stipulated in the Regulations made under the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002), this is not even provided to LRC members in hard copy to use. This in itself reveals how the voice and leadership development was inhibited at the case study school, thus a need for transformative agency in leadership practices of LRC members.

The participants at this stage were busy with the third step of the expansive learning cycled called: modelling of new solutions – the possible solutions to the first challenge up to the fifth challenge mentioned above, were collectively discussed and constructed by the participants. Participants divided themselves into groups to discuss the solutions. Thereafter, each group presented the possible solutions to the following contradictions: the lack of an LRC manual book, the lack of support from teachers, LRC members' individual personalities, and lack of respect and discipline from other learners. This was the agentive action: envisioning new patterns or models of the activity (Haapasaari & Kerosuo, 2015, p. 39). Then afterwards, the whole group selected the best possible solution for each contradiction. In agreement, Mukute (2009) writes, "modelling involves the construction of new ways of working or engaging with" (p. 154). This enhanced the final group discussion and reporting back of various groups to come up with overall possible solutions towards the contradictions.

The prioritising of the possible solutions involved in stage 3 of expansive learning: modelling of new solutions and examining and testing the new model were carried out during the Change Laboratory Workshop 3. This is discussed in the next section below.

5.2.3 Change Laboratory 3: Prioritising solutions and implementation

Figure 5.3: Participants priotitising contradictions and possible solutions during the CLW

This Change Laboratory, as said earlier, reminded participants of the possible solutions that were discussed in the CL workshop 2. The contradictions and possible solutions were prioritised as follows:

- Priority 1: the generation of LRC manual book
- Priority 2: the increased support from teachers
- Priority 3: an improvement in LRC members' individual personalities
- Priority 4: an improvement in respect and discipline from other learners respectively
- Priority 5: an ineffective communication channel contradiction
- Priority 6: the identification of space for LRC members to administer LRC activities

Eventually, the participants chose only priority 1, the generation of an LRC manual book (LRC constitution) as the doable possible solution to the contradiction. This process of prioritising possible solutions in the CL workshop 3 involved stage 3 of expansive learning: modelling of new solutions. Here, the participants were involved in the agentive action describe as: committing to specific actions aimed at changing the activity (Haapasaari & Kerosuo, 2015, p. 39).

After dealing with the prioritising of the possible solutions and identifying only one doable solution: *the lack of LRC manual book* (LRC constitution) was the first priority and the focus for implementation. This involved the fourth stage of expansive learning called examining and testing the new model. Related to this fourth stage of examining and testing the new model, the LRC head boy suggested, "*We can have a committee that will come up with the LRC manual booklet*" (O, 19.09.2019). In agreement, one of the LRC stated that: "*Yes, the committee will be the best way to come up with the LRC booklet on time*" (O, 19.09.2019). Furthermore, the head girl pointed out that, "*this committee must be given a deadline to complete this booklet*" (O, 19.09.2019). However, the LRC members had different opinions on who should be part of the committee. Some suggested that only LRC members should be part of the committee, while others suggested that it should have both teachers and LRC members. The head girl suggested that "*the committee be made out of three LRC members and the three teachers who were part of the previous two Change Laboratory*" (O, 19.09.2019). This was agreed on by all participants. One of the LRC members was tasked to go call the three teachers (LRC liaison teacher, School Management Team 3 and

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Class Register teacher) who were attending a brief staff meeting. The three teachers managed to come and join the CLW 3. The head boy was tasked with explaining to the three teachers why they were called and what the LRC members suggested. The SMT3 welcomed the idea and pointed out that, "*we should together come up with an action plan*" (O, 19.09.2019) that will assist the committee to hasten the process of coming up with the LRC manual booklet.

Figure 5.4: The committee that was selected to deal with the development of the LRC manual booklet (LRC constitution)

Once more, the head girl emphasised the due date by saying, "*this should not take the committee long*" (O, 19.09.2019). Another LRC member stressed: "*It is true as we are expected to start studying for our examination*" (O, 19.09.2019). The Class Register teacher provided direction that "*the duration of the action plan should be for two or three weeks*" (O, 19.09.2019). Eventually every one of the participants agreed to the suggested duration of the action plan. The LT suggested that "*the principal be automatically part of the committee in regards to editing and final write up*" (O, 19.09.2019). As the gatekeeper, the principal and the school board should be the ones to approve this document, thus the participants saw it as a need to involve him in the formulation of this document.

The participants had their differences and debates throughout the process of designing the action plan. This process that led to expansive learning, is what Sannino et al. (2016, p. 4) describes as "a creative type of learning in which learners join their forces to literally create something novel". The suggested categories to be part of the action plan, as outlined in my observation journal, were;

the roles of the committee members in carrying out this noble task of developing an LRC manual booklet (the constitution), duties and responsibilities, composition of LRC, the term of LRC members to serve on the LRC body, the election procedure of LRCs, the relevant law in the Education Act No. 16 of 2001, the various LRC portfolios and each portfolio's function. (O, 19.09.2019)

Participants only suggested some of these activities be included in the LRC manual booklet and the committee obtained the right to add any other activity they agreed on during their deliberations. Moreover, the participants decided that these activities be allocated in the action plan with dates when they should be completed by the participants.

The agentive action in which participants were involved in at this stage was: taking the consequential actions needed to change the activity (Haapasaari & Kerosuo, 2015, p. 39). In simple terms, the transformative opportunity that transpired during CL workshop 3 was the fourth step of expansive learning cycle called: Examining and testing the new model – participants collectively created a new model by designing an action plan as a tool the committee could use to come up with the LRC manual booklet (LRC constitution). According to Mukute (2009), this stage involves "experimenting with the new model to fully grasp dynamics, potentials and limitations" (p. 154).

After this third Change Laboratory, I went to inform the principal about the suggested outcome of the Change Laboratory and emphasised the composition of the selected committee, as well as the duration of the action plan as decided by the participants.

5.3 Reflection on Change Laboratory Workshops 2 And 3

The Change Laboratory Workshops, while successful, did face some challenges. During the CL workshop 2 and 3, participants experienced various challenges during the process. A few of these challenges were: the learners who were worried about being left behind by their taxis; participants who were interrupting other participants while expressing their opinions; other learners popping in and out to find out what was happening; and the limited time, since the CL workshop was carried out after school during the study time duration. However, despite the challenges, overall, the participants expressed confidence in collaboratively seeking for solutions to the mirror data depicted as contradictions that inhibited voice and leadership development within the activity system. The various group discussions of possible solutions assisted in dealing with shyness, lack

of self-confidence and self-expression. A committee was set up during the third workshop to carry out the production of the LRC manual booklet, which is to be sent to the principal's office and myself for further input. By the end, every challenge was well handled and the attitudes changed positively as time went on towards the end of the CL workshop that ended successfully. This was the first time LRC members had collaborated with teachers in a Change Laboratory workshop space to make changes in their school.

5.4 Conclusion

In the three Change Laboratories conducted, transformative opportunities were realised through the four stages of expansive learning cycle that were carried out. The expansive learning cycle comprises seven stages and due to time and unforeseen circumstance mentioned earlier, I only managed to carry out four stages of the expansive learning cycle as a researcher-interventionist. However, I look forward in the future to carry out the last two stages of the expansive learning cycle with the next LRC members at the case study school, if I get the opportunity to conduct another study, that will be underpinned by the third generation of CHAT.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter brings my research journey for this study to its final destination. To remind the reader for the last time, the focus of this study was to find out how LRC members' voice and leadership could be developed at Elumbu Combined School as the case study school in an urban area in the northern part of Namibia. Firstly, the chapter begins with the research goal and questions. Secondly, the chapter provides a brief summary of the main research findings of what the outcome was in an attempt to answer the abovementioned research questions. Furthermore, I explain the value of my study and limitations of the study. Finally, in this chapter, I conclude with the recommendations for Sustainability of the Transformative Learner Leadership Practice and suggestions to future researchers of the concept of learner leadership, and in the final analysis, I reflect on and evaluate, my journey as a researcher-interventionist. The chapter ends with the overall conclusion of my study.

The study used the qualitative research approach, and it was a case study research that used the following research goals and questions to attain the main aim of the study.

6.2 The Research Goal and Questions

To achieve the main goal of the study: study is *to develop learner voice and leadership within LRC members of the case study school through a formative intervention study*. I generated data to the following questions during data collection:

1. How do the LRC members, teachers and SMT members understand learner leadership?

2. To what extent, and how, are LRC members involved in decision-making at the school?

3. What kind of training or programmes do the LRC undergo to develop their leadership capacity?

4. What are the factors enabling and inhibiting the development of leadership within the LRC?

5. How can learner voice and leadership be developed within the LRC at the case study school, through a formative intervention?

The participants of the study were; 12 LRC members; the principal; three school management members; the LRC liaison teacher; and a class register teacher from whom data was generated using the following data generating tools: document analysis; observation schedule; questionnaire; focus group interviews (one for LRC members and the other for the teachers group); and lastly the Change Laboratory workshops. The data generated in phase one (contextual profiling or ethnographic research) was analysed using the inductive analysis method while the data generated in phase two of the study was analysed using the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) lens as the theoretical and analytical tool of my study.

In response to the above questions, the data was analysed as mentioned above and the findings are discussed in chapter 4 and 5 of this study. However, below I briefly present a summary of the main findings.

6.3 Key Findings of My Research

The main key findings were:

- different understandings of the concept learner leadership;

- the involvement of LRC members in the decision-making process was limited to involvement in organising extra-curricular activities and controlling of other learners at school;

- the leadership development opportunities for learners at school was limited to LRC body carrying out various activities and roles at the case study school;

- the factors enabling learner leadership were limited and not that effective in developing learners' leadership at school, even though there were leadership development opportunities;

- there were factors inhibiting the learner leadership development at the case study school since the school relied heavily on meetings to develop learner leadership; and

- there was one primary and four secondary contradictions that surfaced during the Change Laboratory Workshops.

6.3.1 Different understandings of learner leadership

The findings revealed that the participants had different understandings of the concept learner leadership at the case study school. The majority of the participants perceived learner leadership as influencing, leading and motivating fellow learners by learners serving in various leadership structures at the school, more specifically the LRC body at school. The other views were that learner leadership was understood to be based on learner leadership structures (representational roles and position-based) such as LRC body, class captains and captains for various sport codes at school. Finally, learner leadership was perceived as leadership demonstrated through managerial roles of LRC members in maintaining discipline and order among learners.

6.3.2 The involvement of learners in decision-making

The involvement of LRC members in the decision-making process was limited to organising extra mural activities and controlling the other learners at school. The study revealed that LRC members were only involved in the matters raised above and the other matters such as enrolment of learners, appointment of staff, timetabling and budgeting were left to the teachers with no involvement from the LRC members, who are empowered by the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* to partake in the decision-making processes around these issues. This was caused by the cultural belief that learners are still not ready to be entrusted in matters that need confidentiality. The other factor was the lack of faith in learners to be involved in and come up with positive contributions to the critical matters that contribute to a better schooling environment for them and other learners.

However, even though LRC members were part of the highest decision-making body at school, which is the school board body, their involvement did not have that much of an impact in the

decisions made during the school board meetings. The LRC members were merely present to represent other learners and left the decision-making of critical issues to the adults in the room.

6.3.3 The leadership development opportunities for LRC members

The leadership development opportunities for learner (LRC) members were only provided through the LRC members carrying out their activities and roles at the case study school. The data revealed that the LRC structure was the only active learner leadership activity that was present at school. Through their various roles, LRC members were exposed to opportunities to capacitate their leadership skills and to enhance learner leadership practices at school. These opportunities were provided through the organisation of various extra mural activities and the on-the-job training that was offered to LRC members by the principal and LRC liaison teacher to develop LRC members' leadership and to prepare them for the various roles they undertook at school.

6.3.4 Factors enabling and inhibiting learner leadership development

The learner leadership development within the LRC members at the case study school was both enabled and inhibited by various factors. The on-the-job training that was offered by the principal and the LRC liaison teacher to LRC members to prepare them for the job of LRC members ensured that LRC members were ready for the various roles they were expected to carry out as mentioned earlier in the study. This training was reinforced with the annual LRC's regional training that was offered to all the schools in the region. LRC members acquired various skills during this training. However, the regional training was only offered to four LRC members from each school, which, in itself, was an inhibiting factor as the whole population of LRC members was not trained to acquire similar skills. The data revealed that, when the four LRC members returned to school, there was no opportunity provided by the school for those who attended to share the knowledge and skills they acquired during the training. This was due to financial constraints according to the data generated. Both the on-the-job training and the regional training lacked the capacity to provide intensive training to LRC members at schools in empowering them in policy implementation and ensuring that learners' voices are heard at school. Furthermore, the lack of a manual (LRC

constitution) was also revealed as an inhibiting factor, as this manual could assist LRC members in gaining knowledge on the various roles and functions of LRC members at school.

Another enabling factor revealed by the data was the overwhelming support LRC members received from the principal and the LRC liaison teacher in terms of support and guidance. It encouraged the LRC members to continue delivering and any obstacles that they faced was dealt with during their meetings with the principal and the LRC liaison teacher. In addition, the provision for LRC members to implement social and academic activities at school was also an enabling factor since the LRC members felt a sense of belonging and responsibility for improving the school for themselves and their fellow learners.

However, it was suggested by the LRC members that the lack of support and co-operation from teachers was inhibiting them from practicing leadership at the school. The study revealed that teachers expected the support teacher of the LRC members to deal with discipline issues, while they have a discipline committee. Thus, they suggested that the office of the principal approach teachers and refer the relevant ministerial policies to the teachers to strengthen the cooperation and support between the teachers and LRC members. Finally, the LRC members were advised by the teacher participants to ensure that they strengthen their relationship with fellow learners and avoid misunderstandings among themselves and fellow learners by sharing mass meetings and organising many social events and team-building exercises together.

6.3.5 Contradictions surfaced within LRC activity system

Apart from the above mentioned inhibiting factors to the learner leadership development within the LRC members activity system, there were contradictions which surfaced during phase two of the study. The data from the Change Laboratory workshops revealed one primary contradiction and four secondary contradictions within and between the various elements of the LRC members' activity system using the CHAT lens.

The data revealed that, *the LRC members' personality clashes* was the primary contradiction as it was within the subjects of the activity system. This was provoked by the lack of interpersonal skills, not accommodating each other's different personalities *among* LRC members and the

different cultural backgrounds of LRC members as the school consists of multi-race groups. The four secondary contradictions surfaced using the CHAT lens were: *lack of an effective communication channel; lack of respect and discipline towards LRC members from fellow learners; teachers not supporting LRC members; and lack of an LRC manual (constitution).*

Indeed, the surfacing of these contradictions resulted in a transformative agency within the participants to work collectively towards a transformative change in the leadership practice at the case study school. These contradictions were mirrored to the participants during the formative intervention in the Change Laboratory workshop 2 of phase two of the study. This was the first learning action of the expansive learning cycle. Drawing on Midgley (2000), a formative intervention is defined as a "purposeful action by human agent to create change" (Engeström & Sannino 2010, p. 15). The study applied the first four learning actions (steps) of expansive learning cycle to produce a transformative change in the leadership practice of the activity system. The first step of expansive learning cycle was the questioning of the mirror data which was the first stimuli in the Change Laboratory workshop 2. Participants questioned the leadership practice contradictions and they agreed that what was mirrored indeed needed a transformative change to improve the leadership practice at school. Thereafter, the participants used the conceptual tools based on the principles (Engeström, 2014) as the second stimulus to analyse the mirror data. During the third learning action, participants modelled possible solutions to the contradictions collectively during Change Laboratory 2. In Change Laboratory 3, participants prioritised the solutions to the contradictions as follows:

- Priority 1: the generation of a LRC manual;

- Priority 2: increased support from teachers;

- Priority 3: an improvement in LRC members' individual personalities;

- Priority 4: an improvement in respect and discipline from other learners;

- Priority 5: an effective communication channel; and

- Priority 6: the identification of space for LRC members to administer LRC activities.

During Change Laboratory workshop 3, the learning actions of expansive learning cycle led to the fourth stage. The lack of a LRC manual (LRC constitution) was chosen as the doable contradiction to be carried out by the LRC members. The LRC liaison teacher, class register teacher and SMT 3, agreed to be part of the committee, together with three LRC members, to come up with the LRC manual. The outcome of the fourth learning action was the action plan that was developed to guide the selected committee that was entrusted to develop a LRC manual (LRC constitution) to be used by the LRC members in practicing leadership in future. The formative intervention through the Change Laboratory workshop only carried out three Change Laboratory workshops and in my study, the expansive learning actions led to the fourth learning action (step) of expansive learning cycle. This was due to time constraints and unforeseen reasons. The fourth CL workshop did not happen because of time and the committee was expected to utilise the rest of the days to come up with the LRC manual for the school. The collaboration among the participants produced a transformative agency towards the development of voice and leadership within the activity system of LRC members.

6.4 The Relevance of Cultural Historical Activity Theory to this Study

The overarching question or aim of my study was to find out how LRC members' voices and leadership could be developed at the case study school in an urban area in the northern part of Namibia. In order to obtain the answers to the above mentioned main aim, my study was theoretically and analytically framed by the second generation of CHAT as the unit of analysis. This is because my study used one activity system and not a multi-activity system as the unit of analysis. CHAT, as a unit of analysis, "provides a new method to extract meaningful information from massive and complex qualitative data sets and conceptualise how real world phenomena are entrenched within the situation that is being examined" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 6). Thus, CHAT is particularly useful for my study for a number of reasons. Firstly, and in the words of Julkunen (as cited by Foot, 2014, p. 2) CHAT "provides a robust framework for analysing professional work practice, including social service provision". The second-generation activity theory moved beyond Vygotsky's individual focus. It is for this reason that I chose to use the second-generation activity as my theoretical framework that I used to understand and analyse the activity of leadership development within LRC members at the school, which was a collective

activity. Similarly, Yamazumi (2006) believes "activity theory can be considered a theoretical tool for making changes and providing real support for human development through formative experiments and social designs for new activity systems" (p. 77). CHAT as a theoretical framework, provided my study with opportunities as an interventionist to carry out a critical study in the activity of developing leadership within LRC members of the case study school. A point highlighted by Yamazumi (2006) is that:

> Activity theory provides a powerful framework for analyzing and understanding the social cultural, and historical formation of human actions and practices; it deals with actions oriented toward objects and mediated by cultural artifacts such as tools and signs, symbol, ideas, concepts, and technology. (p. 79)

Secondly, another reason that made CHAT applicable to my study was CHAT's "central role of contradictions/tensions as a source of change and development" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). This study used the formative intervention method in the three Change Laboratory workshops to expansively transform the leadership practice of the LRC members' activity system at the case study school. The surfacing of contradictions mirrored to participants in the Change Laboratory workshop helped provoke the agency in the participants to see the need for a change in the practice. This is emphasised by Yamagata-Lynch (2010) that CHAT, "can help document the historical relationship among multiple activities by identifying how the results from a past activity affect new activities" (pp. 1-2). Participants collectively applied four learning actions (steps) of expansive learning cycle: questioning; analysing; modelling; and examining the model to provide a transformative change in the leadership practice by developing learner voice and leadership within the LRC members at the case study school. Furthermore, CHAT "helps to unpack the complexities involved in human activities and helps researchers and practitioners to engage in discussions about their observations and findings" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 31). During the Change Laboratory, the participants were assisted by the use of the second stimulus engaged in the construction of new concepts and tools in discussing possible solutions to the surfaced contradictions.

Thirdly, the historicity of LRC members' activity system was taken into account when analysing the contradictions that were surfaced in the activity system. This involved an analysis of the LRC

election process, training offered to LRC members, support and guidance LRC members received at the case study school and the roles of LRC members in the decision-making process of the case study school. Similarly, Engeström (2001) emphasised that "activity system takes shape and gets transformed over lengthy periods of time" (p. 136). In addition, he suggests that activity systems "problems and potentials can only be understood against their own history" (ibid).

Fourthly, it was for the above mentioned reason of transformative change that CHAT was applicable to my study because it provided the "possibility of expansive transformation in the activity systems" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). Basically, CHAT is a theory that can, in practice, be used to provide opportunities for learning expansively through activities in formal interventions. In my study, the leadership development of LRC members at the case study school's intention was to expand and transform through an interventionist study using CHAT. For more information, expansive learning is discussed in chapter 2 in more detail. CHAT "is concerned with the process of mediation: how practical activity is shaped by cognitive functioning" (Meyers, 2007, p. no page).

Finally, this study is an interventionist study that allows me to bring the possible change in LRC members' leadership to participate in decision-making processes at school in matters that concern their learning and schooling through the leadership development intervention. This is emphasised in Sannino et al. (2009, p. 3). "Activity theory involves the researcher throughout the course of the development, stagnation, or regression of the activities under scrutiny, as well as in the activities of the research subjects." Sannino et al. (2009), in response to this, stresses that "this deep involvement in everyday human life is a crucial resource of activity theory" (p. 3). Foot (2014, p. 2) highlights that "by offering a multi-dimensional, systematic approach that includes both psychological motives and all kinds of tools, as well as the always present dynamics of power, money, culture and history, CHAT enables researchers to analyse complex and evolving professional practices and practitioners to engage in reflective research." The participants throughout the Change Laboratory workshops also acquired leadership skills such as collaborating, cooperating, taking the initiative, working hard and perseverance when they were participating in the Change Laboratory workshops. The LRC members became more aware of their roles in

providing leadership at school in terms of ensuring learners voices are heard at school and how to deal with contradictions within their LRC members' activity system.

6.5 Sustainability of the Transformative Learner Leadership Practice

According to Haapasaari and Kerosou (2015), the innovations and transformations, transformative agency "sustainability has not been studied" (p. 32). However, they point out that "it is possible to sustain transformative agency when employees, with the help of a durable yet flexible second stimulus, persistently keep identifying problems and constructing means to solve their problems after the formative intervention" (p. 37). In the case of the LRC activity system, the LRC liaison teacher and the principal with those LRC members who will get a chance to be part of the LRC body for the next term of LRC's, should continue to identify contradictions within the activity system and use the second stimulus to model possible solutions to change practice every time problems are identified in the activity. However, Haapasaari and Kerosou (2015) warn us that "the sustainability of transformative agency can easily be diminished by activities becoming routine-like after a formative intervention ends" (p. 37). Thus, they suggest that "for an innovation to become sustainable, the strong involvement and participation of all parties is required during its implementation" (p. 39). Thus, I will have to keep in touch with the principal and LRC liaison teacher to see if they involve all teachers and learners to promote learner voice at school.

6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

The phenomenon of learner leadership is still under construction in Namibia. Only a handful of researchers conducted research on learner leadership as mentioned earlier. However, firstly, I suggest that more opportunities be made available to scholars and researchers in Namibia to investigate this phenomenon further as well as also to fill the gap in literature regarding learner leadership development in the Namibian context. Thus, there is still a need for more research to produce more knowledge to add to the limited knowledge on the concept of learner leadership and to transform the current knowledge on the concept of learner leadership. This will ensure that the concept of learner leadership is broadly understood and applied in our everyday practice, policy settings and implementations, teaching and learning processes, decision-making processes at schools and outside schools.

Secondly, I recommend that researchers and scholars should include all the relevant stakeholders in their study's activity system, meaning the participants, unlike in the previous study including this study, are either only LRC members or class captains together with few School Management Team members and teachers. I suggest that parents, other learners and more teachers are included into the activity system so that more views can contribute to rich data.

Thirdly, I recommend that further studies expand the unit of analysis to the third generation of CHAT, which focuses on two or more activity systems. This can include having two or more activity systems from two or more different schools with different backgrounds for example, from urban and rural areas.

Furthermore, I recommend that each phase of the study be conducted in its own time, for example phase one (the contextual phase in term 1) and phase two (the Change Laboratories) in their own time. This is to encourage researchers in future to have ample time to conduct their research and for researchers to complete the expansive learning cycle.

Finally, as it was revealed in the study, that even though only a few LRC functions are stipulated in the *Regulations made in the Education Act, 2001* (Namibia. MBESC, 2002), this is not even provided to LRC members in hard copy to use. This in itself reveals how the voice and leadership development was inhibited at the case study school, thus there is a need for a transformative agency in the leadership practice of LRC members. I recommend that a number of school teachers and learners from various schools around the region work together and put a regional manual for LRC members to use in our schools.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

Although the second generation of CHAT "can guide researchers and practitioners in their design, implementation, analysis, and development of conclusions in a research study or in a programme evaluation" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 1). CHAT is a very useful to interventionist researchers but it is pointed out that the "findings that results from this method are not generaliseable" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 31). In addition, she suggests that "the goal of a case study is to truly understand a single case, and not to compare it with other cases in order to make general claims"

(p. 78). Similarly, Queiros, Faria and Almeida (2017) point out that a case study "can be difficult to establish a cause-effect connection to reach conclusions and it can be hard to generalise, particularly when a small number or case studies are considered" (p. 377). In contrast, Sannino et al. (2016, p. 10) argue that "Formative interventions aim at generative solutions." They describe generative solutions as "locally initiated appropriation solutions, which can lead to practical systematic transformation, as well as to the development of novel theoretical and methodological research tools" (ibid). In using the second generation of CHAT that focuses only on one activity system instead of the third generation of CHAT which focuses on a multi-activity system, in itself, also meant that the study could not be generalised to another activity system. However, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), "case studies can be part of a growing pool of data, with multiple case studies contributing to greater generalisability" (p. 380).

Furthermore, time was another factor that limited my study. This was because I enrolled as a part-time student and it happened that I had to negotiate for leave days as these days were so limited. As I had been studying in those previous years too, my study leave days were not enough, thus I had to use the limited days very well. I managed to complete three change laboratory and four learning actions of expansive learning within the limited leave days I had. This was indeed an achievement on my part.

6.8 My Journey as an Interventionist Researcher

The experience I gained in conducting research at this level of Master's degree is quite different from my Honours degree experience I gained back then. During this research, firstly, I learnt about the proposal and the ethical requirements that as a researcher I need to undertake before I start with my research. During this stage, I gained more insight into what the different literature says about the phenomenon of leadership as it was my responsibility to inform myself first on the topic that I was about to research.

Secondly, in doing this research, I was exposed to the four features of academic writing: formality; objectivity; attentiveness; and accuracy. These features enhanced my academic writing skills and this will assist me in future when studying further doing PhD studies and in writing academic papers.

Furthermore, the use of CHAT as the theoretical and analytical tool underpinning my study, gave me more insight into the importance of selecting a theory that is aligned with theories informing my study.

In the final analysis, I would like to recognise the overwhelming support and guidance I received from my two best researchers who made me gain all these academic skills I possess as a researcher and as an academic with the hope of completing my PhD studies in the near future. The journey was an expansive learning process for me and it opened new hopes for me to join the academic world in terms of carrying out research and publications. As a researcher-interventionist, I will want to complete a circuit or regional based research on the phenomenon of learner leadership, looking at two to four schools using the third generation of CHAT.

6.9 The Relevance of Cultural Historical Activity Theory to this Study

CHAT is particularly useful for my study for a number of reasons. Firstly, and in the words of Julkunen (as quoted by Foot, 2014, p. 2), CHAT "provides a robust framework for analysing professional work practice, including social service provision". The second generation activity theory moved beyond Vygotsky's individual focus. It is for this reason that I chose to use the second generation activity as my theoretical framework that I used to understand and analyse the activity of leadership development within LRC members at the school, which is a collective activity. Similarly, Yamazumi (2006) believes "activity theory can be considered a theoretical tool for making changes and providing real support for human development through formative experiments and social designs for new activity systems" (p. 77). CHAT as a theoretical framework, provided my study with opportunities as an interventionist to carry out a critical study in the activity of developing leadership within LRC members of the case study school. A point highlighted by Yamazumi (2006) is that:

> Activity theory provides a powerful framework for analysing and understanding the social cultural, and historical formation of human actions and practices; it deals with actions oriented toward objects and mediated by cultural artefacts such as tools and signs, symbol, ideas, concepts, and technology. (p. 79)

Secondly, another reason that makes CHAT applicable to my study, is its "central role of contradictions/tensions as a source of change and development" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137).

Thirdly, the historicity of LRC members' activity system was taken into account when analysing the contradictions that surfaced in the activity system. This involved an analysis of the LRC election process, training offered to LRC members, support and guidance LRC members received at the case study school, the roles of LRC members in the decision-making process of the case study school. Similarly, Engeström (2001) emphasised that "activity system take shape and gets transformed over lengthy periods of time" (p. 136). In addition, he suggests that activity systems "problems and potentials can only be understood against their own history" (ibid). Fourthly, it is for the very reason of transformative change that CHAT is applicable to my study because it provides the "possibility of expansive transformation in the activity systems" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). Basically, CHAT is a theory that, in practice, can be used to provide opportunities for learning expansively through activities in formal interventions. In my study, the intention of the leadership development of LRC members at the case study school is to expand and transform through an interventionist study using CHAT. For more information, expansive learning is discussed in section 6.2.4 of this chapter in more detail below. CHAT "is concerned with the process of mediation: how practical activity is shaped by cognitive functioning" (Meyers, 2007, n.p.).

Finally, this study is an interventionist study that allows me to bring the possible change in LRC members' leadership to participate in decision-making processes at school in matters that concern their learning and schooling through leadership development intervention. This is emphasised in Sannino et al. (2009, p. 3) "Activity theory involves the researcher throughout the course of the development, stagnation, or regression of the activities under scrutiny, as well as in the activities of the research subjects." Sannino et al. (2009), in response to this, stresses that "this deep involvement in everyday human life is a crucial resource of activity theory" (p. 3). Foot (2014, p. 2) highlights that " by offering a multi-dimensional, systematic approach that includes both psychological motives and all kinds of tools, as well as the always present dynamics of power, money, culture and history, CHAT enables researchers to analyse complex and evolving professional practices, and practitioners to engage in reflective research."

6.10 Conclusion

The study provides evidence that the learner leadership in our schools is still lacking. This was evident at the case study school where it was revealed that learner leadership is associated with positions such as the LRC body at school. There were no initiatives that ensured that learners are "heard, collaborating with adults and building capacity for leadership" (Mitra & Gross, 2009) at the case study school. In line with policy, the LRC members who are representatives of other learners are there to ensure that learners have a voice at school. However, at the case study school, LRC members were carrying out managerial and administrative roles associated with traditional leadership such as controlling and discipling of other learners.

However, with the formative intervention that took place, the participants are capacitated with the agency to transform the leadership practice at the case study school. I believe that, in future, the LRC members and learners' voices will be heard and there will be collaboration with adults to make the school a better place for both teachers and learners.

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Appendices
Appendix A: Proposal Clearance Certificate

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EDUCATION FACULTY • PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
Tel: (046) 603 8385 / (046) 603 8393 • Fax: (046) 622 8028 • e-mail: d.wilmot@ru.ac.za

PROPOSAL APPROVAL

The minute of the EHDC meeting of 25 October 2018 reflects the following:

2018.6.04   CLASS B RESTRICTED MATTERS
MASTER OF EDUCATION RESEARCH PROPOSALS

To consider the following research proposal for the degree of Master of Education in the Faculty of Education:

Salomo Shipingana Mwatyanga Shipopyeni (15S8848)

Topic: A study of how leadership and learner voice can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia.

Supervisors: Professor C Grant
Co-Supervisor: Dr F Kajee

Decision: *Approved*

This letter confirms the approval of the above proposal at a meeting of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee on the 25 October 2018.

The proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes. The proposed research involves minors or vulnerable groups, which requires an application to the Rhodes University Ethical Standard Committee to receive ethical clearance.

Sincerely

Professor K Ngcoza
Acting Chair of the EHDC, Rhodes University
6 November 2018

Appendix B: Permission letter to Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture

P.O. Box 1111

Oshakati

3 January 2019

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

Office of the Permanent Secretary

P.O. Box xxx

Head Office

Windhoek

Dear: Madam

RE: request for permission to carry out a research project with Learners' Representative Council (LRC) members at Elumbu Combined School in Omusati region.

I am Mr. Salomo S.M. Shipopyeni (615s8848), a part-time master's student at Rhodes University majoring in the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). My study requires me to conduct research at a school. I therefore chose Elumbu Combined School as my study's research site to conduct my research on a LRC members Leadership Development Intervention study. Though I am a principal at a certain school in Omusati, I opted to conduct my research at another school as this will give me ample time to concentrate only on my study and work towards the object of the study . The study aims to develop learner leadership among LRC members to share their views and be heard by school management team and teachers. I am hereby humbly requesting

your office to give me permission to invite the LRC members (through their parents then themselves individually), one class teacher, the LRC's liaison teacher and three school management team members (principal and two HODs) to be participants. The participants will each be asked to complete a declaration form after they agreed to participate in the study. The participants, the research site and data collected will be treated confidentially and anonymously during the research as well as after the research.

I am therefore humbly requesting your office to grant me the permission to conduct my study at Elumbu Combined School in Oshana region. The research main title is: A study of how leadership and learner voice can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia. This research aims to develop learners' leadership and also contribute to literature on learner leadership in Namibia. If you have any queries for more information please do not hesitate to conduct me or my supervisor Prof Carolyn Grant at c.grant@ru.ac.za and Dr. Farhana Kajee f.kajee@ru.ac.za as a co-supervisor.

I will ensure that I will work ethically with the LRC members, learners, teachers, school management and parents at all times during my studies and afterwards. The participants will be provided with either assent or consent letters to seek acceptance and approval, as well as be encouraged to feel free to withdraw from the study at any given time of their choice in case it becomes unfavourable for them.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Shipopyeni S.S.M.

_____

Appendix C: Permission letter to research site, principal

P.O. Box 1111

Oshakati

27 January 2019

Directorate of Education

Oshana Region

Dear: Principal

RE: request for permission to carry out a research project with Learners' Representative Council (LRC) members at Elumbu Combined School.

I am Mr. Salomo S.M. Shipopyeni (615s8848), a part-time master's student at Rhodes University majoring in the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). My study requires me to conduct research at a school. I therefore chose your school as my study's research site to conduct my research with LRC members in a Leadership Development Intervention study. Though I am a principal at a certain school in Omusati region, I opted to conduct my research at another school as this will give me ample time to concentrate only on my study and work towards the object of the study . The study aims to develop learner leadership among LRC members to share their views and be heard by school management team and teachers. I am hereby humbly requesting your office to give me permission to invite the LRC members (through their parents then themselves individually), one class teacher, the LRC's liaison teacher and three school management team members (principal and two HODs) to be participants. The participants will each be asked to complete a declaration form after they agreed to participate in the study. The participants, the research site and data collected will be treated confidentially and anonymously during the research as well as after the research.

I am therefore humbly requesting your office to grant me the permission to conduct my study at your school. This research aims to develop learners' leadership and also contribute to literature on learner leadership in Namibia. The research main title is: A study of how leadership and learner voice can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia. If you have any queries for more information please do not hesitate to conduct me or my supervisor Prof Carolyn Grant at c.grant@ru.ac.za and Dr. Farhana Kajee f.kajee@ru.ac.za as a co-supervisor.

I will ensure that I will work ethically with the LRC members, learners, teachers, school management and parents at all times during my studies and afterwards. The participants will be provided with either assent or consent letters to seek acceptance and approval, as well as be encouraged to feel free to withdraw from the study at any given time of their choice in case it becomes unfavourable for them.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Shipopyeni S.S.M.

_____

Appendix D: Permission letter from gate keeper: Director of Education

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
Aspiring to excellence in Education for All

Tel: 065 229800
Fax: 065 229833
Enquiries: Gerhard S. Ndafenongo
E-mail: ndafenongogs@gmail.com
Ref no: 13/2/9/1

906 Sam Nuyoma Road
Private Bag 5518
Oshakati, Namibia
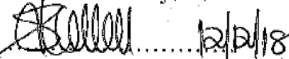
SALOMO SM SHIPOPYENI
salomoshipopyeni@yahoo.com
0812742197

Dear Mr Shipopyeni

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH AT ERUNDU COMBINED SCHOOL, OSHAKATI CIRCUIT, OSHANA REGION

1. I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 10th December 2018 and therefore it bears reference;

2. Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted to conduct the study entitled: **A study of how leadership and learner voice can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Oshana Region**. You are hereby requested to represent this letter of approval to the principal of a selected school to ensure that the research is authorised, authentic and procedures are adhered to.

3. This permission is subject to the following strict conditions; (i) There should be minimal or no interruption on normal teaching and learning, during a class or scheduled afternoon session, (ii) Ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity should be respected and retained throughout this activity i.e. voluntary participation, and consent from participants, and (iii) the permission is valid for entire academic year 2019.

4. Both parties should understand that this permission could be revoked without explanation at any time.

5. Furthermore, we humbly request you to share with us your research findings with the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture_ Oshana Region. You may contact Mr GS Ndafenongo, the Deputy Director: Programs and Quality Assurance (PQA) for the provision of summary of your research findings.

6. I wish you the best in conducting your study.

Yours Sincerely

.... 12/12/18
HILENI M. AMUKANA
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

All correspondence should be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer

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Appendix E: Permission letter: Gate Keeper research site, school

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

ERUNDU COMBINED SCHOOL

OSHANA REGION

KWAME NKHRUMA STREET
P/BAG 5526   OSHAKATI

TEL: +26465220149
FAX: +26465224511

Rep. of Namibia

Enquiries: Mr Kandjala
Email: erunducombined@yahoo.com

4 February 2019

Dear Shipopyeni S.S.M

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOL

This letter serve to inform you that Mr. Salomo SM Shipopyeni, a registered student at Rhodes University (in the Republic of South Africa) is granted permission to conduct research as part of his study towards a Master Degree in Educational Leadership and Management in Erundu Combined School.

I thus have no hesitation in recommending that any results that Mr. Shipopyeni will present might give a true reflection of the school and will be treated with confidentiality it may require.

Thank you.

Yours in Education

Mr. F. Kandjala
Headmaster.

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
ERUNDU COMBINED SCHOOL

2019 -02- 0 4

Private Bag 5526 Oshakati
Tel: 065-220149
Fax: 065-224511

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Appendix F: Consent letter to Principal, SMT and Teachers

P.O. Box 1111

Oshakati

11 February 2019

Dear: SMT / Teacher

RE: request for permission to participate as a participant in a research project at Elumbu Combined School.

I am Mr. Salomo S.M. Shipopyeni (615s8848), a part-time master's student at Rhodes University majoring in the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). My study requires me to conduct research at a school. I therefore chose your school as my study's research site, to conduct my research on a LRC members Leadership Development Intervention study. Though I am a principal at a certain school in Omusati region, I opted to conduct my research at another school as this will give me ample time to concentrate only on my study and work towards the object of the study . The study aims to develop learner leadership among LRC members to share their views and be heard by school management team and teachers. I am here by declaring that each participants of the study will be asked to complete informed consent form. The participants, the research site and data collected will be treated confidentially and anonymously during the research as well as after the research. However if you saw wish for your identity not to be kept confidential (as an individual) you can indicate by writing a brief letter that gives me permission to use your identity. As most of the other thesis, I intend the final product (thesis) to be used publicly in terms of other scholars wanting to use my research, it to contribute to knowledge production as well as for policy formulation and reforms in Namibia.

I am therefore humbly requesting you to be a participant of the research I will conduct at your school. The research main title is: A study of how leadership and learner voice can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia. The study will be conducted at your school. This research aims to develop learners' leadership and also contribute to literature on learner leadership in Namibia. If you have any queries for more information please do not hesitate to conduct me or my supervisor Prof Carolyn Grant at c.grant@ru.ac.za and Dr. Farhana Kajee f.kajee@ru.ac.za as a co-supervisor.

I will ensure that I will work ethically with the participants at all times during my studies and afterwards. The participants are encouraged to feel free to withdraw from the study at any given time of their choice in case it becomes unfavourable for them. If you are agreeing in being a participant of the study mentioned above, kindly complete the declaration form below.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Shipopyeni S.S.M.

_____

DECLARATION FORM

I _____ (full name) hereby confirm that I read the consent letter above and fully understand the content of it. I fully understand that the researcher will interview and record me (provide confidentiality), take pictures of the activities during the research process but will cover my face to protect my identity (ensure my anonymity). I therefore agree to be a participant to the study mentioned above, which is about Learner Leadership at Elumbu C. S. I am aware of my right to withdraw from the study any time that I so wish to withdraw.

_____   _____

(Signature: SMT / Teacher)   Date

Appendix G: Consent letter to parent/guardian (will be translated into Oshiwambo)

P.O. Box 1111

Oshakati

12   February 2019

Dear: Parent / Guardian

RE: request for permission for your child to participate as a participant in a research project at Elumbu Combined School.

I am Mr. Salomo S.M. Shipopyeni (615s8848), a part-time master's student at Rhodes University majoring in the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). My study requires me to conduct research at a school. I therefore chose the above mentioned school as my study's research site, to conduct my research on a LRC members Leadership Development Intervention study. Though I am a principal at a certain school in Omusati region, I opted to conduct my research at another school as this will give me ample time to concentrate only on my study and work towards the object of the study. The study aims to develop learner leadership among LRC members to share their views and be heard by school management team and teachers. I am here by declaring that each participant of the study will be asked to complete informed consent form. The participants, the research site and data collected will be treated confidentially and anonymously during the research as well as after the research. As most of the other thesis, I intend the final product (thesis) to be used publicly in terms of other scholars wanting to use my research, it to contribute to knowledge production as well as for policy formulation and reforms in Namibia.

I am therefore humbly requesting you to provide me with the permission for your child _____ to be a participant of the research I will conduct at the above mentioned school. The study will be conducted at the school. This research aims to develop learners' leadership and also contribute to literature on learner leadership in

Namibia. If you have any queries for more information please do not hesitate to conduct me or my supervisor Prof Carolyn Grant at c.grant@ru.ac.za and Dr. Farhana Kajee f.kajee@ru.ac.za as a co-supervisor.

I will ensure that I will work ethically with the participants at all times during my studies and afterwards. The participants are encouraged to feel free to withdraw from the study at any given time of their choice in case it becomes unfavourable for them. The learners withdrawal at any time of the research will not lead to learners losing their position as LRCs. If you are agreeing in your child (name mentioned above) to be a participant of the study mentioned above, kindly complete the declaration form below.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Shipopyeni S.S.M.

DECLARATION FORM

I _____ (full name of parent / guardian) hereby confirm that I read the consent letter above and fully understand the content of it. I fully understand that the researcher will interview and record my child (provide confidentiality), take pictures of the activities during the research process but will cover his/her face to protect his/her identity (ensure my anonymity). I therefore agree that _____ (child's name) can be a participant to the study mentioned above, which is about Learner Leadership at Elumbu C. S. I am aware of his/ her right to withdraw from the study any time that he/she so wish to withdraw.

_____   _____

(Signature: Parent / Guardian)   Date

Appendix H: Assent letter to LRC member (will be translated into Oshiwambo)

Dear: Learner

I am going to conduct a study at your school on learner leadership development among LRC members. The title of the study is: A study of how leadership and learner voice can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in an urban combined school, Namibia. The study aims to develop learner leadership among LRC members at your school.

If you agree to be part of the study mentioned above, I will provide your parent / guardian a consent letter to provide me with permission for you to be a participant of the study. You will be interviewed and recorded (this will be kept confidential), observed during the research period using the structured observation schedule (researcher take notes during the study), be expected to complete a questionnaire. During the study, I will take pictures of certain scenarios to provide evidence but your face will be protected to keep your identity anonymous. I guarantee you confidentiality and anonymity during the study and after the study. You can withdraw any time from participating in the study.

Kindly write your full name and surname on the space provided below:

I _____ understand that I will interviewed and recorded, observed, taken pictures (that will have my face covered) and expected to complete a questionnaire. My parent or guardian will sign a consent letter to give the researcher permission for me to be a participant of the study mentioned above. I am fully aware that I can withdraw from the study anytime I want to. And my withdrawal from the research will not cease me in being an LRC at our school.

_____   _____

Signature of parent / guardian   Date

Appendix I: Document analysis schedule

Document to be analysed	Comments
Education Act No. 16 of 2001	
Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001	
School Internal Policy	
LRC members Internal Regulation Policy	
Minutes and Agenda of various meetings such as staff, school board meetings	
Minutes of LRC members meetings	
School Development Plan	
Any other relevant document	

I looked at whether the policy documents such as the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001*, *Regulations made under the Education Act, 2001*, *School Internal Policy*, *School Development Plan* and LRC members Internal Regulation Policy are implemented in order for the LRCs to function effectively and efficiently. How implementation or non-implementation of the above policy documents enabled or constrained LRC leadership practices at school. The minutes of the meetings provided data on the historicity of LRC members' activity system at school and the activities as well as involvement of LRC members in the decision-making process at school.

Appendix J: Observation schedule

Activity to be observed	What will be observed	Comment
LRC members meetings	Who chairs the meetings? Who makes the decisions? How is the collaboration and coordination?	
Learner Leadership practice at Elumbu Combined School	How LRCs are involved in decision-making around the school and in classrooms during lessons? Is there delegation of activities involving learners? Who is involved in decision-making at the meeting? Are SMT members and teachers supporting Learner leadership development at school? How	
Change Laboratory	LRC members participation in decision-making Collaboration among LRC members and between LRC members and teachers Leadership of LRC members in owning the process at school	
CLW 1:		
CLW 2:		
CLW 3:		

Appendix K: Individual questionnaire schedule- Principal, SMT, teacher, LRC's liaison teacher, LRC members

Kindly complete the following questionnaire below by giving your honest respond. All information will be treated confidential. Respond in the space provided under each question.

Age _____   Position / Portfolio _____

1. How do you understand leadership?

   _____

   _____

2. Is learner leadership practiced at your school?

   Yes_____   No _____ (Tick the appropriate answer).

3. Briefly give a reason for your answer in question 2 (above).

   _____

   _____

   Explain the term Learner leadership in your own words.

   _____

   _____

4. How are the LRC members selected at your school? Tick appropriate box

   Elected by all learners □

   Elected by the school management team □

   Elected by whole staff (management and teachers) □

5. Is the school preparing LRCs for their roles at school (in terms of training).

   Yes _____ No _____ (Tick the appropriate answer).

6. Do you think it is important to develop learner leadership among learners? If so, why?

   _____

   _____

7. Are some members of the LRCs allowed to attend school board and staff meetings?

   Yes _____ No _____ (Tick appropriate answer)

8. What are the challenges of LRC members at school?

_____

_____

Name different leadership bodies established at your school.

_____

_____

9. What leadership development opportunities are provided at school / planned in your School Development Plan?

_____

_____

10. What are the roles and duties of LRC members at school?

_____

_____

And are these roles documented?

Yes _____ No _____ (Tick appropriate answer)

11. Are the LRC members allowed to come up with initiatives and implement (are they allowed to make decisions on matters affecting learners)?

Yes _____ No _____ (Tick appropriate box)

Provide examples for your answer above if yes.

_____

_____

12. What mechanism / channel of communication are provided to LRC members to share their views and be heard at school on behalf of fellow learners?

_____

_____

13. How does the school encourage and ensure LRC members carry out their functions effectively?

_____

_____

Appendix L: Focus group interview 1 schedule

Focus Group Interview 1 schedule for Principal, SMT, Teachers and LRC Liaison teacher

1. Is leadership for the SMT / Teachers or everyone around the school?

2. What is your view on LRC members being involved in decision-making of matters concerning learners at school?

3. Will you advise SMT and teachers as well as SGB to involve LRC members in their meetings? Why/ why not?

4. What type of leadership programmes are offered to develop leadership among LRC members and learners at large?

5. Will you encourage learners' to share their views and be heard by SMT, Teachers and SGB at school? Why/why not?

6. Will you advocate for learner leadership development among LRC members and learners at school?

7. What do you think will the challenges be in order to develop leadership among LRC members and learners at large?

8. What solutions can you provide for the above mentioned challenges?

9. Do you think the skills and knowledge gained through learner leadership has any impact on the future endeavors of the LRC members and learners trained? Explain your answer.

Appendix M: Focus group interview 2 schedule for LRC members

1. Do you perceive leadership practice is only for the principal and teachers at school? Why?

2. Do you think learners can also practice leadership at school? Why/ why not?

3. What is your opinion about Learner voice and Learner leadership development at school?

4. Do you, as a LRC member, carry out leadership at school? How?

5. Are LRC members involved in decision-making at school on matters affecting learners? How if yes, how and if not why?

6. What is your relationship as LRC members with the school class monitors?

7. Are there activities that you have coordinated as a LRC in school? Describe these activities.

8. What are your roles as LRC members?

9. Did you attend any leadership training as LRC members? What were the topics covered in that training(s)/workshop? Length? Value?

10. Are your roles as LRC members explained to you and documented?

11. How many times do you meet as LRC members to deliberate on various issues?

12. Do you think your meetings resolutions (decisions) are having any positive impact on matters that affect learners at school?

13. Who is more influential or makes most decisions in your meetings?

14. What future plans or activities did you plan as LRC members to enhance learners schooling and relationship among yourselves as LRCs members and between learners and other relevant stakeholders such as SMT, Teachers, Guardian teacher and SGB?

15. How do you ensure that learners raise their voice in school and are being heard by the relevant bodies at school?

16. How important is learner leadership in school?

17. As LRC members, what do you think are your weaknesses? Suggest the type of training or support you need to strengthen those weaknesses.

Appendix N: LRC training invitation letter

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
Aspiring to excellence in Education for All

Tel: 065 229800 Fax: 065 229833
Enquiries: Gerhard Ndafenongo
Ref: 16/2/5/3

906 Sam Nuyoma Road
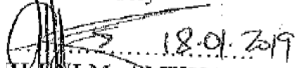Private Bag 5518
Oshakati, Namibia

INSPECTORS OF EDUCATION
CHAIRPERSON OF SCHOOL BOARDS
PRINCIPALS
LIFE SKILLS TEACHERS/LRC LIAISON TEACHERS
LEARNERS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE LEARNERS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (LRC) 20 – 24 MARCH 2019 AT MAVINGA LODGE IN RUACANA

1. I am writing to you in terms of section 60 of the Education Act 2001, Act 16 of 2001 to share with you an exciting opportunity for you to develop and orientate Learners Representative Council (LRC) in their new role. My office is enthusiastic that this training shall add so much value to the character of LRCs in areas such as: leadership, personhood, effective relations and focus;

2. In this instance, I am encouraging you to embark on empowering LRC to know what is expected from them, prioritizing their needs and leadership growth, inculcating skills needed for Africa renaissance and using learners' leadership to induce effective and productive peer pressure on other learners to focus on academic excellence of their respective schools. The training will be spearheaded by experienced instructors who are committed to facilitate it with special focus on the following aspects:
   - *What is student leadership;*
   - *Expectation and characters of leaders;*
   - *How to influence people, teamwork and effective teams;*
   - *Self-mastery and communication;*
   - *Planning i.e. strategic planning, finance, projects and establish clubs or committee.*

3. Due to the prevailing financial blues, the training is outsourced to Blessing Infotainment CC in collaboration with Special Education in the Directorate. Henceforth, each school is expected to register five participants, namely:
   3.1. Head boy and Head Girl
   3.2. Secretary and Treasurer
   3.3. LRC Liaison teacher (*in order to cascade the training at school later*).

The subscription fee is N$2 500.00 per school. The fee should be forwarded to the Regional Office not later than **28 February 2019**. For further information and registration kindly contact **Ms Helena Perestrelo** at *ndeyatilap@gmail.com* or 065 230057.

Yours Sincerely

.....18.01.2019
H.......I M. AMUKANA
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Cc: Ms Ester Sakaria
     Chief Education Officer
     Special Education

All correspondence should be directed to the Chief Regional Officer

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