Assessing the school factors enabling the application of teacher leadership roles in improving learners' academic performances in Namibia

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to assess the school-related factors that enable the application of teacher leadership roles in an attempt to improve academic performance of learners in Namibian schools. Only three schools formed the sample of the study and the study used a qualitative case study design. In the data collection process, interviews, observations and various documents were used as instruments. Previous studies on factors, as well as the theoretical frameworks of distributed leadership theory were used to compare and contrast the study findings. The study revealed that the factors that enable teacher leadership practices were collaborative culture, professional development, induction and mentoring, delegation and empowerment, motivation and involvement, incentives and rewards amongst others. The study recommended a review of contemporary policies to be geared toward the establishment of leadership programs to support and allow teachers to assume leadership and subsequently improve learners' academic performance.

Keywords: *teacher leadership, learners, distributed leadership, academic performance*

Introduction

Teacher leadership is defined as a process by which teachers influence their colleagues and other staff members to improve teaching and learning and increase learners' learning and achievements (Shur et al., 2021). Teacher leadership is regarded as a significant element for improved school performance and learners' achievements (Lowery-Moore et al., 2016). However, research and practices on teacher leadership is deficient, and little is mentioned in the literature on teacher leadership in many African countries (Grant, 2017). Moreover, teacher leadership practice in South Africa has been limited but had gained substantial increase in the last decade (Grant, 2017). Correspondingly, minimal practice of teacher leadership has been observed in Namibian schools since independence (Hamatwi, 2015; Ndakolo, 2018). Studies that were done in Namibian schools by Hamatwi (2015) and Ndakolo (2018) found that teacher leadership is minimally practised due to a lack of understanding and little participation of teachers in the decision-making process.

Teacher leadership roles is regarded as a significant element for improving school and learners' achievements (Lowery-Moore et al., 2016). School leadership in Namibia is still based on a bureaucratic chain of command (Ndakolo, 2018). Unfortunately, the influential position of classroom teachers as teacher leaders is not fully recognised in schools in Namibia as teachers are only confined to the classroom setting (Hamatwi, 2015). The development of teacher leadership roles allows a full involvement of teachers in the decision-making process and some extent eliminates the bureaucratic top-down leadership approach. Besides, teacher leadership roles seemed to be an under-researched concept in the Namibia context (Hamatwi, 2015; Ndakolo, 2018). According to Shava and Tlou (2018), radical transformation of an education system can enable school managers and teachers to respond to rapid technological advancement and ever-changing environment pressure, by adopting leadership approaches that involve all staff members in the school leadership. To achieve radical transformation, schools need to distribute power and authority to all people in the organisation. However, limited studies have been undertaken to assess the factors that enable the application of teacher leadership roles in schools. Therefore, the study sought to find out the enabling factors to teacher leadership practices in Namibian schools.

Theoretical framework and literature review

This study was anchored within distributed leadership theory. Distributed leadership theory is an ancient leadership theory that can be traced back to 1250 BC (Shava & Tlou, 2018). The term distributed leadership was used first in 1954, by the social psychologist (Gibb, 1954, as

cited in Shava & Tlou, 2018). Solly (2018) defines distributed leadership as an approach in which teachers are empowered to lead others and contribute toward the school's improvements and learners' achievements. Distributed leadership is an approach to the sharing and distributing of leadership roles and responsibilities to organization members (Goksoy, 2015). Distributed leadership is deemed an appropriate and relevant theoretical tool for this study to assess the school factors enabling the application of teacher leadership for improving learners' academic performances in Namibian schools. The factors that enable teacher leadership practices are discussed below

Professional development

Literature contends that schools that advocate teacher leadership motivate teacher leaders to be involved actively in a variety of professional development activities (Szeto & Cheng, 2018). Studies demonstrated that the most effective teacher leaders consistently enhance their teaching skills and engage in the professional development of others (Admiraal et al., 2021). When the culture of continuous learning is established in the school, the School Management Team (SMT) supports professional development activities continuously and makes them part of the everyday school operations, thus teacher leadership is improved. Campbell (2022) posits that teacher leaders need opportunities for continuous professional development to grow their roles. Additionally, Cooper and Elton-Chakraft, (2022) contend that professional development needs to focus not only on growing teachers' skills and knowledge but also on aspects relating to leadership roles. Several skills need to be encompassed in teacher professional development programmes such as leading workshops, collaborative work, mentoring, teaching, and action research to assist teachers to learn new leadership roles.

Moreover, McDeffre et al. (2021) indicates that professional development can be enhanced formally through conducting workshops, conferences, study groups, visiting other schools, or informally through visiting others' classrooms, reading books related to areas of professional interest, and peer planning. Besides, a combination of formal and informal professional development not only allows teachers to learn collaboratively with colleagues and SMT but also learn from one another (Lecat et al., 2018). In addition, other scholars have elaborated that, teacher leadership can be enhanced through; collaboration action research, taking part in decision-making, co-planning, and mentoring new and novice teachers, teaching and learning from learners' work, leadership team development and team coaching, offer numerous learning opportunities for teacher leaders (McDeffre et al., 2021). This way, professional development can allow the school to demonstrate strong teacher leadership.

Time

Availing time can catalyse teacher leadership development in schools. Haikka et al. (2018) indicated that providing time can enable the development of teachers' leadership. In support, Antinluoma et al. (2018) assert that timetables should be made to allow teacher leaders to get enough time to perform leadership roles. Moreover, some of the prominent tasks that lead to effective teacher leadership are co-planning, writing curricula together, talking to each other, solving problems, and discussing new initiatives in the school. It is regarded as significant to provide teacher leaders with time to perform leadership roles and investigate new ideas. It has been shown that reducing teachers' workload avails time for more planning and learning. Availing time to teachers enables them to be involved in a collaborative task for greater level of learning and for doing leadership roles (Lipscombe et al., 2023). Hence, the real matter with time appears to be that most times, discretions on how time is used in the school, are made without involving teachers. Teacher leaders need time management and a shared decision-making process.

Relationship with principal

Literature shows that a positive bond between teachers and SMT is pertinent to the development of teacher leaders (Pan & Chen, 2021). Good relationships between principals and teachers enhance teacher leadership practice. Moreover, Pychyl et al. (2022) purport that teachers whose inputs are valued and respected lead to positive change in working with other teachers. Therefore, it is significant to acknowledge teachers' contributions to empower them to implement change in the school successfully. A positive mind-set can make teacher leaders be in charge of any change in the school by sharing ideas, facilitating working relationships, creating enthusiasm and satisfaction with work and team spirit (Webber, 2021). This reassures the teacher to develop a strong sense of professional purpose and feel

determined to change the world for the better. Other studies pointed out that if teachers feel that their views are taken into consideration, they develop mutual respect with the school management (Medina, 2022). These supportive relationships lead to a feeling of trust, care, a sense of self-efficacy, and great effort to achieve the mission of the school. Literature has established that the strong bond between principals and teachers is viewed as vital parallel leadership or parallelism (Wang & Ho, 2019). Parallelism refers to a process in which teacher leaders and their headmasters are involved in collective action to build school capacity (Acquaro, 2019). Parallel leadership includes mutual respect, shared purpose, and allows each individual to express their views and opinions. Teachers and principals need to collaborate to enhance their school's performance.

Relationships with colleagues
Studies have contended that unless teacher leaders have the support of their colleagues, their effectiveness as leaders can be affected (Nguyen et al., 2019). Qanay et al. (2024) advocate that cultures and relationships between teachers and others are the most critical factors in the work of teachers. Moreover, teachers assuming leadership roles can sometimes be hindered by their colleagues. However, teachers' leadership cannot occur in schools where teachers are isolated and have poor connections and interactions with other colleagues. Professional discourse enables teachers to learn from one another, build new approaches and improve their skills (Mockler, 2022). Importantly, friendship, respect, and love of teaching can cause mutual support and guidance through teaching and learning. Oc (2018) and Dugan and Humbles (2018) affirm that leadership does not occur in a vacuum but is a matter or a product of what occurs while tackling something else. Comstrok and Margolis (2021), support the view that leadership happens when leaders support teachers to change their attitudes, beliefs, values about learning, and pedagogical practices.

Teacher leadership is conceptualised in a variety of ways (Daniel et al., 2019). Traditionalists link teacher leadership with formal positional roles while a more comprehensive conceptualisation emerges that teacher leadership is a set of traits, practices, and relationships that can be extensively dispersed in the school and into the classroom.

Collaborative culture and structure
Studies have established that the key attributes to teacher leadership development include a shared sense of purpose, shared commitment to learner learning, purposeful collaboration and collegiality, a desire for lifelong learning, and teacher empowerment (Cooper et al., 2016). Authentic teacher leadership can only manifest in a supportive and collaborative school culture where the interpersonal relationship is mutually reinforcing and positive. Webber (2021) indicates that culture with strong teacher leadership encourages teacher engagement in a professional conversation with a colleague sharing ideas, knowledge, and techniques, and participation in collaborative problem-solving. Many research found that teacher leadership can be nurtured in a culture based on trust, support, and learning (Charles, 2017).

Sawalhi and Chaaban (2022) elucidate that the main factors affecting teacher leadership include supportive principals and staff members, time, resources, and professional development opportunities. Teachers are unlikely to assume leadership roles unless they are clear about the goal the school intends to attain. School culture is significant to learners learning (Deal & Peterson, 2016). The school culture influences the achievement of learning outcomes (Webber, 2021). It can be asserted that one of the prerequisites for teacher leadership is a collaborative culture with participatory decision-making and vision sharing.

Principal's leadership
Researchers have also identified principal leadership as an enabling factor for teacher leadership (Smith et al., 2017). The principals support teacher leadership by offering teachers time and opportunities to be deeply engaged in curricular decisions and other school matters (Cheng and Szeto, 2016), and by getting actively involved in identifying, encouraging, and developing teacher leaders (Cheng & Szeto, 2016). It can be construed that the principal's leadership can foster a climate conducive to peer collaboration.

Methodology
This study adopted a qualitative approach by using a case study design. Maree (2020) defined a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in which multiple phenomenon sources of evidence are used. Three (3) secondary schools were randomly sampled from 8 secondary

schools in the Ohangwena region. The schools were sampled using three main selection criteria as follows. Criteria 1: being a public secondary school. Criteria 2: School performance; two secondary schools selected recorded poor learners' academic performance. The third secondary school selected was a good-performing school. This school was used for benchmarking because it has been performing very well and could provide better and more useful insights on how schools with poor academic performance could employ its success factors. Criteria 3: Accessibility, the researchers needed schools that could be accessed in helping with developing a rapport with the participants. A sample comprising 45 participants participated in the study. The study adopted a purposive sampling method to select the participants using the following criteria. (1) Teachers who occupied leadership positions (informal and positional leaders) in the schools. (2) Teachers with more than two years of teaching experience and possessed valuable knowledge and skills in the application of teacher leadership.

The study used three data collection instruments, namely interviews, observation, and document analysis. The interview was administered to three (3) principals, six (6) heads of departments, and thirty-six (36) teachers in the afternoon after lessons on different dates using pre-prepared interview questions. The researchers captured all interview sessions with the voice recorder, which were later transcribed and each interview lasted for one hour. A face-to-face in-depth interview aimed at getting participants in-depth information on factors that enhance teacher leadership to improve learners' academic performance. During observation, the researcher used two forms of observation to gather data, namely, indoor observation and outdoor observation. During classroom observation, the researchers observed participants' behaviours and actions in their classrooms on how teachers managed their classroom and teacher-learners' interactions.

The researchers also observed teachers beyond the classroom to see teacher-teacher interaction, teacher-SMT interaction, and teachers' participation during staff meetings. During outside classroom observation, the researchers observed teachers' interaction with the community, teachers' interaction at break time, part functions, morning devotion, during study, tests, and examination supervision, and teachers' interaction during extracurricular activities such as sports. The data were recorded in the observation schedules. The researchers also examined several documents obtained from the principal's offices such as meeting minutes, school internal policy, sets of job descriptions for teachers, HODs' and principals', school year plans, School Development Plan (SDP), and Plan for Action for Academic Improvements (PAAI). The documents were analysed during the research period and data were recorded in the document analysis rubric. Data were analysed using the thematic analysis method.

Ethical considerations
The researchers, first, obtained a permission letter from the Director of Education in the Ohangwena region to carry out the study in the Region. The researchers made appointments with research participants through their school principals. Furthermore, the researchers distributed the consent forms to the participants, and information sheet respectively, the researchers explained the purpose of the research, participants' rights, how results would be handled, and how confidentiality would be maintained. The participants were requested to feel free to ask if they wanted any clarity. The researchers also informed the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were provided with a consent form which they signed.

Findings and discussions
Table 1 presents the factors that enable the application of teacher leadership in five main categories as discussed below.

Table 1: The factors that enable the application of teacher leadership at the three selected secondary schools in the Ohangwena region in Namibia

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: The factors that enable the application of teacher leadership at the three selected secondary schools in the Ohangwena region in Namibia.	**Sub-theme 1.1: School culture**
	Collaborative culture
	Sub-theme 1.2: School structure
	Professional development
	Sub-theme 1.3: Principal leadership

Induction and mentoring
Delegation and empowerment
Democratic leadership approach
Sub-theme 1.4: Teacher-related factor
Motivation and Involvement
Sub-theme 1.5: Other factors
Incentive allowance
Time and leadership resources

Sub-theme 1.1: School culture
Collaborative culture
A collaborative culture was identified by many participants as one of the factors that could promote teacher leadership in the schools. To clarify the above claims, one of the experienced teachers (Participant 1) indicated that: *"To enhance teacher leadership at the school, the school management must encourage teamwork, it is only when staff members are working together, then teacher leadership practice can take root. Teachers need to collaborate to enhance teacher leadership practices. The collaboration comprises working together, cooperation, and collective contribution from all teachers. Collaboration can enable teachers to share stories, have fun, and assist one another and in that way, we exchange views, opinions, and experiences".*

Collaboration culture promotes the sharing of views, thereby allowing teacher leadership practice. It becomes evident from the above findings that collaboration is the cornerstone of distributed leadership that allows collective interaction of the principal, teachers, and learners. A study by Wenner and Campbell (2017) also confirmed that teacher leadership can be developed through a culture of collaboration and trust and a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of teacher leadership. The findings further indicate that collaboration between the school management and staff members can maximise teacher leadership practice. In support of this statement, participant 17 asserted that: *"Teacher leadership can be enhanced through promoting and facilitating collaboration"*. She added that: *"The SMT must value and respect the role and work of teacher leaders. The school must come up with team-building exercises to allow teachers to team up as a staff then everything else will fall into place. Teamwork promotes learning, so when we are working as a team we can achieve the organisational objective. The SMT should facilitate collaborative planning, and also in terms of a teacher doing distance study they should give positive words towards*

their teacher". She further stated that; *"Another way to enhance teacher leadership is when we respect each other opinions. Some teachers undermine others' ideas and this demotivates them"*.

Moreover, observation data revealed that teachers attended morning devotion and shared information with the learners. This is an indication that there was collaboration among teachers. It was further observed that teachers in the school meet every week to do peer planning and develop assessment tasks. Drawing on the findings, it became evident that teachers in the case study schools demonstrated a collaborative culture. Participants believed that in collaborative cultures teachers share ideas to improve their content and pedagogic knowledge. It is evident that collaboration is a fundamental determinant of the manifestation of teacher leadership in education and that this was evidenced at the case study schools as teachers were observed collaborating through the sharing of teaching and learning materials and conducting peer observation. These findings correlate with the views of Charles (2017) and Mokhele (2016) who expounded that teacher leadership can be nurtured in a culture based on trust, support, and learning. In support, Sawalhi and Chaaban (2022) also indicated that one of the factors that influence teacher leadership is the collaborative culture. It can be asserted that one of the most important pre-requisites for teacher leadership is a collaborative culture with participatory decision-making and vision sharing.

Sub-theme 1.2: School structure
Professional development
The findings revealed that continuous development was one of the factors mentioned by participants to enhance teacher leadership development. Participants indicated that schools should be structured to accommodate the professional development of staff members. This was confirmed by Participant 17 who stated that: *"The SMT should enhance professional development to help teachers grow*

professionally such as taking them through policy guides and coaching them for interviews or promotions. Teachers need to be provided with training for professional continuous development. Training activities and continuing professional development activities should be strengthened. Teachers lack leadership skills because the aspects of education leadership are not extensively emphasised in the curriculum programmes offered at institutions of higher learning".

Drawing from the above data, it can be indicated that, professional development for teachers should not only aim at developing teachers' pedagogic skills and competence but should incorporate leadership skills to equip teachers with necessary leadership skills on how to lead during educational training, workshops, seminars, and others. In his contribution, Participant 24 said that: *"Teachers should be provided with quality professional development opportunities. SMT should ensure that equity and diversity are at the forefront of leadership opportunities to establish an environment of trust and fairness. Create opportunities with clear expectations and discover teachers' passion and hobbies".* These findings substantiate the views of several authors which emphasise that the combination of formal and informal professional development not only allows teachers to learn collaboratively with colleagues and SMT but also from one another (Dille & Rokenes, 2021). The researchers believe that a heavy top-down, rigid, and opaque structure acts as a hindrance to teacher leadership.

Sub-theme 1.3: Principal leadership
Induction and mentoring
Induction and mentoring were viewed by participants as significant keys to facilitating teacher leadership development. This assertion was supported by Participant 2 who said that: *"Teachers who are knowledgeable and have more experience should assist us in performing leadership activities through mentoring and coaching. Induction and mentoring should become more operational in our schools to assist and nurture teachers' leadership skills. Induction and mentoring in our school only happened to new teachers in their first three months of working".*

Participants believed that effective teacher leadership needs a principal's involvement and a strong influence from the school principal. In support of this claim, all participants maintained that teacher leadership

could be enhanced through support, motivation, coaching, induction, and mentoring. These findings substantiate the findings in the study by Cheng and Szeto (2016) that proposed that principals should support teachers by carrying out continuous mentoring and induction programmes in the schools, engaging them in curricular decisions and other school matters. The findings further depict that induction and mentoring were regarded by participants as key determinants of teacher leadership development. This was confirmed by Participant 27 who narrated that: *"Coaching and mentoring can be extremely helpful to develop your skills. The school management team should mentor teachers to develop their leadership skills. For teachers to grow professionally through mentorship, monitoring, and evaluation of delegated tasks should be strengthened. Induction and mentoring programmes need to be fully functional to nurture leadership skills in teachers".*

Participants believed that induction and mentoring programmes in the schools should involve all staff members not only novice teachers. These findings substantiate the views of other scholars who have elaborated that collaboration action research, taking part in decision-making, co-planning, mentoring new and novice teachers, teaching and learning from learners' work, leadership team development, and team coaching, offer numerous learning opportunities for teacher leaders including in daily activities (McDeffre et al., 2021).

Delegation and empowerment
Another way to improve teacher leadership practices at the school was through delegation and empowerment. Participant 1 said that: *"Empowering teachers to perform their leadership tasks to embrace teacher leadership practice. Teachers should be valued and respected. When valuing and respecting the work of teacher leaders, embraces change and allows data-driven research-based risk-taking. The SMT needs to provide affirmation for teacher leadership tasks and provide technical support for teacher leaders. The school management must increase the approach of delegation of tasks to the staff members to embrace teacher leadership. We should be given a chance to attend principals' meetings and give feedback to other teachers. To embrace teacher leadership practice at our school, teachers should be assigned leadership roles to improve their leadership skills".*

As indicated by participants, motivating

teachers to become leaders requires professional development and the provision of opportunities to lead. These findings are in line with the remarks made by Schildkamp (2019) who posits that effective teacher leaders are consistently enhanced through delegation and empowerment of teachers and engaging in professional development activities in the school. The findings revealed that delegation and empowerment are key factors in teacher leadership development. Cementing this assertion, Participant 14 affirmed that: *"Teacher leadership practice can be enhanced by delegating staff members and encouraging democratic participation in school affairs. Teachers should be delegated leadership tasks to enhance their leadership skills. Distributing tasks among teachers and monitoring such tasks can improve teachers' leadership skills"*. These findings correspond with the views that suggest that a supportive school principal-teacher relationship can establish a strong and effective approach to teaching and learning and encourage teacher leadership in and out of the classroom (Yani et al., 2021).

Democratic leadership approach
Democratic leadership has been identified by research participants as a key determinant of the manifestation of teacher leadership practices at the school. To strengthen this view, Participant 15 stated that: *"Teacher leadership practice can be enhanced through democratic distributed leadership when tasks are equally distributed among teachers and all teachers participate in the decision making at school. Sharing of tasks avoids the overloading and overburdening of certain teachers. It also helps to find a quick solution to problems since you have many ideas from different teachers. To enhance teacher leadership practice at our school, the school management needs to welcome the views of everyone. Decisions that affect everyone must be made in the staff meetings so that everyone can participate instead of teachers to be informed of the decisions made by the school management only"*.

It is evident from the above findings that teachers and principals need to collaborate through democratic leadership to enhance teachers' participation in school leadership. The above findings corroborate the earlier findings in the literature that establish the fact that a strong bond between the principals and teachers is viewed as vital parallel leadership or parallelism and underscore the view that democratic leadership can lead to the emergence of effective teacher leadership practices (Flessa et al., 2018).

Sub-theme 1.4: Teacher-related factors
Motivation and involvement
Principals and SMT need to motivate and involve teachers to assume leadership. This was cemented by Participant 13, who said that: *"Teacher leadership can be enhanced by involving all teachers to participate in decision-making within the school. Encouraging teachers also to participate in some leadership activities within the community, e.g. churches, and advisory committees, makes teachers develop leadership skills. The only way to enhance teacher leadership at this school, teachers must be involved in the school decision-making process and be motivated to engage actively in the leadership activities at school. SMT should involve teachers in all the school activities, and should also consult us to seek our inputs. The school management needs to invite a motivational speaker and community leaders to motivate staff members to be more actively engaged in school leadership and management. The SMT should allow us to lead in extra and co-curricular activities and motivate us to work hard"*.

It is clear that for teacher leadership to emerge teachers should be involved and be motivated to undertake the delegated leadership roles successfully. These findings corroborate earlier findings by Cheng and Szeto (2016) who suggested that teacher leadership could be developed when teachers were actively involved and encouraged to develop their leadership skills. The findings further revealed that, motivation and involvement could enable teacher leadership development at the case study schools. This was confirmed by Participant 19 who said: *"Teachers should be fully involved in the decision-making process, their views should be respected, if not they will feel disregarded and start distancing themselves which is not healthy. If teachers come together and agree to work as a team, they will perform and lead better. Resistant teachers need to be spoken to and be told what is expected and the disadvantages of being an absent leader. The SMT needs to encourage teachers to work hard and excel. They are expected to assign duties and act along. They involve teacher leaders in decision-making such as serving in the school management team or a school board member. SMT must provide motivational support, guidance, and counselling when necessary and should*

encourage and motivate the entire school to view the same situation positively. Motivation through inspiration should be maximised to enable teachers to assume leadership roles".

Participants believed that maximising distributed leadership in the school could lead to improved teachers' leadership capabilities. These findings harmonise with the views of Pychyl et al. (2022) which indicate that teachers whose inputs are valued and respected, allow them to participate actively in school leadership which leads to positive outcomes. The participants suggested that teachers at the schools need to be involved and motivated to actively participate in the school leadership. This was confirmed by Participant 31 who indicated that: *"Teachers need to be motivated and encouraged to fully participate in the leadership of the school. Teachers need to be motivated and reminded all the time to practice leadership regardless of their position at school. Teachers need constant motivation preferably from different sources such as principals, school board members, inspectors, and education directors. More motivational speeches from within the circuit and external are needed to boost interest and to realise the precious time one has as a teacher. More exposure and value of time in a lifetime called education should be maximised. Every teacher should be given the privilege to lead in a certain activity and the principal should supervise the leadership of the teachers. Nurture an authentic workplace and create opportunities with clear expectations".*

It became evident that teacher leadership practice might emerge if teachers at the schools were involved and motivated to assume leadership roles effectively which might lead to improved learners' academic performance. These findings harmonize with the views of Mbonu and Azuyi (2021) who suggested that motivation and involvement bring trust and confidence in teachers' professional judgment to improve teacher leadership.

Sub-theme 1.5: Other factors
Incentive allowance
Participants suggested that there was a need to reward teachers who assumed leadership roles in the school. This was confirmed by Participant 6, who said that: *"Teachers with good leadership skills should be praised by the school management. If teachers are given allowances for assuming leadership tasks, no one would be hesitant to take up leadership roles at the school. Teachers need to be remunerated for performing extra roles".* The participants believed that if teachers were given incentive allowance for assuming leadership roles, all teachers would be motivated to participate in leadership practice without any hesitation. The above findings substantiate the views by Kimbrel (2018) who alleged that the non-existence of a reward system for teachers demoralised them from taking up leadership roles. The findings also revealed that the majority of the participants advocated the notion of remunerating teachers who take up leadership roles.

In support of this assertion, Participant 26 noted that: *"Teachers should be remunerated for any leadership tasks they perform. To enhance teacher leadership practice at school teachers should be given the respect they may deserve. SMT should listen to teachers' inputs towards the school's progress and performance. When decisions and meetings are conducted, constructive feedback should always be provided within a reasonable timeframe. Teachers should be appraised and awarded for the best work done. The school managers should lead by example in a way that they are doing it for the betterment of schools. Teacher leadership practice can be enhanced through recognising, motivating, and rewarding teachers who are doing well academically and in extra-curricular activities. SMT should motivate and reward those who are cooperating with others".*

From the above data, it is evident that teacher leadership might be enhanced if teacher leaders were remunerated for assuming leadership roles such as leading school clubs and sports teams. The findings above support the views by Sharar and Nawab (2020) who indicated that the absence of rewards and reinforcement for teachers who assumed leadership roles demoralised them.

Availing time
Participants suggested that teachers needed to be provided with adequate time to assume leadership roles. This was confirmed by Participant 43 who indicated that: *"Workload of teachers should be minimised to allow teachers to take part in the school leadership. Teachers need more time to perform leadership roles outside the classroom".* Drawing from the data, it was believed that if teachers were provided with enough time this might make them perform leadership roles and assist learners to improve their academic performance. These findings correspond with the views by Haikka et al.

(2018) who indicated that availability of time could catalyse teacher leadership development in schools.

Conclusion

The data revealed that the factors that enabled teacher leadership at the schools were collaborative culture, training, induction and mentoring, delegation and empowerment. The use of a democratic leadership approach was also identified as a factor that enabled the emergence of teacher leadership at the schools. The findings further alluded to the fact that teachers who were always motivated and involved in the school decision-making process were more likely to assume leadership roles and assist learners in improving their academic performance. This enhances learning and nurturing skills for distributed leadership in managing school change. Lastly the findings revealed that incentives and availing time enabled the emergence of teacher leadership practices for improved learners' academic performance.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) should provide leadership opportunities for teachers through contemporary tailor-made leadership development programmes to enable teachers to perform their leadership roles productively. In addition, incentives and recognition should be maximised to acknowledge and motivate both formal and informal teacher leadership practices for improved learners' academic performance.

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