

**Learner leadership development within home-schooling context**

**by**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS**

**in the Faculty of Education**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

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**DECEMBER 2017**

## Declaration

I declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Masters in Education at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



.....

Bianca Francisca Naudé

14390877

1 December 2017

## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Eduan Naudé.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank God for giving me the strength, knowledge and determination to complete this dissertation.

My heartfelt thanks to my husband Eduan. Thank you for your love, support and encouragement. Thank you for always listening and for taking a sincere interest in my work. I could always count on you to wipe away the tears and I want you to share in the joy of the final result.

To my supervisors, Dr Yolandi Woest and Prof Johan Wassermann, thank you for believing in me and being tough on me when I needed it. Dr Woest, thank you for standing by me throughout. Prof Wassermann thank you for always challenging me and encouraging me to do better. You are a generous mentor and I appreciate the opportunity to learn from you.

I also want to thank my mother, father, grandmother, friends and colleagues, for their love and support. Special thanks to my father-in-law who made various promises about post-masters vacations, provided I complete this study. I am really looking forward to all the new destinations and sightseeing.

I could not have done this study without the help of the participants. Thank you for allowing me into your homes and sharing your knowledge and experiences.

## Abstract

I have always been interested in the concept of leadership. In particular, observing people who were chosen for or appointed in leadership roles and how others react to situations where leadership skills are required. This grew during my honours course at the University of Pretoria which included a module on leadership and leadership development. This led me to think about how, if at all, learner leadership development takes place during one's schooling years. The question I asked was: How does learner leadership development happen in the home-schooling environment? This question led to the research in this paper.

Literature explored in this study include, among others, work by R.E. Sacks (2009), J.K. Seago (2012, 2014) and L.M. Brumbaugh (2013), which deals with youth leadership, leadership development and learner leadership development, with specific reference to the home-schooling environment.

I followed the qualitative case study research design. Data was collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with home-schooled learners and their parents. In a collaborative effort, I worked with the participants in one-to-one, semi-structured interviews, to find out how learner leadership development happens in the home-schooling context and how they perceive and experience this process in their daily lives.

What I found was that the development of learner leadership in this context mostly happens unintentionally. This is because the emphasis is not necessarily placed on leadership and leadership development. However, learners do develop leadership skills by interacting with parents and family members (who act as mentors), peers and others in the community. Learners are encouraged to explore different activities and avenues of development, and it is their responsibility to arrange and facilitate such activities. This requires a sense of maturity and the ability to self-manage and effectively lead others.

There are, however, also instances of intentional leadership development in the form of, for example, leadership camps, created in the home-schooling environment.

Learners actively seek to develop certain leadership skills and often initiate and pursue these initiatives by themselves, with some support from their parents and family.

This study aims to further explain and apply the process of leadership development to the home-schooling environment. The findings of this study support previous research and may provide additional material to fill the shortage of literature on this topic. Some comparisons may also be drawn between the leadership development process in the traditional schooling system and that of home-schooling. Further research may be done to explore the possibilities of how learner leadership development, specifically in the home-schooling environment, may be improved.

## Declaration from language editor



November 2017

University of Pretoria  
To whom it may concern,

### **Editing: Dissertation by Bianca Francisca Naudé**

I, Anrica Mills, language editor, proofreader and writer, declare that the academic work titled:

#### **Learner leadership development within the home- schooling context**

has been language edited. Neither the research content nor the author's intentions were altered in any way during the editing process. The work remains the original work of the student – it is only the language that has been edited or adapted.

Yours faithfully

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## Ethical clearance certificate



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### RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

<b>CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE</b>	<b>CLEARANCE NUMBER:</b> HU 15/08/01
<b>DEGREE AND PROJECT</b>	MEd Learner leadership development within home-schooling context
<b>INVESTIGATOR</b>	Ms Blanca Pretorius
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Humanities
<b>APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY</b>	18 April 2016
<b>DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE</b>	11 November 2017

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE:** Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

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**CC** Ms Bronwynne Swarts  
Dr Yolandi Woest  
Prof Johan Wassemann

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (IDF) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

## List of abbreviations

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>eNCA</b>	eNews Channel Africa
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IAHV</b>	International Association for Human Values
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

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## **CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION**

### **1.1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

South Africa's education system has a rich and tainted history (Prew, 2009). Over the years, many laws and policies were implemented, which, in turn, led to varying degrees of success and failure. The apartheid government held fast to rigid policies and laws and little to no importance was placed on alternative methods of education; the focus was solely on traditional schooling systems. Education was wielded as a political tool to control and separate learners of different races by using divergent content and focus of curricula (Msila, 2007). The majority of white learners attended so-called Model C schools and Bantu Education was introduced for black and other marginalised South Africans.

The post-apartheid period between 1994 and 2017 ushered in a vastly different educational era for all South Africans. The political approach in the new South Africa was to eradicate all that had been systemically linked with apartheid and to introduce new policies in its place (Mouton, Louw, & Strydom, 2012). More specifically, changes to the South African education system. According to Mouton, Louw and Strydom (2012), South Africa has, since 1994, seen a significant redesign of the country's education and training state of affairs. The new main objective is to provide equal and quality education to the majority of South Africans.

In 1995, there were 20 780 primary and secondary education facilities in South Africa, of which 20 303 were managed by the government; 477 were privately run. Adding to this number were 226 specialised schools for gifted learners and those with special needs (Byrnes, 1996). In November 1996, the South African Schools Act (Act 83 of 1996) was promulgated. This paved the way for alternative education methods by providing a legal framework to implement these systems. This included privately owned schools and home-schooling as both additional and legal methods of education that added to the potential collective of mechanisms, which could be used to provide quality education to the masses.

In December 1996, South Africa's new constitution was adopted, which entrenched the legal status of independent-, private- and home-schooling. By 2016, this landscape had changed, with 25 375 primary and secondary schools, of which 23 530 were government operated and 1 844 were privately run. Additionally, there were 465 special needs schools, of which 46 were privately run (Department of Basic Education, 2016). The notion that private schooling was becoming more prevalent was confirmed by the National Census of 2011,

which indicated that the segment of learners attending private schools had increased from 5% to 7,3% between 2001 and 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2015).

Even though the basis for a diversified education system has been established, there is still a multitude of well-publicised concerns and difficulties, which add to the burden of providing quality education (Van Oostrum, 2014). These include, among others, too few teachers, underqualified teachers and poor teacher performance. This has compounded existing issues in classrooms, resulting in poor education standards, substandard results and ill-discipline, further exacerbated by the prevalence of lacking resources and inadequate infrastructure (Modisaotsile, 2012). In terms of governance and policy, a failure of appropriate advisory and monitoring mechanisms, as well as changing curricula without appropriate communication and training, have caused difficulties. All this has led to the prevalence of demoralisation and cynicism among teachers with a negative and deteriorating opinion of the teaching profession (Prew, 2009). These are among the main reasons why some parents no longer trust the current education system and are inclined to look for alternative avenues of education (Lines, 2000; Oosthuizen, 2005; Olatunji, 2014). According to Olatunji (2014), one of the most common reasons why parents choose to home-school their children is because they are dissatisfied with the current standard of education in traditional schools, especially in public schools.

To understand why home-schooling is gaining popularity and the number of home-schooled learners is increasing in the South African context, one should touch on the history of home-schooling in South Africa. The benefits of home-schooling for parents and learners should also be explored. Apart from the perceived deterioration of the traditional schooling system, the motives for choosing home-schooling may be ascribed to diverse moral motivations, cultural backgrounds, religion, safety, flexibility, freedom of mobility, as well as the desire for improved academic performance, availability of leisure time and learning difficulties (Walsh, 2001; Oosthuizen, 2005; Moreua, 2012; Korkmaz & Duman, 2014).

Reflecting on the reasons for choosing home-schooling, Moreua (2012) states that parents choose home-schooling to strengthen their relationship with their child through communication, emotional intimacy and close family life while guarding against potentially harmful or negative social influences. Some parents view their child's education as their God-given task, which could and should not be done by anyone else (Oosthuizen, 2005; Olatunji, 2014). Considering these reasons, it is interesting to note that in South Africa, more

females use home-schooling than males, especially in the black population (Statistics South Africa, 2015). This is noteworthy because it is the only form of education where this seems to be the trend (Statistics South Africa, 2015). This could possibly be linked to current cultural norms and practices, where females are expected to fulfil certain duties at home, their health status, teenage pregnancy (Willan, 2013) and the higher prevalence of disability in females (Statistics South Africa, 2014).

According to the South African National Census of 2011, approximately 62 000 learners (0.3% of the total population between the ages of 5 and 24 years), were using home-schooling (Statistics South Africa 2015; Quantec EsayData, 2016). Assuming that there were no home-schooled learners prior to the enactment of the South African Schools Act (Act 83 of 1996) and that there were 750 in the first year after the legalisation of home-schooling, this would mean that the number of home-schooled learners has grown by roughly 37% per annum between 1996 and 2011.

Unfortunately, the only official statistical information on the number of home-schooled learners in South Africa remains the 2011 census. Even though the growth of home-schooling has not been well-documented in South Africa, the number of home-schooling learners in the United States of America has grown by 15% every year for the past decade (Zeiss, 2011). Many role players in the South African home-schooling environment, including the South African Association for Homeschooling, the Pestalozzi Trust and the Homeschooling Curriculum Guide (Homeschooling Curriculum Guide, n.d.), share the opinion that South Africa has experienced a similar trend, which is far more reserved when compared to the historic growth between 1996 and 2011. It would appear that more parents are considering this alternative method of education. This notion is supported by Google Trends, which indicates that South Africa is the country where the topic 'home-schooling' is searched the most in the world in proportion to its population size, followed by Puerto Rico and the United States (Google, 2017).

Based on assumed growth patterns and using the comparable growth rate of the United States, it may be assumed that by 2017 the number of home-schooled learners in South Africa could range between 140 000 and 400 000. This would mean that home-schooling is occupying a larger section proportionally since 0,7% to 2,0% of the total population between the ages of 5 and 24 years old are currently using home-schooling for their education.

Even though this may still be a relatively small portion of the schooling population, the calculations indicate that its popularity is increasing, more than doubling in the past five years. It is difficult to establish the exact number of current home-schooled learners because many families do not register their children with the Department of Basic Education (Van Oostrum, 2014). The main reasons for this are the implementation of unenforceable registration policies and processes, as well as the fear of interference and persecution from the governing body (Lemmer, Moore, & Van Wyk, 2004; Oosthuizen, 2005; Van Oostrum, 2014; Olatunji, 2014). Leenert van Oostrum (2014), representative of the Pestalozzi Trust and one of the leading researchers on home-schooling in South Africa, estimated that in 2011, as much as 95% of home-schooled learners were not registered with the Department of Basic Education.

On an international level, home-schooling has become a prominent and popular method of education. This includes, for example, the United States, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Thailand and the United Kingdom (Ray 2010; Olatunji, 2014). Lines (2000, p. 74) states: "The rise of home-schooling is one of the most significant social trends of the past half-century". The mounting interest in home-schooling has led to the creation of a vast industry that provides support and resources to families who choose home-schooling as a mode of education (Lines, 2000; Korkmaz & Duman, 2014). As a result, countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom have done extensive research about this method of education. Although the home-schooling movement is still relatively new to South Africa (Lemmer, Moore, & Van Wyk, 2004), it has gained momentum and popularity over the last ten years. However, only limited research has been done on home-schooling in the South African and African context (Olatunji, 2014).

As to education in general, leadership and leadership development have always been topics of research and debate. Past studies have not necessarily always focused on how leadership characteristics are developed or on the process of how these characteristics are passed on from one generation to the next (Seago, 2014). As for home-schooling and the development of learner leadership in the home environment, the situation is no different. However, as mentioned, knowledge and research about home-schooling in the South African context, in general, is limited but even more so about learner leadership development in this environment.

In traditional private- and government schools, learners are exposed to a number of mentors, including teachers, coaches, principals and other learners in leadership roles. They are able to interact with and learn certain leadership skills from these individuals. These learners also encounter various challenges, such as dealing with different peer groups, peer pressure, social acceptance and interaction with a variety of individuals, all of which generally contribute to the development of leadership skills. Contrary to the interactive school environment, it is perceived that learners who choose home-schooling have limited interaction and that they do not have the same exposure and opportunities to develop leadership skills. If these perceptions are found to be true, they could potentially adversely affect learners in the home-schooling environment.

De Vries and Korotov (2010) point out that leadership skills and qualities are cultivated early in life. This ensures the foundation of a well-rounded leader is established, which means that the chosen mode of education could influence and affect the development of future leaders. Ideally, leadership development originates within the family context and home environment, as parents play a key role in initiating and establishing the leadership development process (De Vries & Korotov, 2010). Parents of home-schooled learners are expected to increasingly play an even larger role as tutors, educators and mentors.

With the increasing numbers of learners using home-schooling and the ever-present importance of leadership development at a young age, it becomes very apparent that we need to evaluate, explore and understand whether and how learner leadership development happens in the home-schooling environment.

## **1.2. RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY**

I have always been interested in the concept of leadership. In particular, observing people who were chosen for or appointed in leadership roles and how others react to situations where leadership skills are required. Over the years, my interest grew as I found myself in different situations, where I either had to be the leader or had to listen to- and follow a leader. This includes the different behaviours and ways of thinking, the various leadership styles that people chose and the way in which leadership is used to effectively solve problems, work together or to achieve goals. My interest was further strengthened during my honours course in Education, Management, Law and Policy at the University of Pretoria, which included LVO731: Management and Leadership in Education, a module on leadership and

leadership development. The course dealt with leadership in the schooling system, which specifically related to school principals, teachers and other members of staff, as well as the different leadership styles and how these may help schools to achieve their goals.

However, simply dealing with leadership as it pertains to staff members at a school was not enough, and it led to me think of the learners. How does learner leadership development effectively happen during one's schooling years? How is it important during and after a learner's schooling years, when they are eventually employed, taking on responsibilities or placed in leadership positions?

In my professional career, I have had the privilege to work in the South African traditional education system since 2011. I taught at a high school for a few years, after which I moved on to a curriculum provider catering to a large number of home-schooled learners. This has afforded me the opportunity to compare both methods of education and I have come to realise that there are a number of distinct differences between the two. These differences are not only apparent in the more obvious ways of curriculum delivery and how information and knowledge are transferred, but also in the different ways learners are exposed to certain situations. The varying ways in which interactions take place are apparent and I am of the opinion this ultimately affects how learners develop as adults and future leaders.

In traditional schools, there are various and well-documented opportunities through which learners are exposed to leadership skills development (Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Meadows, 2012; Jansen, Moosa & Van Niekerk, 2014). While teaching at a traditional school, I noted that generally the same children were repeatedly chosen for the available leadership positions. The same learners were the class leaders, sports team captains, represented the school at events and were elected as prefects. I often wondered why this was the case – was it because they could truly motivate and inspire their peers, was it their overall popularity or their parents' involvement at school? It appeared as though these learners were afforded all the opportunities, and subsequently little to no effort was made by either these 'leaders' or the teachers to identify potential leaders in other, more reserved learners.

The literature on this aspect provided some clarity to an extent (Sacks, 2009), during the early stages of leadership development, children or learners with good verbal and communication skills are more likely to take on leadership roles in schools, than those who are introverts. Although many of these introverts could potentially step into leadership roles,

they would not be chosen or regarded as potential leaders. One could argue that the successful candidates were chosen based on their perceived leadership skills, with very little effort being made to develop new leadership skills in a wider range of learners.

In general, leadership development activities were arranged by the teachers, based on their personal ideas of leadership development. Participation from the chosen leaders in planning these programmes was usually not considered or invited. Minimal effort was made to understand different leadership styles and how these could be put to use in different situations. The leaders could also not show initiative outside certain parameters and all decisions had to be approved by the teachers or principal. The few identified leaders were 'developed' with a blanket approach of what the teacher's or mentor's vision of a perfect leader was, while also being restricted in how and where they could apply the leadership skills they were taught.

In retrospect, I am of the opinion that schools cannot be the only environment where learner leadership development is implemented and that other areas outside of the traditional schooling system must be incorporated to sustainably and effectively develop leadership among our youth. As mentioned, there is an ever-increasing number of learners who are not part of the traditional schooling system, but who rather opt for home-schooling or other alternative methods. As a growing alternative to the traditional schooling system, it is important to explore the home-schooling context as a potential environment for learner leadership development. The need for this development must be understood and promoted in both these systems. Whether a learner attends a traditional school or uses an alternative method of education, they all eventually become part of the same society, the same workforce and have to be able to run their own households – all these require leadership skills.

This study is of particular importance to me because if learner leadership development does not happen effectively in the home environment, I want to pursue other avenues to possibly help improve this very important aspect of a learner's development, specifically in the home-schooling environment. However, if this process does, in fact, happen successfully at home, I want to relay this information to the home-schooling community, to alternative centres of education and ultimately the traditional schooling system. My aim is to then also improve these methods of leadership development.

The search for relevant literature on the topic led to the research done by Johnny Seago in 2012 and 2014. These studies specifically explored the concept of leadership development in the home-schooling context. Throughout this paper, there are references to Seago's research because it contains relevant discussions and findings. Seago (2012) observes that even though the literature from the past three decades proves that transformational leadership and learning form part of the home-schooling context, a need for continuous research on the contemporary situation still remains.

In addition, Van Schalkwyk and Bower (2011, p. 186) state that "the unheard voices of the students and parents would add to the body of literature on the process of transformational leadership in specific groups of people, and how these groups interact with the greater community". Similarly, Seago (2012) argues that qualitative studies, which focusses on observing the transformational leadership behaviour of children and their parents in the home-schooling context, may provide rich descriptions of lived experienced and prevailing dynamics. Parents could contribute to research on learner leadership development by providing descriptive explanations and interpretations of the habits and rituals followed by their children, which may facilitate the growth of transformational leadership (Seago, 2012).

When considering the need for further studies, Seago (2012) mentions that qualitative studies juxtaposing the transformational leadership behaviour of home-schooled individuals with those who participated in the traditional schooling system could confirm which setting produces superior leadership abilities. This includes entrepreneurial-, conflict resolution- and problem-solving skills.

In terms of broadening the list of works and knowledge base on educational leadership, a new dimension on leadership development may open unexplored territory. This study aims to contribute towards addressing the absence of available literature specifically focused on home-schooling in the South African context and effectively answer my research question: How does learner leadership development happen in this environment?

### **1.3. RESEARCH STATEMENT**

Effective and influential leadership is mandatory in everyday life (Bass, 1990; Vasbinder, 2012). Early development of leadership skills and knowledge, as well as the importance of leadership, is of great significance. A review of the literature on leadership highlights two

primary links between the potential for leadership in any child and the realisation of that leadership in adulthood. Those links are, firstly, the family environment and childhood experiences, and secondly, the family environment combined with school experiences during adolescence. Pace (1987) asserts that the primary issue for an agenda that promotes the scholarly study of leadership is the link between family and leadership, and while leadership is learnt, not inherited genetically, much of what the potential leader brings to eventual leadership is learnt from his or her family exposure. Seago (2014) adds to this by noticing two drawbacks when observing adolescent leadership: the lack of developmental leadership programmes and the visibility of leaders in young people's lives. One may reason that the process of developing leadership skills begins with family interactions in the home, while potentially being augmented by external sources, although this may be limited.

In addition, De Vries and Korotov (2010) explain that to be an effective leader requires more than simply being placed in a position of authority to preside over a group of people. A number of additional abilities are required, including the ability to inspire and empower individuals to realise their full potential, the capacity to cultivate concentration, along with high levels of interpersonal-, communication-, teambuilding- and motivational skills. In essence, these qualities have to do with the interaction with others, a factor that is perceived to be limited or absent in the home-schooling environment. Considering that most learners are young and inexperienced, it becomes vital for them to learn the necessary skills to be effective leaders.

The growth in home-schooled learners and the importance of leadership development at an early age creates the need to evaluate and explore whether and how learner leadership development happens in the home. As a result, the primary purpose of this study is to collaborate with home-schooled learners and their parents to determine how learner leadership development happens in the South African home-schooling context. The study is also aimed at clarifying whether there are opportunities that adequately expose home-schooled learners to situations and interactions with others, which will eventually lead to progressive development of leadership skills.

If this is not the case, other opportunities for learner leadership development or leadership development programmes should be identified and recommended to home-schooling parents, learners and institutions. If this process does indeed happen in the home-schooling

context, possible further studies may explore whether the development is on par with, or potentially even superior to, that of a traditional school.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following was the primary research question that directed the research that was conducted:

1. How does learner leadership development happen in the South African home-schooling context?

To address the primary research question, the subsequent secondary research questions were formulated:

1. What leadership opportunities are available in the home-schooling environment?
2. What are the specific needs of home-schooled learners in terms of leadership development?
3. How do learners explore the possible opportunities for leadership development in their home-schooling environments?
4. What are the leadership development experiences and opinions of both home-schooled learners and their parents?

#### **1.5. CONCEPT CLARIFICATION**

This sub-section provides a concise description and clarification of the key concepts used throughout this study.

##### **Home-schooling**

For the purpose of this study, home-schooling may be conceptualised as a model of education conducted outside the scope of the public- or private schooling environment. It further involves commitment from a parent or guardian to oversee and facilitate their child's or learner's educational development (Cogan, 2010). These learners are generally taught at home by their parents or guardians, however, teaching responsibilities are sometimes shared among two or more families (Angelis, 1998). Home-schooled learners usually also have support groups, tutors or facilitators who help address certain difficulties. These

function as support structures to help individual learners find solutions and in so doing improve their learning experience.

### **Traditional schooling**

For the purpose of this study, I agree with the view of Staker and Horn (2012), who conceptualise traditional schooling as a structured education programme focused on face-to-face, teacher-centred training, including teacher-led discussions and knowledge that is conveyed to learners from a teacher's perspective. These learners are matched by age, and often also their perceived aptitude. Instructional materials are based on textbooks, lessons and individual written assignments. All learners in the class generally receive the same, unified curriculum.

Furthermore, traditional schools usually have different grades that follow teacher-directed work as a group (Chattin-McNichols, 1992), and in which individuals are bound to a definite time period to complete specified syllabus content (Joshua, 2005). Traditional schooling is regarded as a formalised, structured, rigid and collective method of education and considered as the norm.

### **Leadership**

Leadership generally refers to the motivation and influencing of followers to improve present attitudes and assumptions (Yulk, 2002; Friedman, 2004), and is considered to be a broad and relative term (Rajbhandari, 2014). For the purpose of this study, leadership is regarded as a skill that involves interaction with other individuals or groups, forging relationships (Ryan, 2011) through participation (Rajbhandari, 2014) to create a singular vision aimed at achieving predetermined mutual goals.

### **Learner leadership**

For the purpose of this study, learner leadership is defined as a learner who has the ability to inspire, motivate and encourage other learners in their class, school environment and community. These learners have acquired certain leadership skills and apply these skills in the school environment. Learner leadership is also the ability to empower other learners to take action, learn and achieve (Janc, 2004). Learners who are leaders in their respective ways may have a positive influence in the classroom, on participation in extramural activities and on the overall behaviour and attitude of learners in the school community. To further

add to this concept, research presents this positive anecdotal evidence by validating the power and ability of learner leaders to influence the behaviour and attitude of their peers (Tiven, 2002).

### **Learner leadership development**

Leadership development is the process of developing certain skills to equip an individual with the ability to lead and influence others. De Vries and Korotov (2010) conceptualise this concept as the development of social capital, which focuses on the development of leadership as the vehicle of influence.

For the purpose of this study, learner leadership development is described as an intentional effort to provide learners with opportunities to learn, grow and develop into leaders. In traditional schools these opportunities are frequently available, for example, to be selected as a class leader or captain of a sports team, as well as the inevitable interaction with peer groups and other leaders. Learner leadership development may also involve formal leadership programmes that learners may attend and, through these programmes, be exposed to situations in which they develop leadership skills, as well as being afforded the opportunity to be mentored by more experienced leaders.

## **1.6. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This section provides a brief overview of the research design and methodology followed throughout this study. The aspects touched on in relation to the research design and methodology, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. The research design is the plan that links the research purpose to the research questions to be able to draw conclusions from the collected data (Polis, 2015). I employed a qualitative research approach with the purpose of gaining an in-depth understanding (Merriam, 2002) of the chosen phenomena (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2007), which referred to learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment.

A qualitative research approach lends itself to- and supports the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm lens. The research methodology was expressed in line with chosen paradigmatic stances which relate to that of a constructivist-interpretivist: That to understand this world of meaning, one needs to interpret it (Schwandt, 1994). The purpose of this study is to interpret the collected data to better understand the process of learner leadership development in the

home-schooling context and to provide a rich, descriptive analysis of how this process happens in this specific context. One of the key characteristics of the interpretive research paradigm is the “need to understand the world from a subjective point of view, pursuing an explanation of the phenomenon at hand from the participant’s perspective, rather than the objective bystander” (Polis, 2015, p. 538).

I directed this research using a case study design since it involves a contemporary real-life phenomenon, in this case, learner leadership development. I selected four home-schooled learners and their parents to participate in the study. I employed purposive and convenience sampling for the data collection process. I purposively identified grade 10 – 12 home-schooled learners and their parents. For convenience purposes, these home-schooling families were located in the geographical area of Pretoria. These learners should have been in the home-schooling environment for the majority of their schooling career. I chose face-to-face, semi-structured interviews as the main method for data collection. This allowed me to gain valuable insight and understanding (Newton, 2010) of learner leadership in the home-schooling environment. It further also allowed participants to share their thoughts, feelings and lived experiences in agreement with the research topic (Lee & Humphrey, 2004). During the interviews, I made audio recordings and afterwards transcribed these recordings verbatim. Together with the interviews, I also kept a researcher’s journal, which I used to reflect on various aspects of the data collection- and research process.

The data analysis was done by following the six steps as set out by Creswell (2009). The process starts by firstly organising the data from the transcriptions and the researcher’s journal. After reading through the data, a detailed analysis is done. For this study, the thematic content analysis was used. This involves identifying, analysing and reporting themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) within data. Pre-determined themes were established, which emerged from the existing literature, and as such a priori- or closed coding was used to establish the themes of analysis.

## **1.7. CHAPTER OUTLINE**

In this next section, the outline of the dissertation is presented, along with a brief overview of what each chapter entails. The aim is to provide context and to indicate how the research is unpacked and conducted as a whole.

## **Chapter 1: Background and introduction**

This chapter provides a broad overview of the study and begins with an introduction and the rationale. The chapter also poses the research questions and explains some of the core concepts that are elaborated on as part of the literature review. The chapter concludes by providing a brief overview of the research design and methodology that was followed.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter discusses the international and local research conducted on the topic. It outlines the theoretical framework used throughout the study, while also taking an in-depth look at the various aspects related to learner leadership development in the home-schooling context. Each concept related to the topic is explained and explored in detail. In addition, the chapter identifies the shortcomings in the existing research literature, suggests potential areas for further investigation and highlights the strengths of the study.

## **Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

Chapter 3 explains and justifies the chosen research design and methodology. This includes a clarification of the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation used in the study. Finally, I discuss the ethical considerations and quality measures used to ensure the validity of the study.

## **Chapter 4: Data analysis**

Chapter 4 introduces the study's participants and illustrates the method used to identify the main themes of analysis. The chapter also presents the data that was collected by linking it to the main themes of analysis. Direct quotations from the verbatim transcripts of the interviews, field notes and entries from my researcher's journal are also included to complement and augment the data.

## **Chapter 5: Findings, discussion and conclusion**

The final chapter presents and explores the core findings in-depth. A deduction is made as to whether the research findings resonate with or refute the findings in the existing literature as discussed in Chapter 2. There is also a discussion on the limitations or shortcomings in

the existing literature in relation to the findings of this study and its various elements. In conclusion, there is a section about the potential research that may still be done.

## **1.8. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I provide the background and context for this study, as well as the reasons and motivation for doing this research. I also elaborate on the research statement and introduce the primary and secondary research questions pertinent to this study. This is accompanied by a clarification of relevant concepts and I provide a brief overview of the research design and methodology followed throughout. Lastly, there is a summary of what each chapter of the dissertation entails. Chapter 1 provided an overview of the research and how it was conducted, creating the backdrop for the dissertation and the reasoning.

In the next chapter, I review the existing literature dealing with home-schooling, youth or learner leadership and the development process. This is a crucial element of the dissertation, as it provides an in-depth review of the existing body of research and knowledge on the topic and its respective elements.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 sets the contextual background to this study, as well as an overview of the research topic, concepts and the methodology it encapsulates. Chapter 2 is a literature review which establishes a “firm foundation for advancing knowledge” (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. 13). It also “facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists and uncovers areas where research is needed” (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. 13). The aim of a literature review is to explain and investigate what we already know, what we still need to know, and how we can get there (Rowe, 2014).

When I set out to find academic literature on this topic, I searched Google Scholar using the keywords ‘learner leadership’ reflected anywhere in an article. The results from this search came back with 49 700 sources listed in the past decade. When I extended my search by including ‘youth leadership’ as the keywords found anywhere in an article, approximately 530 000 sources were identified. To further refine the results, I added the phrase ‘home-schooling’ to both searches, which came back with 2 620 articles. Further refinement included searching for the exact phrase of ‘youth leadership development’ anywhere in an article and linking it to the phrase ‘home-schooling’, which returned 46 articles. Lastly, the exact phrase of ‘learner leadership development’ found anywhere in an article, was linked to the words ‘home-schooling’, which surprisingly only returned six results. Of these six results, only one source had the phrase ‘learner leadership’ as part of its title, a South African article published in the *South African Journal of Education*.

The article, “Emotionally intelligent learner leadership development: a case study”, was written by C.A. Jansen; S.O. Moosa; E.J. van Niekerk and H. Muller (2014). They all agreed that there is a dearth of information on learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment, even more so when considering the South African context. I also used the University of Pretoria’s online library resources but only a few additional, somewhat relevant, sources could be found, which strengthened the argument that there is an absence of research on the identified research topic.

All things considered, the literature review for this study uses these limited resources to delve more deeply into the research topic of learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment and provides context as to why it is relevant, as well as how the

aforementioned concepts are inherently linked. This is achieved by gaining an in-depth perspective of the academic exploration that has been done, both locally and internationally, on the research topic and the concepts it comprises. The literature review is done in a thematic manner, by using themes that were prevalent in the body of the sourced literature. These themes were then also further refined and used during the empirical phase of the research process.

Firstly, the investigation focused on youth leadership, considering both its meaning and the importance of leadership development at a young age. During this process, the key role players and the roles they fulfil in youth leadership development are identified and discussed. Following this, the topic of leadership development is reflected on as a process by which leadership skills are developed and transferred by the various key role players. The aim is to draw parallels between youth development, youth leadership and how learner leadership development happens in the home-schooling context. This provides a basis for the initial understanding of how learner leadership development possibly happens. The second section of the literature review presents an investigation into the research that has been done on learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment, especially considering it as a possible environment for learner leadership development. In this section, the available opportunities for learner leadership development in this context are identified and elaborated on.

Finally, the chapter further develops local and international research findings on learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment and other related elements. The concluding section of this chapter provides the necessary backdrop for a discussion about the existing conceptual framework relating to the research topic. This section also illuminates the possible disparities in the understanding and knowledge base of learner leadership development, specifically in the home-schooling context of South Africa.

## **2.2. MATTERS OF TERMINOLOGY**

Throughout this study, I refer to certain terms that are the key concepts of the research topic. However, there are certain aspects of the terminology that must be addressed. This subsection of the literature review will explain the terminology that must be understood, including how certain terms may be used interchangeably. The main aspects that are

addressed in this section relate to the terms: youth, learner and student, as well as home-schooling and home education.

Firstly, I explored the term 'youth'. In terms of age, there are many explanations and variations of what youth is. Several globally recognised entities, instruments and regional organisations, such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), UN-Habitat and the World Health Organisation (WHO), have different categorisations of youth, which offer a variety of age range classifications (www.un.org, 2013). Most of these classifications accept a lower limit of 15 years old, but it is at the upper limit where these entities differ in their classification of what youth means. For instance, according to the UN-Habitat classification, youth are considered to be between the ages of 15 and 32 years old (unhabitat.org, 2012), whereas UNICEF and the WHO classify youth as between the ages of 15 and 24 years old (www.unfpa.org, n.d.). In South Africa, youth is officially classified by the National Youth Policy as people between the ages of 14 and 35 years old (YOUTHPOLICY.ORG, 2014). These differences in the age range may be as a result of different demographical changes, sociocultural and economic circumstances (Makiwane & Chimere-Dan, 2009), as well as the purpose and aim of a specific institution, to name only a few. Even though considering the differences in age, youth is generally considered to be the time when a child is in the process of entering the next stage of his or her development and becoming a young adult. It therefore also corresponds or overlaps with adolescence (10 - 19 years of age) as a developmental stage.

Being a learner is usually part of the earlier stages of an individual's educational development, in the form of primary and secondary education. The term 'student' in the South African context is reserved for a person who attends a Further Education and Training (FET) college or a higher education institution (Department of Basic Education, 2010). International resources used in this study, refer to learners as students and are not classified into two different terms. The participants in this study are classified as youth between the ages of 16 and 18 years, who are currently completing their secondary education as grade 10 to 12 learners. The reason for choosing the participants according to their age and grade was that they would have been part of the home-schooling environment for a significant time and would be able to provide valuable and descriptive insights into their daily activities and routines which may lead to leadership development in this context.

The second important aspect of terminology refers to the interchangeable use of the terms 'home-schooling' and 'home education'. This was noted in several of the literature resources used as part of the study. Some researchers used the term home-schooling, namely Montgomery (1989), Bauman (2001), Brynard (2007), Taylor (2012) and Seago (2012), while others used the term home education, such as Moore (2002), Taylor - Hough (2010), Morton (2010) and in some instances the Department of Basic Education. It was evident that these terms could be and were used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, I use home-schooling as the preferred term because it is interchangeable with home education and it is the common term used by the participants.

## **2.3. YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: A NARROWED FOCUS**

### **2.3.1. What is youth leadership?**

All members of society, at one time or another, will find themselves in a situation that requires some sort of leadership or where they will be exposed to various forms of leadership. Mills (2005) indicates that there is hardly anything as essential to human activity, as the concept of leadership. Barnard Bass, one of the leading scholars of leadership, accordingly describes leadership as a 'universal phenomenon' (De Ver, 2009, p. 4). By considering these statements, one realises that the development of leadership skills and the creation of leadership development opportunities form an integral part of human activity.

In 1974, Raph Stogdill, a prominent researcher in the field of leadership and management theory, stated that there are numerous definitions of leadership, almost as many as the number of individuals who have attempted to define the concept (Houwer, 2013). This is still applicable in 2017, as the same trend was evident when searching for a well-defined description of youth leadership. Although there are various descriptions and debates on defining youth leadership, for the most part, they all touch on the same concepts of self-belief, the ability to influence others and being goal oriented. Hewes, Kahn & Ali (2009) describes youth leadership as young people who are able to motivate and mobilise themselves, along with others, in order to achieve a collective objective and to realise progressive change, as a response to personal and/or social issues and challenges. Youth leaders are perceived as young individuals who "think for themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others and help others understand and act on their own beliefs" (Conner & Stroble, 2007, p. 277). Furthermore, Kress (2006) and MacNeil (2006) talk of

youth leadership as an internal and external process leading to (1) the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence their opinion and behaviour, and show the way by going in advance; and (2) the ability to analyse one's own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out. In short, youth leadership refers to youthful individuals who have the ability to think independently to make solicitous decisions. They are also able to adapt to different situations, inspiring and motivating their peers and influencing them to achieve common goals, and as a result, they become citizens who contribute to society and who convince others to adopt the same behaviour.

The importance of youth leadership cannot be overstated, the youth is the future leaders of society and our country. Leaders, youth leaders, parents and researchers have recognised the youth as assets in shaping communities and find that their civic engagement produces positive externalities for both young people and the community (Gillaspey, Beaudelaine, & Scheibel, 2011).

### **2.3.2. Tension between youth and adult leadership**

Research on youth leadership is limited and past researchers have encouraged academia to explore and tap into this field of leadership (Mitra, 2006; Klau, 2006; MacNeil, 2006; Sacks, 2009; Seago, 2012; Lickers, 2016). While reviewing the available literature, it became clear that researchers emphasise the need for research that gives the youth a voice when it comes to youth leadership development (MacNeil, 2006; Sacks, 2009; Seago, 2012; Brumbaugh, 2013). In this section of the literature review, I shed some light on the similarities and the differences as well as the tension that exists between adult- and youth leadership.

Adults have been the focus of leadership in research and have served as the population around which leadership theories have been developed (MacNeil, 2006). Historically, young people have often been overlooked in the field of youth leadership development, where learning leadership happens by accident (Klau, 2006). Until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, efforts to instil leadership in the youth were largely extracurricular, mainly through opportunities such as student government newspapers and clubs. Leadership skills were not taught to learners as part of a structured curriculum, perhaps because children were not thought of as leaders or even expected to be leaders (Sacks, 2009). A review of youth leadership literature from the past thirty years reveals an uncontested, yet widely held,

assumption that leadership styles and models developed for adults are equally applicable to the youth (Sacks, 2009). This assumption is indicative of a tendency among researchers to view youth leadership from what Dempster and Lizzio (2007) refer to as an outside-in perspective (Sacks, 2009). According to Sacks (2009, p. 5), the question arises: 'If leadership is not well-defined among adults, how can educators know which skills, theories and models from the adult literature are best suited for children and the youth – if any at all?'

That being said, research surrounding youth leadership can and has derived a lot of value from the existing body of knowledge related to adult leadership theory. "The bottom line is youth leadership development theory needs to be created" (Brumbaugh, 2013, p. 17). According to Lickers (2016), adult leadership development theory may offer a starting point, or a base, from which youth leadership development theories may be developed and presented. In the early 2000s, MacNeil (2006, p. 29) provided what she referred to as a working definition on youth leadership as a starting point, which it would seem she derived from existing definitions, based on adult leadership theories. It read as follows: "Leadership is a relational process combining ability (knowledge, skills and talents) with authority (voice, influence and decision-making power) to positively influence and impact diverse individuals, organisations and communities" (MacNeil, 2006, p. 29). The youth leadership paradigm stems from adult-based leadership development theories, which may be considered as the building blocks or foundation from which the differences may then possibly be deduced.

When considering the differences between youth and adult leadership, including its development and the respective theories related to it, the devil is in the detail. The existing literature often draws the conclusion that adult leadership is generally linked to authoritative power, whereas youth leadership is linked to the power of influence (Sacks, 2009; Brumbaugh, 2013; Brantley, 2016). This is also reflected in the perceptions of the youth and adults when considering leadership since adults view leadership on the basis of experience, whereas youths perceive it as being active participation (Nelson, 2010; Brantley, 2016). As part of his research, Nelson (2010) found that adults view leadership as a practice reserved for older people while taking an active engagement approach, or learning by doing, is an effective method in leadership development according to the youth.

Considering the applicability of adult leadership models to the youth, Sacks (2009) argues that models of leadership in adults do not easily map onto children and the youth, largely because the two elements underlining all adult models – influence and authority – are absent

from children's self-generated models. Sacks (2009) further states that at the adolescent stage of development (high school) new leadership opportunities allow learners to start appreciating the connection between leadership and influence or authority, but that these elements are still not fundamental to leadership.

Literature concerning youth leadership development mainly concentrates on the youth learning about leadership and does not focus on making learning meaningful through experiential learning opportunities (MacNeil, 2006). Concurring with MacNeil, Brumbaugh (2013) states that adult leadership development literature focuses primarily on both the learning and the practice of leadership development. When looking at youth leadership development, the practice is often not mentioned. The focus is more often than not on content and not on the context of how youth are learning leadership (MacNeil, 2006). The emphasis is, therefore, on informing learners about leadership, but not to understand their pre-existing perception of it, or how it has already manifested in their daily lives.

As a result, Sacks (2009) urges researchers to explore the youth's conceptions of leadership, how they define leadership, how they conceive their own leadership development and, probably most importantly, what methods of education most helped them to acquire leadership knowledge and skills.

### **2.3.3. The importance of youth leadership**

In South Africa, we experience the lack of quality leadership every day. This is evident in the socio-economic issues, political changes and educational barriers that confront our country. Leadership, and the lack thereof, lies at the core of many of these issues (van Niekerk, 2014). Post-apartheid South Africa, is faced with an array of challenges, that necessitates extraordinary leaders in and from all walks of life (van Niekerk, 2014). The extraordinary leaders that Van Niekerk refers to, have to be identified, encouraged and cultivated from an early age, as the youth are the future of our country and are expected to become the leaders of tomorrow. The importance of youth leadership and its effective development cannot be underestimated.

In society, leadership and its effects are visible in almost all, if not all, elements of society and life. In this section, I present a summary of how youth leadership may contribute and the benefits of involving and making the youth part of important decision-making. I structured this section of the literature review by identifying and explaining three main settings in which

the importance of youth leadership may be emphasised: the economic-, social- and educational context.

### **2.3.3.1. Economic context**

Among the greatest challenges facing many countries today are inadequate human capital investment and high unemployment rates among the youth (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division, 2015). As the youth face the reality of poverty and unemployment in South Africa and across the world, it becomes more important for them to be able to think of innovative ways to generate wealth and contribute to the economy. In order to be able to include and incorporate youth into the economy, it's deemed essential to create training programmes specifically tailored for young entrepreneurs that are practical and experiential and not only based on theory (Harrington & Lemos, 2015). Economies can become more inclusive by listening to the youth, and by providing the necessary channels for young people to be connected and participate in community life. The expansion of information and communication technologies offers opportunities to promote inclusion and expand access to knowledge and participation of the youth in public life. There is a universal desire on the part of young people for communication. Making it happen will foster opportunities, innovation, diversity, and economic inclusion (Harrington & Lemos, 2015) .

Leadership and leadership skills will enable the youth to not only use and harness these opportunities but to create their own opportunities. Being a leader and making independent, skilful and knowledgeable decisions are entrepreneurial qualities. When touching on the importance of leadership in the economy and the workplace the “participation in leadership development experiences is linked to increased self-efficacy and the development of skills relevant to success in adulthood and the workplace, such as decision-making and working well with others” (Edelman, et al., 2004, p.8).

### **2.3.3.2. Social context**

The primary role of the youth in society is that of the student or learner, which implies that they are often excluded from local decision-making (Mortensen, et al., 2014). While it is true that the youth do not freely have access to power and influence, in the traditional sense, they are still able to serve as agents of change in their communities (Mortensen, et al., 2014). Stoneman (2002) explains that the youth have many ideas about how their

communities, the nation and the world as a whole, should be different. They have very fresh and unique ideas about how schools, employment training programmes, foster care programmes, prisons and health centres can be improved. They see and feel the new trends as they develop, and are often the initiators of these movements. They are aware of current dangers, long before the newspapers and journals become aware of it. If harnessed correctly, these attributes may be used to improve socioeconomic issues and create awareness among adults on issues they are not fully aware of or do not fully comprehend. Considering the benefits of involving the youth in different community matters Lekies, Baker and Baldini (2009) mention that prevailing social norms, policies and practices have effectively restricted the roles young people can play in communities. This is unfortunate since the youth represent an underutilised resource in community change efforts (Mortensen, et al., 2014). Involving the youth now and developing their abilities as leaders would be beneficial in creating meaningful community change and would instil a sense of leadership and community inclusion early on in life (Stoneman, 2002).

### **2.3.3.3. Educational context**

In South Africa, both historically and in recent times, the youth have made their voices heard on issues around education. During the Soweto student uprisings in 1976 (eNCA, 2015) students opposed the apartheid education system and more recently, they were the driving force behind reviewing the costs associated with tertiary education in the high-profile 'fees must fall' protests (eNCA, 2015). In both these instances, the youth brought about significant change in the education system and context of the country.

Some would argue that these events didn't necessarily reflect positive leadership and that unruliness and unlawfulness were indeed present, but one cannot imagine they would achieve anything of this magnitude without some form of leadership. It may also be argued that scholars, the larger society and adults, in general, may not understand how leadership functioned during these events to facilitate the changes. Stoneman (2002) provides a corresponding statement when saying that adults of all races and classes believe it is their duty to educate, direct, control, discipline, and entertain young people. Far rarer are the adults who believe it is their duty to listen to young people, learn from them, and provide them with the resources to help create their vision of a better society. It is always regarded as a marvellous innovation when adults give young people a place at the table. It is even more unusual when adults give young people access to resources to implement their best

ideas. It has enormous power when adults play a facilitative, respectful, liberating role rather than a controlling, limiting, disciplinary role (Stoneman, 2002).

#### **2.3.4. Youth leadership development**

The process of youth leadership development is mostly based on adult leadership theories and concepts. Studies on how the development of youth leadership should happen are, however, limited. In particular, there is simply not enough empirical data to draw conclusive evidence about how leadership develops throughout childhood (Sacks, 2009). The aim of this section of the literature review is to explore literature that attempts to explain the process of the development of youth leadership, as well as exploring local youth programmes that make youth leadership development opportunities available.

Chapter 1 explained that the term leadership development refers to the process of developing certain skills to equip an individual with the ability to lead and influence others. In constructing this section of the literature review I first identified different key elements, dimensions and skills that are required for youth leadership development. Then I explored youth development programmes and tried to link the identified elements, dimensions and skills with what local and international youth leadership programmes set out to achieve.

Van Linden and Fertman (1998) initially provide a broad, yet it would seem accurate, description of the youth leadership development process, describing it as three fundamental developmental stages, namely awareness of leadership, interaction and mastery of the newly acquired knowledge. Sacks (2009, p. 10) provides the following description of the three stages:

“During the ‘awareness’ phase, adolescents come to see themselves as potential leaders. They move from a confounding belief about having very little control or say over one’s life to a more sophisticated view of personal control and autonomy. In the second phase – interaction – teenagers take leadership action to ‘try on’ their new identity as leaders. This stage is marked with both enthusiasm for new experiences and frustration due to lack of experience in dealing with stress and challenges. Stage three, termed the mastery stage, is marked by a focused energy in an activity or a cause that the adolescent cares about. During this

phase, learners gain confidence in their ability to take action or ‘step up’ to a new challenge.” (Sacks, 2009, p. 10)

These stages are then also underpinned by five dimensions: leadership information, leadership attitude, communication, decision-making and stress management. Subsequent literature seems to concur with this initial assessment, as this description of the youth leadership development process provided others with the basis to interpret it and further unpack its elements (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998).

Marais, Yang, and Farzanehkia (2002) stated that the key elements critical to the development of youth leadership can be listed as youth-adult partnerships, granting young people decision-making power and the responsibility of dealing with the consequences, a broad context for learning and service, and finally, recognising young people’s experience, knowledge and skills. Similarly, Sedonaen, Bliss & Libby (2006) stated that the process of leadership development can be summarised into the developmental areas of leading, connecting and including training skills. These training skills involve self-advocacy, conflict resolution, exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities including community service and opportunities that allow the youth to exercise leadership.

In the literature reviewed, the general consensus is that knowledge about leadership may be regarded as the starting point of learner leadership development. Leadership knowledge and information represent that which young people have to know about leaders and leadership before they will be able to converse about and apply leadership concepts (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). However, they also concur that the youth should do more than simply learn about leadership. They should also be encouraged and required, as part of the developmental process, to apply the principles and skills related to leadership in their everyday life (Brumbaugh, 2013).

Considering real-world situations, there are a noteworthy number of youth leadership development programmes currently being implemented, both in South Africa and abroad. Youth leadership programmes present concrete mechanisms, which can access and mould the energy and vitality of young people in order to unlock profound contributions to society (Redmond & Dolan, 2014).

In South Africa, the Youth Leadership in Action programme was established by the International Association for Human Values, South Africa (IAHV) and involves a year-long volunteer programme with the aim of developing leadership and active citizenship through participation in community projects. It starts with initial training where participants learn techniques and gain the knowledge to strengthen themselves, connect with the components of leadership, examine the challenges and resources in their own community, devise their community projects, and begin to learn the practical skills required to successfully implement these projects. After initial training, teams implement their 'part-time' volunteer-based community initiative and so begins a year of applied learning with support from the programme (International Association for Human Values South Africa, 2014). In this programme, the initial focus is on leadership knowledge which then shifts to mastery as the final development stage.

Another youth development programme was launched by the Helen Suzman Foundation in 2011 and 2012, which is designed to support young people in their endeavours in order to achieve actual success, by developing confidence and leadership abilities through a mentorship programme ([hsf.org.za/projects/youth-leadership](http://hsf.org.za/projects/youth-leadership), 2013). The key success of this programme was attributed to the interactions between youths and mentors, which relied on a critical level of separation between the mentor and mentee – close enough to act as a real-life role model, but far enough to avoid the tangled nature of friendship ([hsf.org.za/projects/youth-leadership](http://hsf.org.za/projects/youth-leadership), 2013).

Considering the stages, dimensions and elements necessary for youth leadership development, as identified from the various literature sources, it would seem that the available youth programmes do incorporate some of these fundamental requirements. Whether or not this is achieved deliberately so, or with the view and knowledge that youth leadership development varies from adult leadership development, is not clear. The perception amongst academics is that even though a significant number of these programmes are deemed successful (Brumbaugh, 2013), they are mostly reinforced by adult leadership theories (Sacks, 2009). Further critique of youth development programmes is that young people's own implicit ideas and opinions about leadership are not taken into account during conceptualisation and development of the programmes (Sacks, 2009). These shortcomings and uncharted territory are the reasons why it is even more important

to conceive a theoretical underpinning and evidence base in order to develop improved youth development programmes (Redmond & Dolan, 2014).

### **2.3.5. Factors contributing to youth leadership development**

The previous section dealt with the process of leadership development and the fundamental requirements needed for it to be effective. Taking these requirements into consideration, one also has to further investigate factors that may contribute to the successful development of youth leadership. These factors include the child's or youth's age and developmental stage, environment, interaction with others in their environment and other influential role players. I will elaborate on each of these factors and explain (1) why they must be taken into consideration and (2) how these factors ultimately contribute to effective youth leadership development.

#### **2.3.5.1. Age and developmental stage**

As with all things in life, leadership and how individuals experience it, evolves with age. As such, the adopted leadership identity and established abilities that result in effective leadership differ depending on an individual's developmental stage (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). In terms of creating an identity, the analysis of leadership at different developmental levels suggests that there may be particular points in time at which introducing lessons is crucial to put individuals on the path to good leadership (Gardner, 2011). Avolio and Vogelgesang (2011) make the analogy between leader development and learning a new language; it is possible to do both in adulthood but it is much easier to learn at a young age.

The identified participants for this study are 16 – 18 years old and typically in their adolescence. I researched whether this age range and developmental stage of a child may possibly affect the process of leadership development. A thorough knowledge of adolescent development was found to be an important precursor to the development of youth leadership (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). It was salient that researchers in this field identified that although leadership development may happen in all stages of a child's development, adolescence is typically described as the ideal time for leadership development (Brumbaugh, 2013). During this stage of development, the youth frequently examine their abilities to lead, they start to think about the world in a new, broader context, they become idealistic, they are prone to rejecting practical, old-fashioned solutions to problems (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998).

Adolescents begin to understand and grasp the meaning of values and their role in social groups and communities, so the process of understanding the role of power and influence in leading people begins (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Brumbaugh (2013) warns us of the danger, that if adolescents do not fully appreciate or understand the power that leadership has on a group of people, they may easily misuse their leadership through negative behaviour. Because of the importance of considering each individual's ability to lead, an adolescent's differences, similarities and needs should all be considered before the synthesis and adoption of a model for a formal youth leadership development curriculum (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002).

#### **2.3.5.2. Environment**

There are three key environments in which young people learn and develop these skills: the family, the context of their schooling and what they do in their leisure time. (Hewes, Kahn, & Ali, 2009). These environments should provide efficient opportunities for the youth to learn about leadership and practice it. Interestingly, within the home-schooling context these environments converge and could possibly be viewed as one complex environ in which leadership development and development in general, could be influenced. Irrespective of this observation and the different environments the youth find themselves in, it should be noted that they need to feel a sense of belonging (Brumbaugh, 2013). If the youth feel that they belong to a group, are safe and have the supporting care of family members and friends, one would assume that they would feel comfortable enough in these environments to want to gain knowledge and master a subject, in this case, the mastery of leadership (Calvert, 2005). One should want all young people to feel safe in their environments and feel free and equipped to step forward as leaders. Unfortunately, in reality, this is not always the case since all environments are not the same and young people face various challenges in their environments. Learners may learn about leadership, but when they return to their immediate environment, they will not always be able to apply the skills and principles they have learnt. This is, however, juxtaposed in the home-schooling context since the immediate environment and the learning environment become one.

#### **2.3.5.3. Interaction**

The interaction between an individual and any number of people, younger, older or of the same age, has the potential to influence one's beliefs, thinking and overall understanding of

the world and how it functions. Interaction and its relationship to leadership and leadership development is no different. It is then not difficult to understand why interaction has been considered as a core topic in past research on leadership development (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998; MacNeil, 2006; Sacks, 2009; De Vries & Korotov, 2010; Seago, 2012).

One of the main reasons why interaction is considered as crucial is the fact that no knowledge transfer can take place without it. Teachers, parents, mentors or programme leaders must interact with learners to transfer their knowledge of leadership. Interaction then also becomes the vessel through which the newly acquired knowledge can be practised, applied and mastered through an interface with peers, other leaders, followers and mentors. It should be noted that there are a great number of different scenarios and situations where these interactions may happen. The literature would suggest that there are a number of formal and structured scenarios which facilitate the interactions required for leadership development, such as leadership- and mentorship programmes and related curricula. There are, however, also many informal and unplanned opportunities where interaction may happen, which could lead to the development, application or mastery of leadership skills. This includes impromptu situations in social settings, often among peers and family members.

#### **2.3.5.4. Key role players**

In any form of development, there are key role players who will influence the eventual developmental outcomes of an individual. In terms of leadership development, the web of relationships becomes the source of interactions, by which leadership knowledge is transferred and eventually applied.

The first role players in learners' leadership development are those who they interact with most often, those individuals who are part of their everyday life in their immediate environment. In short, these are their parents, family and friends. As previously mentioned, the development of leadership skills ideally begins at home (De Vries & Korotov, 2010). In addressing the question of what research expresses about the development of youth leadership and leadership skills, Barnard Bass (1990) outlined the importance of childhood and adolescent experiences. Childhood experiences centre on the family and family relationships; adolescent experiences on the family and friends.

Considering a more extended environment, the community in which a learner develops also has a role to play, especially if the young people are actively involved in the community. As learners spend most of their time being educated at school, a learning centre or home, tutors and teachers also play a significant role. They have the potential to greatly influence and promote leadership development in their learners. It is important that tutors and teachers realise the influential role they can and should fulfil, that of educator and possibly a mentor. Mentorship, however, is a somewhat ambiguous term since this role can be fulfilled by almost anyone. More often than not, it is the role a family member, teacher or tutor undertakes. A mentor may also be a programme leader, friend or someone trusted in the community.

Lastly, the importance of peers and younger family members or community members should not be underestimated. Young leaders can test and apply their new-found leadership knowledge and skills with these equals, working towards mastering the concept of leadership.

### **2.3.6. Barriers to youth leadership development**

Young people are faced with a number of challenges in their development as capable and important leaders (Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2000). Adults often adopt the premise that leadership is something that is earned over time, a concept which one grows into when gaining experience. It is often believed that young people cannot possibly be leaders in the present, as they do not have the experience and, therefore, the ability to lead.

Young people could possibly be ready to practice leadership within certain preconceived contexts or environments, but not effectively and independently perform it (Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2002). Adults on the other hand do not want to relinquish their own positions of authority (Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2000). This phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that adults, including academics, do not fully understand youth leadership and how it is developed, most probably due to a lack of research on the topic. In turn, this means there are a limited number of formal structures or programmes that aim to develop leadership in youths, and even fewer who truly understand youth leadership development.

More specifically in the South African context, one inevitably has to analyse the broad context of the youth that is earmarked as having the potential for leadership development

(van Niekerk, 2014). According to van Niekerk (2014), one can argue that a number of challenges exist in the South African youth context, such as the following: High levels of unemployment and a low labour absorption rate, which imply that a considerable number of South African youths do not have the skills that are required to be economically productive in order to contribute to society and the economy. Other concerns relate to health issues associated with HIV and Aids and other diseases, which hamper young peoples' ability to be economically productive. Concerning political participation, young people also illustrate a reluctance to participate in the conventional way of voting for particular political parties, signifying apathy towards political activities. Another issue that can be highlighted is the lack of social cohesion due to apartheid's structural inequality, in which legacies persist among the youth that in turn perpetuate a divided rather than a united society. Lastly, poor quality of primary- and secondary education, resulting in a widening educational gap between the former and tertiary education, can also be emphasised as an area of concern (van Niekerk, 2014). Considering the unique socio-political and socio-economic contexts of South Africa and the overall deficient understanding of youth leadership development, further research that considers these distinctive characteristics becomes imperative.

#### **2.4. A POTENTIAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AREA: THE HOME-SCHOOLING ENVIRONMENT**

To assess leadership and leadership development in the context of home-schooling, it is important to first understand how it differs from what happens in the mainstream traditional schooling system. Van Linden and Fertman (1998) refers to the three stages of leadership development as awareness, interaction and mastery: all of which are apparent in the make-up of the traditional schooling system. Awareness is created as learners are exposed to other leaders in the school, including teachers, principals and peers. Interaction and mastery develop as they participate in school leadership programmes, become class leaders, sports team captains or group leaders, all of which create platforms for leadership development. De Ver (2008) observes that the skill of leadership is an emerging effect of interaction with one another.

More generally, the school provides learners with opportunities to practise their leadership skills. There are numerous school bound clubs and organisations in which learners may take part and assume leadership roles (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Learners who attend a school where they are empowered by school officials to share their voices are more likely to develop

as leaders (Mitra, 2006). Bartone et al (2007) arrived at a similar conclusion, noting that learners who find themselves leading class discussions, working in small groups, speaking in public and being involved in extracurricular activities, will develop as future leaders. Traditional schooling is also largely teacher-based, with face-to-face learning and interaction happening on a daily basis (Staker & Horn, 2012). The opportunity for leadership to be passed on to learners by teachers as mentors is evident.

It is clear how the traditional schooling system influences, supports and encourages learner leadership development. As for home-schooling, most of the dynamics that are apparent in traditional schooling, are not as well defined since there are fewer clear-cut situations, face-to-face interaction and systems in place, which presumably promote and facilitate leadership development.

Home-schooling has the potential to greatly impact the education system but has generally received little attention compared to other educational trends (Bauman, 2001). Consequently, attention to- and research about the leadership development of home-schooling learners has also been limited. According to the research conducted by Johnny Seago (2012) on the leadership development of home-schooled learners, the following findings were made: Home-schoolers possess significantly higher self-esteem than those in public schools, enjoy less peer dependence than private school learners and participated in extracurricular activities, all of which promote leadership. As opposed to traditional schooling, the learner's development into a leader is not only limited to a location, such as a school building or the way in which knowledge is transferred. A home-schooled learner's development, education and everyday life differs greatly and is subject to altered stimuli, largely conveyed by his or her immediate family. Home-schooling families do not enter into this form of education and lifestyle by chance, they assent to the change (Seago, 2012).

Because they have more time available, home-schooling parents have the potential to participate in and enter into deeper levels of engagement (Schultz, 1998). This may largely be attributed to the increased amount of time home-schooled learners spend with their parents and family and the influences they are exposed to (Seago, 2012). The parents of home-schooled learners and their immediate families play an important role in their development into potential leaders. Seago (2012, p. 1) weighs in on this conclusion by stating that "the home-school environment acts as a perfect leadership learning laboratory"

through which students are able to observe and interact with adults who accomplish long-term objectives and complete daily tasks.

Earlier research done by Montgomery (1989, p. 9) on the effects of home-schooling on learners, concluded that “it would appear that home-schooling is not generally repressive of a student’s potential leadership, and may, in fact, nurture leadership at least as well as does the conventional system”.

Taylor (2012) mentioned one other aspect that contributes to the potential leadership development of a home-school learner, namely the unrestricted (more free and creative) environment. These learners have more time to explore, experience, learn and develop on their own time when compared to learners in the traditional school system. Furthermore, home-schooled learners are subject to less binding circumstances when it comes to time and curriculum requirements. This allows them to create their own projects, explore outdoor environments and conduct science experiments at their own pace (Taylor, 2012). The home-schooling experience has the potential to create an influential area or space for leadership development in the home environment, based on transitional changes.

Although these changes are viewed as positive, the uncontrolled and unknown may create a fear or feeling of loss (Seago, 2012). These feelings or fears have the potential to create barriers to sustainable and effective leadership development. These shortcomings may further be exasperated by the fact that parents may be ill-equipped to provide guidance or a form of mentorship that adequately exposes learners to situations and interactions that will eventually lead to a progressive development of leadership skills.

From the available literature, it would seem that the home-schooling environment could potentially be a conducive space for learner leadership development. However, before one attempts to determine the effectiveness of the home-schooling context as a potential learner leadership development area, one has to ascertain whether and how learner leadership development takes place. This is ultimately the essence and purpose of this study and associated research.

## **2.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Throughout this study, it is important to remain mindful that the core question is to determine how leadership development happens specifically in the home-schooling environment. It is important to note that there are youth leadership development models that focus on how

this process possibly could or should take place, either in general or in a specific setting. In some cases, generic youth leadership development models are linked to opportunities and environments in a traditional schooling set-up or form part of a formal leadership programme. The existing models also do not consider the specific needs, environment or opportunities for learners in the home-schooling environment. It is possible to link elements of these models to the home-schooling environment, but this can only be done once we have determined how leadership development happens in this environment. These frameworks are, however, not necessarily entirely applicable to the home-schooling environment, as its uniqueness has yet to be fully explored and analysed. In this section, I explain the chosen conceptual framework for this study.

In line with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological model, the conceptual framework for this study considers the ecological context in which youth leadership development happens in the home-schooling environment.

The home-schooling situation and its associated environment are unique because the teaching- and learning events shift from the traditional school to the context of the family (Oosthuizen, 2005). The same applies to the development of skills associated with leadership. The process and, to a large degree, the responsibility of leadership development is transferred to a learner's immediate family in the home situation. As previously mentioned, leadership development is greatly reliant on constant interaction with others and engaging in situations where leadership skills are required. For the home-schooled learner, these interactions and situations originate in the home environment and from their engagements with family members, who may act as mentors, guiding learners through their leadership journey (Redmond & Dolan, 2014). It is for this reason that Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) is used to investigate and provide an analysis of the home-schooling environment as a potential incubator for learner leadership development.

### **2.5.1. The bioecological model**

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the ecological environment, is a set of nested structures, each inside the next, similar to the Russian matryoshka. Bronfenbrenner formulated the ecological systems theory to make the point that development cannot be explored or explained by any one single concept, like biology, but rather by a more

multidimensional and complex system of layers. Each of these layers forms a system of relationships and has an influence on the development of the child (Krishnan, 2010).

Learner development happens through processes of progressively more complex interaction between an active child and the people, objects, and symbols in their immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The ecological theory is based on four major interacting dimensions: process, person, context, and time (Wachs & Evans, 2010). These dimensions, and the way they are considered relevant to the study are defined as follows:

#### **2.5.1.1. Process**

Process refers to how the learner interacts with their surroundings. The bioecological model recognises the process, or point of interface, in the interaction between the learner and the environment as being of primary importance (Kruger, 2011). To be effective, the interaction must happen on a fairly regular basis over an extended period of time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). There are mainly two types of processes: proximal- or near-processes and distal processes (Krishnan, 2010). Krishnan (2010) explains that the proximal- or near-processes involve all types of transactions between the learner and their immediate surroundings. Distal processes include a family's own ability to support a learner, as well as interact with other environments which the child is a part of. However, unlike the proximal processes that directly influence a learner's competencies and general well-being, the distal processes have only an indirect influence on the learner (Krishnan, 2010). In essence, both proximal- and distal processes drive a learner's development. This study investigates the constant interaction between the learner and their immediate family as leaders, mentors and educators, with the purpose of determining how these proximal processes influence the learner's development as a leader. Distal processes, or the lack thereof, will also be identified and examined to determine its potential role in learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment.

#### **2.5.1.2. Person**

Person or person characteristics refers to the behavioural tendencies of the learner and other people they may encounter (Oosthuizen, 2005) in the proximal and distal processes. Bronfenbrenner (2005) viewed person characteristics as consisting of dispositions, ecological resources and demand characteristics. The effect of a person's characteristics is

regarded as bi-directional because the learner is affected by the behaviour of others, while their own behaviour also affects those who they encounter. The learner, therefore, experiences, observes, interprets and reacts to the behaviour of others and vice versa. This is also the case with leadership and how the learner experiences and re-enacts leadership. The study aims to interpret this phenomenon in the home-schooling environment and how it impacts learner leadership development.

### **2.5.1.3. Context**

Context refers to the multiple venues modifying the proximal processes, and they include environments in which the child is in constant interaction, whether physical, social, or economic (Krishnan, 2010). Context can, therefore, be regarded as the realm in which the learner experiences interaction, learning and development. It is perceived that home-schooling limits the possible venues or locations of interaction and learning, consequently potentially limiting overall development. As this study examines the way in which home-schooled learners interact with others, it will shed light on this perception and determine whether or not it alters leadership development.

### **2.5.1.4. Time**

The time component of Bronfenbrenner's model encompasses various aspects, such as chronological age, duration and nature of periodicity. An event has varying degrees of impact on development, and the impact decreases as time progresses. Events such as a parent's debilitating illness, divorce or change of residence may have a more profound impact on young children compared to older ones (Krishnan, 2010). Time is a more abstract and complex dimension when compared to the other dimensions and the resultant impact of certain occurrences and situations may vary drastically based on a learner's age. For a more specific analysis, this study focuses solely on Grade 10 – 12 home-schooled learners, who have, to a degree, experienced similar periods of exposure to leadership and who have had the same amount of time to reflect on leadership and potentially develop leadership skills.

The mechanisms of the aforementioned dimensions of interaction between the learner and other individuals and the situations in which a learner develops can be perceived as a series of concentric circles that represent situations or systems that have direct and indirect

influences on the learner. According to Bronfenbrenner, there are five distinct concentric systems, namely micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono. Each of these systems has either a direct or indirect influence on a learner's development (Krishnan, 2010). The manner in which these systems function according to Krishnan (2010) is set out on the next pages.

#### **2.5.1.5. Microsystem**

The microsystem is the innermost level, the one closest to the learner and that the learner is in direct contact with. The microsystem includes the family, playmates, day care, school, and the neighbourhood in all of which the proximal processes occur. This layer has the most immediate and earliest influence on the learner and is expected to play the most influential role in the early development of leadership skills. If the proximal processes in the immediate microsystem break down, the learner will not have the tools to explore other outlying parts or spheres of their surroundings. Since this is where home-schoolers are educated and exposed to the world at large, its functionality and influence plays an even more important role and will in effect have a more prominent impact on learner leadership development.

#### **2.5.1.6. Mesosystem**

The mesosystem is the second immediate layer and includes all the various microsystems in which the learner interacts. It focuses on the connections between two or more systems, essentially different microsystems, such as home, playmate settings, school, etc. For home-schooled learners, the mesosystem may be more diverse with fewer limitations because the education medium is unstructured and flexible. It is also probable that this system may offer the most unknown variables in terms of interaction with others, as well as exposure to- and application of leadership.

#### **2.5.1.7. Exosystem**

The exosystem is the third layer and although the learner does not directly encounter the system, it has an impact on their development. The system contains micro- and mesosystems and influences the well-being of all those who come into contact with the learner. Further, the policies and decisions made at a wider level may also indirectly impact the learner and their development.

#### **2.5.1.8. Macrosystem**

The outermost context layer is the macrosystem. This societal blueprint influences all lower layers of the exosystem in ways such as cultural characteristics, political upheaval, or economic disruption, all of which may solely or collectively shape a learner's development.

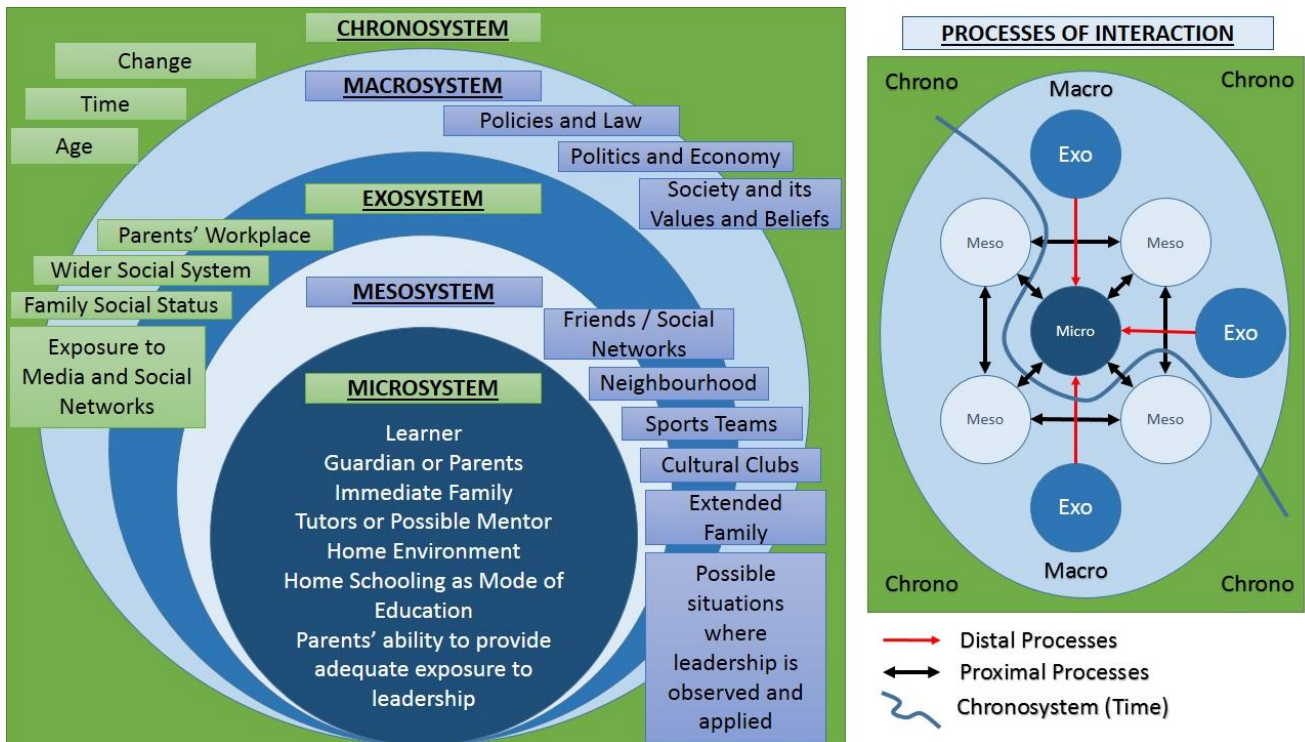
#### **2.5.1.9. Chronosystem**

A fifth system, chrono, incorporates the dimension of time as it relates to a learner's environment. This may involve internal or external changes, such as physiological adaptations or events, for example, the loss of a parent, as well as exposure to certain people and contexts over time.

Due to the nature of the research and the targeted research group this study mainly focuses on the micro- and mesosystems. These are the core areas which have an impact on a learner's development and are clearly discernible in the home-school environment. The underlying or indirect influences that the exo- and macrosystems have on home-schooled learners, and how they impact these specific individuals differently, became apparent during the course of this study. The chronosystem is interconnected with all the other systems and the way in which it impacts leadership development of the home-schooled learner is also explored in this study.

Diagram 2-1 illustrates the bioecological model and how it will be adapted to suit the requirements of the research.

**Diagram 2-1: Adapted bioecological model (Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979))**



The conceptual framework chosen for this study was initially designed to understand and analyse the developmental process of humans. By adapting it and applying it to learners in the home-schooling context, it allowed me the opportunity to determine how learner leadership development happens by understanding how the home environment links with to other environments. This is something that differentiates the home schooling context to other modes of education as the home, family and education environment are intertwined. By using the adapted bio-ecological model, I could distinguish between these spheres of influence and interaction, while still acknowledging their connectedness and level of importance. This conceptual framework became the lens through which I viewed and conducted my research, while also providing me with a proven structure to understand and gauge the learner leadership development process.

The elements of the conceptual framework helped to determine the parameters for the sampling and selection of participants. It was also used to delineate the appropriate contexts and environments in which home-schooled learners develop their leadership skills. Once these environments were pinpointed the key role players involved in important interactions could be identified. Using this conceptual framework, the levels of interaction and the influence of key role players became clearer and could be analysed and interpreted. The

framework, together with other literature, formed the basis for the selection of themes for the analysis of the empirical data.

## **2.6. CONCLUSION**

This chapter clarified certain questions about terminology which may crop up when reading this study, while also highlighting the interchangeable use of certain concepts. It also explored the existing literature related to youth leadership development and the processes that are associated therewith. What became evident from the literature is an identifiable tension between adult leadership theories and those aimed at youth leadership. It further elaborated on why there is tension and how the issues related to adult- and youth leadership may be addressed. The importance of developing young people as future leaders and factors that contribute to their development was discussed. The literature review also highlighted how sparse recent research on the topic is, especially in the South African context. Even though different elements of learner leadership development are touched on in the available literature, the process in its entirety is not yet clear. This evidently indicates a significant absence of research on the process of learner leadership development in the home-schooling context, as a whole.

In line with this, the chapter introduced a conceptual framework for this study and explained how it could be applied. The chapter concluded with an outline of the existing barriers related to the development of youth leadership and elaborated on the home-schooling environment as a potential leadership development area. The next chapter elaborates on the research design and methodology chosen for this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 of this study presented an in-depth perspective of academic exploration by using literature on the research topic, focused on the development of learner leadership development in the South African home-schooling environment. Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology. The main purpose of this chapter is to describe how the research design and the research methodology was used to understand how learner leadership development happens in the home-schooling context. This is achieved by first explaining the difference between research design and research methodology. Once this has been clarified, the second section goes on to a detailed discussion on the paradigmatic stances; interpretivist- and constructivist paradigm, as well as the ontological and epistemological assumptions, made. Thirdly, the chosen research design is explained: qualitative research and case study research. The fourth part of this chapter covers the research methodology; thematic content analysis, sampling, the data collection and data analysis process. The final section discusses the ethical considerations applicable to this study, as well as the necessary quality criteria applied throughout the course of this study.

During consultation with my supervisors, they stressed the importance of knowing and understanding the differences between the research design and the research methodology, and to be clear on what each of these entails. These concepts are easily confused and one may assume they have the same meaning, which is not the case. To have a better understanding of these concepts, I used the descriptions from Mouton (2001), Pieterse (2010), and Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013) to describe and distinguish between these two concepts. According to Mouton (2001), a research design constitutes a 'blueprint' of how an investigation will be conducted, as it is the researcher's plan of how the research will be executed (Pieterse, 2010). It is an important aspect of any study since it provides structure. Alternatively, the research methodology is explained in its simplest form as the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2013). The research design (the plan of this study) and the research methodology (the process of how this plan will be executed) are summarised in the table on the next page. Each of the aspects included in this summary are explained in detail after that.

**Table 3-1: Research design and methodology summary**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Learner leadership development within home-schooling context</b>	
<b>Research question</b>	How does learner leadership development happen in the South African home-schooling context?	
<b>Purpose</b>	Collaboratively working with home-schooled learners and their parents to determine how learner leadership development happens in the South African home-schooling context.	
<b>Research design</b>		
<b>Paradigmatic perspectives</b>	Constructivist-interpretivist paradigm	
<b>Research approach</b>	A qualitative research approach	
<b>Ontological and epistemological assumptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reality in which the researcher and the participants find themselves is socially constructed and people’s perceptions and interpretations are different due to their unique backgrounds and lived experiences.</li> <li>• For the qualitative researcher, knowledge is gained by exploring the individual and collective experiences of people in the context of the framed research topic.</li> </ul>	
<b>Research methodology</b>		
<b>Case study research – intrinsic case study</b>		
<b>Population of the study</b>	The population for this study are the home-schooling learners and their parents from the Pretoria area.	
<b>Sampling</b>	Purposive, and convenience sampling	Conducting face-to-face interviews with home-schooled learners and their parents to gain an understanding of their lived experiences in the home-schooling environment and how they perceive learner leadership development.

<b>Data collection and documentation</b>	Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews.	Verbatim transcripts of audio recordings. Researcher's journal.
<b>Data analysis</b>	Thematic content analysis	
<b>Ethical considerations</b>	Informed and voluntary consent. Confidentiality and anonymity of research participants.	Protecting participants from harm. Relationship of trust between the participant and the researcher. Security of data.
<b>Quality criteria for study</b>	Credibility, conformability, transferability, dependability and authenticity.	

### 3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.2.1. Paradigmatic perspectives

It is the choice of an epistemological perspective or paradigm that sets out the intent, motivation and expectations for the research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 107) describe a paradigm as a “set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimate or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). The type of paradigm the researcher chooses must be established at the beginning of the study, as this provides the basis for all the successive choices about the research design, literature and the research methodology (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The constructivist-interpretivist paradigm was used in this study. This collective paradigm consists of two parts and framed the mindset I adopted. It was also the lens through which I guided my research and interpreted the data. There are also specific ontological and epistemological assumptions that frame and are applicable to this paradigm, these are elaborated on in the next subsection.

##### 3.2.1.1. Constructivist-interpretivist paradigm

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) emphasise that interpretive researchers start with individuals and endeavour to appreciate their interpretations of the world around them. Following an interpretivist paradigm, Creswell (2009) explains that it is directed at

understanding a phenomenon from an individual's perspective. Interpretivists yield insights, by attempting to understand behaviour and thereby explain the actions and perceptions of the participants (Scotland, 2012). It is theoretically understood that the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants in a study (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Constructivism on the other hand refers to the notion that the world around us is actively constructed (Riegler, 2012), as people attempt to arrange and make sense of the world around them through lived experiences. Human beings, including the researcher, therefore, seek to make sense of the world around them through subjective interpretations of occurrences and experiences in their daily lives (Creswell, 2007). As such, the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm suggests that the researcher interprets the perceptions and experiences of participants from their own personal perspective and the research approach and findings cannot be devoid of the researcher's subjectivity (Creswell, 2007). The researcher plays a major role in any theory and research (Riegler, 2012).

In this study, the phenomenon under investigation is the concept of learner leadership development. This study sets out to explore the phenomenon of learner leadership development, discovering and uncovering how it happens in the lives and environments the participants find themselves. The researcher interpreted the lived experiences of the participants in terms of learner leadership development and their home-schooling environment. As a constructivist researcher, I also understand and acknowledge that my background as a teacher in the traditional South African schooling system and my later experience as an education specialist, specifically working with home-schooled learners, shaped my interpretations of the phenomenon and individual participants' perspectives.

### **3.2.2. Qualitative research approach**

The next section deals with the qualitative research approach, as well as the reasoning behind selecting a qualitative approach for this study. In the latter part of this section, the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of the chosen research approach are discussed. A research approach, as referred to by Creswell (2014), are the plans and procedures for research that encompass the initial broad assumptions that the research is based on, to the detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. When establishing the

research approach for this study, I first looked at the three main approaches to research: the quantitative-, mixed method- and qualitative research approach.

In short, quantitative research deals with the testing of an objective theory by examining the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2014). These variables can be measured on instruments so that numbered data may be analysed by using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014). The mixed method approach involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). Lastly, qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possibility of a theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning it holds for individuals or groups who ascribe to a social and human problem (Creswell, 2007). It is further described as research that involves an interpretive, naturalist approach to the world or subject matter (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The fact that qualitative research lends itself to an interpretive approach supports the chosen constructivist-interpretivist paradigmatic stance used in this study

Throughout this process I was mindful of the nature of the research topic, the research question and the purpose of this study. When I considered the aforementioned key elements, it became clear that a qualitative research approach best suited this study. The reason for this is because the qualitative approach is suitable when a concept or phenomenon must be explored and understood because little research has been done on it (Creswell, 2014). As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2 the absence of research on this specific topic, especially in the South African home-schooling environment, is evident. In the process of adopting an approach for this study, it was important for me, as the researcher, to understand the lived experiences of the participants as it relates to learner leadership in the home. Creswell (2007) points out that a qualitative research approach allows the desire to expose the human part of a story. As a researcher, I wanted to gain various insights, emotions, views, thoughts and experiences of the home-schooled learners and their parents in their own environment. This would allow me to expose the human part of the story. The qualitative research methodology also underpins the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, which I chose to follow (Tubey, Rotich, & Bengat, 2015).

In an article by Sophia Ospina (2004) on qualitative research and its applicability to leadership as a field of research, she summarises the advantages of following a qualitative research approach. I found three of these advantages relevant to my research. She mentions that it (1) offers the flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during research and

expose processes effectively. This often occurred during the interviews, where participants mentioned other topics not initially part of the interview questions, but which needed to be explored. This also led to (2) more opportunities to further explore and delve deeply into responses from participants. The third noteworthy advantage she mentions is sensitivity to contextual factors. In the case of this study, parents and learners allowed me into their space, which for them is safe and conducive to their needs as individuals. As a researcher, I was conscious of how these safe and conducive spaces influenced the participants' demeanour and eventual responses.

Another strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex, textual descriptions on how people experience a given research issue (Mack, et al., 2011). In this instance, the issue was the lack of knowledge on how learner leadership development happens in the home-schooling environment. By using a qualitative research approach, valuable textual descriptions related to the research topic were obtained by using various qualitative data gathering methods. This included face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, verbatim transcriptions and a researcher's journal. Each of these methods is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

As one considers the advantages and strengths of qualitative research, the same must be done with the disadvantages or limitations. Yauch and Steudel (2003) mention two major drawbacks of qualitative research. First of all, a particularly important issue may be overlooked or go unnoticed. To avoid this, significant time was spent transcribing the data with great care, to provide rich and vivid descriptions. Secondly, according to Yauch and Streudel (2003) all researchers' 'interpretations' are limited, due to personal experience and knowledge, which influence their observations and conclusions. Though, as a constructivist, I acknowledge that my experiences as an individual and my background as a researcher will influence and limit my interpretation of the research to a certain extent. However, instead of interpreting this as a flaw, I view my experience and background of working with home-schooled learners as a point of departure and the angle of perspective with which I explicate my research data and eventual findings.

### **3.2.3 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions**

Ontological and epistemological assumptions are best described as those assumptions that frame and limit the researcher, as it seeks to determine what falls inside or outside the

boundaries of legitimate inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). By stating these assumptions in accordance with the chosen constructivist-interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative research approach, I set the parameters of the study.

Ontology refers to the nature of reality and by understanding its nature, what may be learnt from it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). One of the key ontological assumptions that frame the interpretivist paradigm is that contextual factors influencing individual researchers' views, beliefs, opinions and overall understanding of the world around them, will ultimately lead to different interpretations of situations and occurrences. The world we live in is a social construct, conceived by the human mind, meaning that researchers and participants alike are unable to be objective (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Consequently, the interpretivist research paradigm takes into account that interpretivist research is subjective in nature. Willis (2007) adds to this statement, by affirming that the goal of interpretivist research is to value subjectivity and it alludes to the idea that objective research on human behaviour is impossible. For the purposes of this study, one of the ontological assumptions is that the reality in which the researcher and the participants find themselves is socially constructed and that people's perceptions and interpretations are different due to their unique background and lived experiences.

To this same end, constructivist researchers often address the processes of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work to be able to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. However, what sets constructivist researchers apart from other paradigmatic stances, is the ontological assumption and recognition that their own contextual backgrounds shape their interpretation of perspectives and phenomena. They then position themselves accordingly to acknowledge how their research and their interpretation of it flows from their personal, cultural and historical experiences (Creswell, 2014). As a researcher, I acknowledge my background as both a teacher and an education specialist for a home-schooling curriculum provider, which, in turn, alters and guides my interpretations and perceptions on the research.

Epistemology relates to the theory of knowledge and how it is acquired during the research process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The fact that this study is framed in the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm and employs a qualitative research approach, one can maintain that the world consists of a collection of singular human beings who have each developed their

own unique world views through their distinctive lived experiences. So, for a qualitative researcher, knowledge is gained by exploring the individual and collective experiences of people in the context of the framed research topic. Furthermore, the researcher is also human, with their own lived experiences and individual construct of reality, which in turn influences their own opinions, perceptions and interpretations and cannot be removed from the research itself. Due to these complexities, researchers should understand and acknowledge that knowledge is subjective and cannot be generalised (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

### **3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

As mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, a research methodology refers to the process of how this plan (research design) will be executed. In the next section all aspects of sampling, data collection, documentation, analysis and interpretation are discussed.

#### **3.3.1. Case study research**

Yin (2003) describes his view of case study research as a story about something unique, special, or interesting. These stories may be about individuals, organisations, processes, programmes, neighbourhoods, institutions or events. Zainal (2007) states that case study research explores and investigates contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships, which enable a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. Case study research is also defined by its selection of a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of the study (Zainal, 2007).

Using a case study design for this research was fitting since the nature of this study involved a contemporary real-life phenomenon – learner leadership development. Furthermore, I selected only a small number of participants – four home-schooled learners and their parents. The geographical area was also limited to Pretoria because it was convenient and in close proximity to my home and office.

In addition to the above description of case study research and how it could apply to this study, it is important to note that there are different types of case studies, as well as different case study designs. Stake (1995) distinguishes between three types of case study research, namely intrinsic, instrumental and collective. According to Stake (1995), an intrinsic case

study is done to understand a specific or individual case. When a research question involves acquiring insight by studying a particular case, an instrumental case study is done. Finally, a collective case study refers to the extension of an instrumental study to include several cases. In contrast, Yin (2009) suggests three different types of case studies, which are determined by the type of research question. These are exploratory-, descriptive- and explanatory case studies. Yin (2009) explains that if the research is mainly focused on 'what' questions, it is an exploratory study. An explanatory case study is used when 'how' or 'why' questions are investigated. Lastly, a descriptive study covers the background information and accurate description of the case in question (Yin, 2009).

Because the aim of this research is to gain insight into learner leadership development, specifically in the home-schooling environment, it may be considered as an instrumental case study. As for Yin's typologies, this study may also be considered an explanatory case study because it attempts to answer how learner leadership development happens in this context.

In terms of case study design, Yin (2003) distinguishes between single-, holistic- and multiple case study designs. Even though this study relates to elements within each of these, it lends itself best to the single case study design. This particular design is implemented when the researcher is investigating a critical, extreme, unique or representative of a typical case (Yin, 2009). This case study comprises four purposively selected home-schooled learners and their parents, who are in the FET phase of their schooling.

### **3.3.2. Sampling**

The sampling technique used in this study was both purposive and convenient. Purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative research (Etikan, Sulaiman, & Rukayya, 2016) and involves the deliberate choice of an informant (Tongca, 2007) who is proficient and well-informed on a phenomenon and interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). I purposively identified and selected four FET (grades 10 – 12) home-schooled learners and their parents (See table 3.2) who were willing to share their experiences in the home-schooling environment. I deliberately chose learners in their FET phase who have been home-schooled for most of their schooling career. Reason being that most of these learners have been home-schooled for a few years and I believed they would provide a more in-depth

response as opposed to learners who are still in the early years of their schooling or who have only been home-schooled for a short time.

The parents were chosen to participate for a different first-hand perspective on how their children have developed as leaders in the home environment and how possible leadership development happens. Together with purposive sampling, I also used convenience sampling. Convenience sampling involves drawing samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in a study (Teddlie & Fen, 2007). As previously mentioned, I limited the geographical area to Pretoria, for its convenience and proximity to my home and office. I also was able to reach out to home-schooling learners and parents quite easily because I am involved with the home-schooling environment every day. One of the main limitations of purposive and convenient sampling is that the finding cannot be generalised. This limitation is, however, not problematic, since the objective of this study is to gain a basic in-depth understanding of how learner leadership development happens and not to generalise these findings in a bigger population.

**Table 3-2: Participant information**

Research participants	Learner and parent pseudonym	Grade of learner	Age of learner
Learner 1 and parent 1	Sally and Sally's mother	12	17
Learner 2 and parent 2	Tom and Tom's mother	11	17
Learner 3 and parent 3	John and John's mother	10	16
Learner 4 and parent 4	Bill and Bill's mother	11	17

### 3.3.3. Data collection and documentation

In this section, I explain the data- collection and documentation procedures adhered to in this research. Data collection as described by Reisman, Gienapp and Stachowiak (2005) is the way in which the researcher gathers information about what people think and feel about certain issues or a phenomenon. Creswell (2014) sets out three important steps affiliated with the data collection process, namely (1) setting the boundaries for the study, (2)

collecting information through various data collection techniques such as interviews, focus groups, field notes, the use of a researcher's journal, etc. and (3) establishing the protocol for recording information. The data collection process for this study stretched over three weeks, during which I used the steps described by Creswell.

First, the boundaries of the study were established by determining what information I wanted to gather and delineating the groups I wanted to gather this information from. Then I had to decide who I wanted to interview. Following that, I identified the main topics I wanted to explore in the interviews and constructed my questions accordingly. Next, data was collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with participants and using a researcher's journal to gain perspective on my interpretation of the interviews and the data collected. The paradigmatic stances I followed, allowed me to effectively use these data collection techniques, commonly associated with qualitative research. Lastly, a digital recorder was used in the interviews and the recordings were then transcribed for further analysis.

#### **3.3.3.1. Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews**

Once willing participants had been identified and selected, we had face-to-face, semi-structured interviews in their homes. Lee & Humphrey (2004) made the point that face-to-face, semi-structured interviews are chosen to allow the interviewees a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts and to highlight areas of particular interest and expertise that they felt they had, as well as to enable certain responses to be questioned in greater depth, and in particular to bring out and resolve apparent contradictions. In support of this statement (Gill, et al., 2008) state that semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions, which assist to define the research areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge and pursue an idea or response in more detail. I intentionally chose face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth knowledge of the subjects and their lived experiences in the home-schooling environment.

By using this data collection method, I had the flexibility to inquire and investigate the topic in great depth and endeavoured to really understand and interpret answers from the participants. Furthermore, the participants were asked to reflect on possible exposure to leadership and the development of leadership opportunities in this context. The learner and the parent of the same family were interviewed on the same day, but these interviews were

done separately. This was done on purpose because I wanted the learners' experiences without input or influence from their parents during the interview and vice versa.

Before the interviews, a lot of time and critical thinking went into structuring the questions. After carefully considering how the interviews should be approached and from which angle the topics were to be explored, it was decided that the questions should focus on activities, interactions and experiences of learners in the home environment. By asking the questions this way, the interviewees had the freedom to highlight what they felt were important and relevant, leaving the researcher able to interpret the relevance and implications of the answers without any bias. After the first interview, I contemplated the questions, the answers, the discussion as well as my thoughts on the learner and her abilities in the home environment. This allowed me to improve my interview questions and the way in which I asked them for the remainder of the interviews. The first draft of the research questions appears in my research journal. The final interview schedule is part of the attached documents.

### **3.3.3.2. Audio recordings and transcriptions**

Transcription is the process of reproducing spoken words, such as those from an audiotaped interview, into written text (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). After each interview, I transcribed the data verbatim. This refers to the word for word reproduction of verbal data, i.e. the written words are an exact replication of the audio recorded words (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). By doing all the transcriptions myself and verbatim, I relived the interviews and once more experienced the tone, emotions and overall context. This allowed far more effective data analysis and provided great insights into the participants' responses.

Most interviews lasted 15 to 30 minutes and transcribing the recordings was a time-consuming, yet effective exercise. While transcribing, I identified topics that became key to the data analysis and eventual findings of the research. After each transcription, I replayed and listened to the interview to ensure the accuracy of the data. If I had missed any information I added it to the transcription.

### **3.3.3.3. Researcher's journal**

Gaining insights into the world of the researcher is often problematic, but compiling a research journal may provide a window into their experience through personal reflection. It

may also be used as an important methodological tool in “contributing to the trustworthiness of a research study” (Jasper, 2005, p. 248). I kept a researcher’s journal to reflect on events during the course of my research and to record my feelings, emotions, thoughts and possible ideas about the research. The researcher’s journal was a very effective tool to address possible bias towards findings, thoughts and experiences of participants. After interviewing participants, I was preoccupied with different thoughts and emotions. I kept replaying some of the things they said or the way they portrayed themselves. It was inspiring and exciting, and very difficult to explain to someone who wasn’t there or part of the process. The researcher’s journal was my way of writing down and reflecting on sometimes very personal thoughts.

Furthermore, the process of reflection helps to bring the unconscious into consciousness (Ortlipp, 2008). At first, I didn’t see the value in keeping a research journal. Writing down my thoughts and feelings isn’t something I would generally do. I quickly realised that any thoughts, emotions, comments from my supervisors, colleagues, family and friends, or interaction in society generated new perspectives about my research topic. I needed an outlet and writing about it quickly became the most effective tool.

A researcher’s journal involves thinking about the research critically to record thoughts and evaluate the experiences to provide “a measure of perspective” (Ellis, 2001, p. 5). I felt relieved and accomplished when I wrote in my journal. I really started using the researcher’s journal during Chapters 2 and 3 of this study. An example of this is in Chapter 2, where I used my journal to help me map out what I wanted to discuss and why. In Chapter 3, I had difficulty with the research terminology, including certain paradigms, assumptions and concepts. In my journal, I could explain these concepts in any way that made sense to me. This helped me to understand them and I was able to link it back to my academic writing. I underestimated the usefulness and advantages of keeping a researcher’s journal. It not only helped me to plan and discuss the theoretical and academic aspects of this study, it also helped me to organise my thoughts, reflections and emotions.

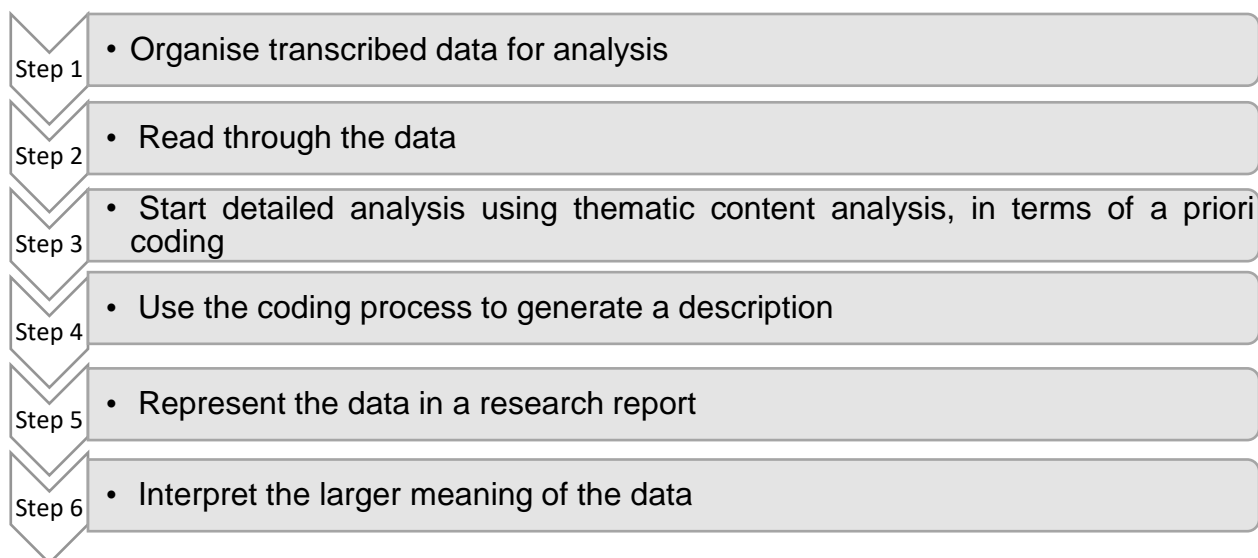
#### **3.3.4. Data analysis and interpretation**

This section of the chapter deals with the methods of data analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explain that qualitative data analysis is the process of making sense from the views and opinions research participants have of

situations, corresponding patterns, themes, categories and regular similarities. Gibbs (2007) adds to this explanation by stating that the data analysis process entails the transformation of collected qualitative data, into a clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy and original analysis.

After the interviews, I was left with a few hours of recorded data and realised that the process of analysing and interpreting the data is rather daunting. While reading up on data analysis, I came across Creswell's (2009) six steps that a researcher follows to do data analysis. I decided to use these steps for guidance when collecting and interpreting data. Data analysis, however, is not a static and linear order of analysis, it is an ongoing process and following these steps does not imply otherwise (Dodge, 2011). I experienced this first-hand and reflected on it in my journal. Refer to the diagram on the next page for an illustration of the six steps, followed by an explanation on how I applied it to this study.

**Diagram 3-1: Six-step data analysis process (Creswell, 2009)**



Step 1 involves organising and preparing the data for analysis. In this step, I replayed the audio recordings and listened to the interviews. I then transcribed each interview verbatim. In step 2 you read through the data. After listening to- and transcribing the data, I once again carefully read through it. In steps 1 and 2 one becomes familiar with the data and you form an idea of certain recurring topics. After doing step 2, I formed an overall idea of the responses from participants and I started thinking about topics and points of discussion that could be explored further during the interpretation stages.

Step 3 is the detailed analysis of the data and step 4 uses the coding process to generate a description of it. I combined steps 3 and 4 as they are closely linked to each other. The detailed analysis was done using thematic content analysis, supported by the a priori coding technique. Qualitative thematic content analysis has best been defined and described as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) elaborate on thematic analysis when stating that it goes beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas in the data, as topics or themes.

Considering the above-mentioned definitions, my main source of data was interview transcripts and to a lesser extent, my thoughts and opinions on the interviews and answers from participants captured in my researcher's journal. Before doing my first interview, I identified predetermined topics from the literature and the theoretical framework and used a priori coding. When dealing with a priori coding, the categories are established prior to the data analysis and are based on some theory (Stemler, 2001). The categories or themes were established in line with the existing literature discussed in Chapter 2. When using a priori coding, the predetermined categories and coding are applied to the data (Stemler, 2001). By working through the interview transcripts and using a priori coding, I was able to group together certain themes, which formed the basis of my analysis. After collecting the data, I realised that there are additional underlying or implied themes, which I initially had not been able to identify through the literature review. To ensure that I capture all possible topics and subtopics in the data, the additional subthemes were identified by highlighting and labelling them descriptively to adequately and understandably delineate the respective themes. By using this technique, data was analysed in detail according to the predetermined themes, but further enriching themes were also extracted.

Once the respective topics were identified and the relevant data grouped together, it could be analysed in terms of its relevance to and impact on how learner leadership abilities are developed in the South African home-schooling environment. Doing qualitative research is about putting oneself in another's shoes and seeing the world from their perspective, therefore, the most important part of data analysis and management is to be true to the participants (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999). During the data collection and subsequent analysis and interpretation, this was my main objective. Steps 5 and 6 of the data analysis

process involves representing the data in a research report and interpreting the larger meaning of the data. Steps 5 and 6 are discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

### **3.3.5. Ethical considerations**

This section explains the ethical considerations followed throughout this study. The ethical aspects of this research were of the utmost importance before, during and after the process. Every part of this study complied with the ethical principles set by the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria and an ethical clearance certificate was issued by the committee, indicating that I have adhered to all the required ethical considerations and recommendations. The ethical clearance certificate is available on page vii.

#### **3.3.5.1. Informed consent and voluntary participation**

Consent may be referred to as a negotiation of trust (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000), which starts from the first interaction with the participant. When the study first started, consent and assent forms (where applicable) were provided to and signed by all willing participants. They were given the forms before the interview. As a researcher, I had the obligation to build trusting relationships with the participants. The first step was to thoroughly and meaningfully explain what the research is about and how it will be disseminated (Corti, Day, & Backhouse, 2000). This ensured that the participants were aware of the purpose of the study and what role they would play. It was made clear that participating in the research was completely voluntary. To put participants at ease during the course of the study, they were allowed to withdraw at any time when, and if, they felt the need to do so. It was also made clear that the findings of the research would be communicated to them once the study had been completed.

#### **3.3.5.2. Beneficence: Confidentiality, anonymity and protection of participants**

The ethical principle of beneficence implies that the researcher protects the participants from the potential harm of research while allowing them to benefit from the results (Powell, et al., 2012). I explained to each participant that their accounts of and responses about their lived experiences in the home environment is key to this study. Protecting participants is linked to the concept of anonymity, which deals with the protection of participants on various levels. For participants, the benefits of this study are that they are provided with information about learner leadership in the home environment. Initially, this may not seem to be an immediate benefit for them as findings and feedback will only be available after the study, but

information on the research topic may give them further insight and a better understanding of this important phenomenon.

Confidentiality and anonymity mean that the privacy of individuals will be protected. It implies that the data they provide will be dealt with and reported in such a way that it cannot be associated with them personally (Mertens, 2010). Furthermore, no uniquely identifying information is attached to the data and no one can trace the data back to the individual who provided it (Mertens, 2010). Maintaining the confidentiality of participants was a high priority during the data collection-, analysis- and interpretation process and was applied throughout. All information gathered from participants was regarded as confidential and personal anonymity was ensured at all times.

Data from the participants was stored and saved electronically. Information was frequently stored on backup systems including hard drives, compact discs and the 'cloud'. This was done continuously to avoid any possible loss of data. Research transcripts and information were kept safe and private – no information was exposed. Interviews were named by allocating numbers, this way no interview could be traced back to any specific participants.

### **3.3.6. Quality criteria for study**

The final section of this chapter explains the quality criteria met throughout this study. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model for establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative research was used. Trustworthiness originally included four elements: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability, with authenticity as the fifth element validated by some qualitative researchers as an equally important evaluative element (Billups, 2014).

Trustworthiness represents the measures built into the research process by the researcher to ensure the study is valid and the results are reliable (Zhou, 2006). In short, trustworthiness refers to what extent the study may be trusted. By including and applying measures of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity, the trustworthiness of the study is confirmed. Trustworthiness is an overarching concept, encapsulating these different concepts. Table 3-3 sets out each of the aspects mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and how it was used to establish trustworthiness in this study.

**Table 3-3: Lincoln & Guba’s (1985) trustworthiness criteria and techniques**

Criteria	Techniques used in this study
Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer debriefing, co-analysis</li> <li>• Detailed systematic descriptions</li> <li>• Member checking</li> </ul>
Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study is considered as a unique case and the objective is not to generalise, but to provide a perspective.</li> <li>• Thick descriptions</li> </ul>
Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit trail – face-to-face, semi-structured interview, audio recordings, transcriptions of data and researcher’s journal</li> </ul>
Confirmability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recordings, verbatim transcripts, member checking</li> </ul>
Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above</li> <li>• Researcher’s journal containing information on the research process, as well as personal thoughts, ideas and emotions documented throughout the study.</li> </ul>

The subsections to follow discuss what is meant by trustworthiness in qualitative research, in terms of the aspects required to establish trustworthiness and how it was addressed as part of this study.

### **3.3.6.1. Credibility**

Credibility concerns the internal validity of a study, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was done in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described (De Vos, et al., 2002). Credibility refers to the confidence one may have in the truth of the findings, which may be established through various methods (Bowen , 2005). Four methods were used in this study: peer debriefing, co-analysis, detailed systematic descriptions and member checking (Guba & Lincoln 1985, 1989; Shenton 2004).

To achieve peer debriefing and co-analysis, I frequently engaged with my supervisors at all stages of this study. They assisted in refining the topic and determining my areas of focus. They also advised me on ways to approach the data collection process, as well as providing guidance throughout the interpretation stage. I usually met with my supervisors or we communicated via email. These sessions and interactions gave me confidence and a better understanding. After each session with them, I had a better idea of what was required to undertake and complete a certain aspect of this study. Once I had written the first draft, my supervisors also assisted in scrutinising my process and outcomes, which further refined the study. I often communicated with a fellow student who, at the time, was also completing her master's degree. We talked about the progress we were making in our respective studies and shared ideas and had in-depth discussions about our research topics and their various elements. This gave me the opportunity to share my thoughts and logic with someone other than my supervisors.

The third method I used to establish credibility was through detailed systematic descriptions. This was achieved during the data collection process by recording each interview with a participant and afterwards transcribing it verbatim. These word for word transcriptions provided thick descriptions of the lived realities of the participants, which I often referred back to when considering the themes and discussing the research findings. By describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail one may begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Throughout my study, I reflected in detail on its various components in my research journal. The journal was a powerful tool to communicate thoughts and questions around the study and provided a means of discourse and confronting personal opinions, thoughts and feelings experienced during the research process.

The last method was member checking. In this method the validity procedure shifts from the researchers to the participants in the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Member checking involves taking data and interpretations back to the participants so they may confirm the credibility of the information (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Member checking only happened in the final stages of the study, to ensure that a full interpretation was presented and that nothing could be misunderstood or misconstrued.

### **3.3.6.2. Transferability**

According to (Bowen , 2005) transferability means, in essence, that other researchers may apply the findings of the study to their own research and it should be applicable to other settings or groups. The objectives of this study were, however, not to generalise the findings, but to instead provide a perspective on a specific phenomenon in a specific context. With regard to transferability, even though this case may be unique, it is still an example or perspective of a wider context (Anney, 2014). One method to establish transferability is once again by providing thick descriptions of the phenomenon being studied. By providing these thick descriptions in my interview recordings, verbatim transcripts and my researcher's journal, it is possible to judge and compare the applicability of this study's unique findings when it comes to leadership development in the home-school, with other potentially comparable contexts (Seale, 1999).

### **3.3.6.3. Dependability**

A study is deemed dependable in terms of the degree to which another researcher will reach the same findings when doing the same study, whether the interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources and whether the findings are supported by the inquiry (Pieterse, 2010). To achieve dependability, an audit trail was established as part of the construct of this study. In establishing an audit trail, researchers provide clear documentation of all research decisions and activities (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The audit trail applicable to the study is the way in which data was collected, recorded and analysed to enable information to be traced back to its sources. An audit trail is established by researchers documenting the inquiry process through journals and keeping memos, a research log of all activities, developing a data collection chronology and recording data analysis procedures clearly (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Data was collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with four home-schooled learners and their parents. These interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and then transcribed verbatim. As mentioned previously, the data was stored and saved electronically, and often referred to, along with thoughts on the various aspects of the research in a researcher's journal. All of these documents are part of a comprehensive audit trail and are submitted along with the dissertation as appendices, both in hard copy and digitally.

#### **3.3.6.4. Confirmability**

Confirmability or objectivity refers to the *quality of the results* produced by an inquiry in terms of how well they are supported by participants who were involved in the study and by events that are independent of the inquirer (Williams, 2011). However, as I took on the role of a constructivist-interpretivist I valued subjectivity (Willis, 2007). I was aware of my possible biased interpretations of participants' views and of the research findings, but in order to assist in the confirmability of the research, I stated such bias from the onset of the study. Furthermore, by thoroughly recording the interactions with participants, both in digital audio and in verbatim texts format, and by conducting member checking at the end of the study, I ensured that the confirmability of the study has been achieved.

#### **3.3.6.5. Authenticity**

Authenticity refers to the extent to which the researcher fairly and faithfully shows a range of applicable, yet different realities or viewpoints of the research topic (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). As the data collection process involved eight individuals, each with their own perspectives and lived experiences, it is safe to say that a wide range of viewpoints have been analysed and incorporated in the study. The authenticity of the study may then be confirmed by consulting the interview recordings and the associated verbatim transcripts. Member checking was also used to ensure that participants can confirm the research and its findings.

### **3.4. CONCLUSION**

Chapter 3 outlined the research design and research methodology. This study was done using a qualitative research approach, with a constructivist-interpretivist paradigmatic view. Case study research methodology was used in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to gain insight into how leadership development happens in the home-schooling context. Data analysis was done using thematic content analysis and applying a priori coding. The valuable experiences and perceptions of learners and their parents obtained during the data collection exercise provided first-hand insights into how learner leadership development happens in their specific home-schooling contexts. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the ethical considerations, as well as the quality criteria of this study. Quality measurements in research are an essential part of the research process, as it ensures that the study and its end results adhere to proper standards and meets the necessary

requirements, making it trustworthy. The next chapter elaborates on data interpretation and the eventual findings of this study.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 3 presented the research design and methodology, and elaborated on and motivated the methodological choices and paradigmatic perspectives of this study. It further explained how it is used to determine and describe how learner leadership development happens in the home-schooling environment. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the empirical data collected during the interviewing process. The aim of this chapter is to structure and ultimately make sense of this data. As discussed in Chapter 3, thematic content analysis was used to analyse the captured data. Predetermined topics were identified from the investigated body of literature and the theoretical framework applied as part of this study.

This chapter opens with an explanation of the themes and subthemes identified and used in the data capture and analysis process. The participants are then introduced by providing some background, including descriptions of their interactions and memories during the interviews. These descriptions and memories are a combination of information from the researcher's journal, as well as direct words taken from the verbatim transcripts of interviews. The identified themes are then unpacked and described, and the relevant data collected from each participant presented in line with each of these themes. Throughout the data analysis process, I continuously referred back to and reviewed the transcriptions of the interviews, as well as using my researcher's journal to reflect on the interactions with participants.

### **4.2. EXPLANATION OF THEMES**

The themes used to guide the interviewing and data analysis process emerged from the literature review where leadership development was explored. The themes are based on an interpretation of a culmination of relevant literature sources, the most prominent of which were contributions by Van Linden & Fertman (1998), Ricketts & Rudd (2002), Bronfenbrenner (2005) and Sacks (2009). This indicates that a priori- or closed coding was applied to determine the themes of analysis.

The data was analysed and structured according to four main themes, namely (1) knowledge and awareness, (2) environments in which leadership development may happen, (3) key

role players who contribute to learner leadership development and (4) the application and mastery of leadership in the home environment. Each of these themes also contained sub-themes by which the data analysis was done. The table below provides an overview of the themes and the subthemes. Each theme is then elaborated on.

**Table 4-1: Overview of themes and subthemes**

Theme	Subthemes
Knowledge and awareness of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial exposure to the concept of leadership</li> <li>• Content and context of this initial exposure</li> <li>• Meaning of leadership</li> <li>• Understanding of what is a leader</li> <li>• Views on leadership</li> <li>• Understanding the importance of leadership development</li> </ul>
Environments in which leadership development happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family- and schooling environment</li> <li>• Extracurricular environments</li> </ul>
Key role players who contribute to learner leadership development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate family as mentors, peer group and support structure</li> <li>• Extended family</li> <li>• Friends and peer group</li> <li>• External groups and community</li> </ul>
Application and mastery of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to apply developing knowledge and leadership skills</li> <li>• Successful application of leadership skills, effectively moving towards mastery of that</li> </ul>

The first identified theme relates to knowledge and awareness about leadership. Knowledge and awareness is the first step in the process of learner leadership development. It refers to an individual's initial exposure to the concept of leadership and what learners need to know about leaders and leadership before they may proceed to the application stage of the

leadership development process (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). Awareness is created by the learners' new-found knowledge about leadership and they could possibly then see themselves as potential future leaders (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). As mentioned in Chapter 2, Sacks (2009) urges researchers to explore the youth's concepts of leadership and how they define leadership, as well as how learners conceive their own leadership abilities. For this reason, the subthemes identified from the literature on knowledge and awareness refer to when the learner first learnt about leadership, what they learnt, the meaning of leadership, their understanding of what a leader is, as well as how aware learners are of leadership, when it is imposed on them or when they personally use it. This may also refer to the awareness and impressions they have of other people who they regard as leaders. These subthemes were also applicable when presenting the data from the parents' perspective.

The second theme refers to the environments and context in which the learner experiences interaction, learning and development. Because home-schooling links family life to the schooling environment, this theme involves the analysis of the data in a certain set of microsystems, which collectively form a mesosystem of environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). These contextual or environmental systems ultimately impact on and modify the process of learner leadership development (Krishnan, 2010). In terms of microenvironmental systems, much of the findings focus on the immediate family and schooling environment, which becomes a crucial subtheme. Due to the nature of home-schooling, the family- and schooling environments are very much intertwined, making it difficult to distinguish them as two different environments. This environment relates to how home-schooled learners and their parents structure their daily activities around family life and the requirements of home-schooling. Some of the participants have very flexible family- and schooling environments, whereas others' is more controlled. In these instances, the families often try to replicate the structured nature of the traditional schooling system in their home environment.

Another microsystem discussed as a subtheme relates to the context in which learners participate in extracurricular activities, especially where they develop their interests and hobbies. This environment also involves the learners' involvement in the community and society as a whole. This microsystem falls outside the home- and schooling environment. Collectively these individual microsystems may be regarded as a single mesosystem, and

the findings will then also be interpreted in terms of interaction between microsystems and collectively as a single meso-environment. The relevance of this theme to the research topic is to determine how these identified environments, individually and collectively, influence the learner leadership development process.

The third identified theme relates to the individuals or key role players who influence the lives of the home-schooled learners and their leadership developmental process. These role players ultimately form the basis or cornerstone of interaction, learning and practice, all of which have been identified as crucial parts of the developmental process. In the home-schooling context, these role players generally include the immediate family, who simultaneously act as mentors, support structure and peer group. It, however, also includes friends, extended family members, peer groups, tutors and other external groups, such as clubs, groups and community members.

The fourth and final theme considers the application and eventual mastery of leadership. It investigates which opportunities are available for the application of leadership skills and knowledge in the home-schooling context. It also attempts to understand how a learner uses these opportunities to practise and apply the leadership knowledge and skills they are still developing. True to the maxim that practise makes perfect, the expected outcome of the enactment of developing leadership skills, through natural progression, is the mastering of these abilities in the long run. This theme also investigates whether leadership skills are effectively applied and the participants are actively moving towards mastery of these skills. These opportunities may be interpreted as the learners' responsibilities in their home environment, daily chores, community work, leadership roles they take on at home, in the community, or the groups in which they interact.

### **4.3. OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS**

The reason for introducing the participants before presenting the findings of the research is to share, in more detail, the experiences of the interviews, the interaction I had with them, the context and the environment in which the interviews were done. The participants included four home-schooled learners and their parents.

To comply with the rules of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to identify participants. For the purpose of this study, the four learner participants were named Sally, Tom, John

and Bill. The information shared in this section is their ages, their grades and their primary reasons for home-schooling. All of this information was part of my interview questions. I have included excerpts from my researcher's journal describing my reflections and memories of where I interviewed the learners and their parents, as well as how I experienced the environments in which the interviews were done and how it contributed to the learners' responses.

#### **4.3.1. Home-schooled learners**

The participants in this study had to comply with certain criteria as explained in previous chapters. They had to be home-schooled for a number of years, be between 16 and 18 years of age and completing grades 10 to 12. I set up these criteria to ensure that the learners who were interviewed had been completely exposed to all aspects of the home-schooling environment and I wanted them to truly reflect on their lived experiences in this context. They also had to be able to successfully answer questions, so an understanding of the questions and terminology used in discussions were important. Furthermore, I expected them to initiate further discussions around the initial topics and share their thoughts and feelings. I was also of the opinion that learners who have been in the home-schooling environment for an extended time would feel comfortable to share their experiences and answer questions. It was expected that they would have been exposed to leadership in some way or form. These learners are also in the final stages of their secondary education and will soon be taken up in the workforce or further their studies at a tertiary institution. Their further involvement in society after school and outside of their home environment will possibly require leadership skills or there will be leaders who they must follow. I needed to understand how they perceive leadership and how leadership skills are developed up to this point. Although these specific criteria would not guarantee the expected outcomes, I used my teaching experience and working with learners in this specific age group and developmental stage as a reliable starting point to set up the criteria.

Two of the participants, Tom and John were 16 years old and in grade 10, Sally was 17 and completing grade 11, while Bill was 18 and in grade 12. The number of years that these learners have been home-schooled varied. Two of them have been home-schooled between nine and ten years and only completed grades 1 and 2 in the traditional schooling system. Another has been home-schooled for six years and had completed some grades in a school.

The last participant had not been home-schooled as long as the others, he had only been home-schooled for three years from grade 8.

During the interviews, I deliberately asked the learners questions on how they experience the home-schooling environment, how their schooling is structured and their reason(s) for choosing to home-school. The purpose of this was to better understand them, as well as gain a better contextual understanding as to why they responded in certain ways. I also added these questions to illustrate that although the learners are more or less in the same age group or developmental stage and completing the same grades, they still vary considerably.

The reasons for choosing home-schooling differed greatly. I initially asked the learners why they chose home-schooling and what factors contributed to their decision. I realised that in most cases the parents primarily made the decision to home-school their children and only in some instances parents consulted with their children before making the final decision. I elaborate on the reasons for these decisions in the section introducing the parents who participated in this study.

From a personal viewpoint, I also experienced and reflected on each of the interviews and wanted the learners to feel comfortable in the space that we met and did the interview. I considered the ideal place to be their own home but was unsure whether it would be possible to do the interviews there or whether they or their parents would feel comfortable with me entering their personal space to question them. I interviewed three learners and their parents in their homes and interviewed one learner and their parent at an agreed upon venue. Initially, I sensed uncertainty from the learners in our first interactions and could see that they were nervous, probably not entirely sure of what would be expected of them. All of them asked me where I wanted to sit to do the interview. I asked them to take me to the place in their home where they felt most comfortable and obligingly they took me to where they felt most at ease. The following journal entries describe the spaces where I interviewed a few of the participants.

#### **Researcher's journal entry 4-1: Interview with Tom – his space (24 April 2017)**

Today, I had an overwhelming experience during the interview with Tom. He is an intelligent and interesting human being. He took me to the place in his house where he felt most comfortable. To him, that is his room. His very spacious bedroom was more than just that, as it was also his working and living area, with enough space to be effective, efficient and productive in his everyday activities. At first when I met Tom, I believed him to be an uncertain and uncomfortable person, lacking confidence. These first impressions of him were so wrong.

Once I entered his world, he was actually the exact opposite. He was confident, self-assured and expressed his thoughts and feelings in the most interesting way. His room was filled with the art that he had created. He had this huge desk where all his books were spread out, he had a bench at his window and a cat lying on it soaking up the sun. It was a structurally disorganised, yet personally organised space. When I saw the change in his demeanour, I wondered, how can the space that a learner functions in contribute to his or her learner leadership development?

#### **Researcher's journal entry 4-2: Interview with Bill – his space (25 April 2017)**

Today I interviewed Bill, which was quite different to the interview I had with Tom yesterday. The first impressions of Bill were that he is very happy-go-lucky. He was so welcoming and friendly and seemed excited to talk to me. As in my other interviews, I also told Bill that I wanted him to choose where we do the interview. It didn't matter to me, I wanted him to feel comfortable. Bill chose to do the interview in their living room. He flopped down on the couch, in his shorts and casual T-shirt with no shoes. He looked like someone who is happy with themselves and a specific space, room or environment won't matter to him, because he is confident and self-assured.

#### **4.3.2. Parents of home-schooled learners**

In all of these learners' home-environments, parents play a vital role in their development as leaders and for this reason, a parent of each learner was also interviewed as part of the data collection process. During the interviews, it was noted that only mothers were available to participate because the learners' fathers were working away from home. It became apparent that the mother plays a larger role in the home-schooled learner's day to day development because she either did not work or worked from home. This meant that she was available to play a more hands-on role in their child's schooling and development. It should be noted that some mothers were more forthcoming and provided a richer description and more details than others and their responses are used to explain and highlight some of the data findings.

As mentioned before, the parents primarily decided on home-schooling for their children. The reasons for this were financial, uncertainty about the effectiveness of the traditional schooling system and its ability to meet the needs of their children, while religious reasons in some cases also attributed to the choice. The primary reason why, for example, Sally's parents chose home-schooling for their children was its affordability. Sally has five siblings and to their parents, home-school made more financial sense. In the cases of Bill and John, their respective parents weren't happy with the quality of the existing traditional schooling system and wanted more from their children's education. They felt that they had to take on the responsibility of providing additional input and exposure with regard to their children's education. Tom, on the other hand, struggled to adapt to school. Although he excelled academically, emotionally and socially he experienced difficulties in the traditional schooling system. The school did not address his specific requirements and his parents opted for home-schooling.

Other reasons included that they wanted to concentrate on academic performance and in a school, they found it difficult to do so because other learners in the class didn't have the same focus. Related to this was the fact that most schools didn't make provision for out of the ordinary subject choice as part of the curriculum, which was required for certain career paths. Home-schooling provided the participants with the flexibility and means to explore a wider variety of academic fields on their own terms. They also felt that in a school, learners are only taught the academic aspect but the practical implementation in real-life situations

was lacking. The extracts below from some of the interviews provide additional insight in this respect.

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-1: Bill’s interview (25 April 2017)**

*“Home-schooling is supposed to be to not only learn about the work and to get an education, but how to apply the work that you learn in books to your everyday life and the other way around.”*

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-2: Tom’s mother’s interview (24 April 2017)**

*“The pull was freedom to get the kids to dig deeper in what they show as their interest and abilities and to develop those. Rather than to develop a thin layer of knowledge about everything, they can go in deeper and develop them. Thinking and reasoning for me is very important. It contributed to why I wanted to do more than what was available.”*

This perception of an inadequate learning experience was attributed to large learner numbers in classes, limited abilities of educators and a rigid, yet full, curriculum to cover within a limited and restrictive timeframe. One final reason was that home-schooling suited their family’s way of life and schedules. Certain parents had flexible working hours, worked from home or were qualified educators, all of which enabled them to use home-schooling. The responsibility for successfully using home-schooling is a collaborative effort from both the parents and the learners. In all cases the parents gave their children a sense of freedom combined with responsibility and consequences, should those responsibilities not be met. Sally captured this notion when she said:

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-3: Sally’s interview (14 April 2017)**

*“When doing home-schooling you have to create your own structure.”*

#### **4.4. THE PROCESS OF LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

In the next section, I report on the findings related to the process of learner leadership development and how it is applied in the home-schooling environment. After establishing and explaining the respective themes, I present the recorded data in line with those themes.

##### **4.4.1. Theme 1: Knowledge and awareness of leadership**

In the section where the participants were introduced it was mentioned that Sally, Tom and John were in the traditional schooling system before being home-schooled. Sally remembered being a group leader when she attended a traditional school. She mentioned that her friends were scared of the boys and couldn't interact with them in certain situations. She described herself as the leader of the group, as well as the negotiator and being the 'tough one'. She described the traditional school as her first engagement with leadership and the leadership learning environment. In the home-schooling environment, she was made aware of leadership by observing the behaviour of her older sisters and their responsibilities in the home towards their younger sisters. This meant that they helped their parents to run the household properly every day and ensured that their younger sisters did their chores and school work. For Sally, her older sisters were an example of what leadership is and should be and in so doing inadvertently acted as Sally's mentors.

Tom remembered when he attended primary school that leadership was one of the main rules or principles that one should adhere to. Teachers were the leaders in the school and examples of leadership that learners should strive to emulate. Tom was also chosen as a class- and merit leader. One thing that Tom mentioned when he spoke about his leadership position in the traditional school was that because he excelled academically, his peers regarded him as a leader. Tom felt uncomfortable with being the leader in class and found it difficult to understand why he was chosen in the first place. He gained his knowledge about leadership from the school he was in but learners' perceptions of what leadership is and who should be leaders differed.

For John, his knowledge about leadership was also gleaned from attending a traditional school. He was not chosen for a leadership position, but observed leadership in the general structure of grade- and group leaders, as well participating in sports and other extramural activities. There was always a sports team captain who he had to follow. He also mentioned

that in the home-schooling environment when they do work in groups, arrange activities or socialise they do not choose a leader. They rather work together to get things done. One person does not do all the work. John said that you do not have to be in a leadership position to be able to lead. You may be in any position and still be a leader. All three these participants remember initially learning about leadership when they attended a traditional school, gained some knowledge of leadership and were made aware of their own leadership abilities in this setting.

As for Bill, who started home-schooling at a very early age, he said that he first learnt about leadership when he noticed it in his group of friends. Some of his friends would start following a specific friend, who would then assume the role of leader in that particular setting. For John, most of his leadership knowledge and awareness was gained by observing certain roles in his group of friends, as well as the roles that family members take on in the household. John actively participates in different sports and he is made aware of leadership by being part of a team.

Sally, John, Tom and Bill mentioned that in the home-schooling environment they gained knowledge of leadership by attending character-building camps or camps arranged specifically for home-schooled learners. When attending these camps, one person is placed in a leadership position and the rest of the group is expected to follow. In terms of the academic curriculum, they also indicated that it dealt with the topic of leadership and knowledge relating to leadership in an allocated section.

From the parents' perspective, they mentioned that knowledge about leadership is transferred through informal discussions between themselves and their children. Tom's mother described that in the mornings before they start with the academic, work they sit around the dining room table and talk about various topics. They have a 'bring your electronics to the table' policy. So, while they are discussing a topic they can do research on it at the same time. A topic they regularly talk about is the political leaders and leadership in our country. For her, one way of obtaining knowledge and creating awareness of leadership is through informal discussions. The following section is the direct words from the verbatim transcripts in which she describes their discussions on leadership.

#### **Verbatim transcript extract 4-4: Tom's mother's interview (24 April 2017)**

*"For instance, the big issues at this moment in our country has to do with political leadership. That is something we discuss every day and Tom can't wait for his father to come home because then we have more opinionated discourse about our leadership in our country and it is played out."*

Tom's mother also said that she assists and guides Tom when he is doing a certain task, thereby providing leadership and mentorship. In these instances, the approach is to provide the learner with the necessary knowledge to learn without having to learn from their own mistakes. Tom's mother described the following as a regular occurrence:

#### **Verbatim transcript extract 4-5: Tom's mother's interview (24 April 2017)**

*"I try to give leadership in those instances to say we do certain things like this because it works like this."*

For Bill's mother, knowledge is gained about leadership and their children are made aware of it in their household. She explained that knowledge is gained by observing how a father leads his household and what a mother does to stimulate decision-making and self-worth for her family. Knowledge is also obtained through what parents teach their children. Bill's mother mentioned that through play, children may also learn to lead, especially when they are put into smaller groups and given responsibility. To explain, she said the following:

#### **Verbatim transcript extract 4-6: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)**

*"I am of the conviction that if you put a child in a smaller group they actually have to take the responsibility or the leadership. If a child is always in a big group few children get the opportunity to stand out and take leadership."*

John's mother actively participates in various forms of sports with her children. According to her, knowledge about leadership and awareness of it is gained through participating in team sports and activities. Sally's mother emphasises that creating a disciplined and well-structured household for her family is important. This environment creates opportunities for

learning about leadership by following a more rigid schedule and allocating responsibilities to her children.

Although most of the participants first learnt about leadership in a traditional school, the focus of this study is how they learn about leadership in the home-schooling environment. Home-schooled learners learn about leadership primarily by talking to their parents and siblings, observing how these individuals take on various roles in the home and to a lesser extent learning from available curricula and being exposed to leadership by attending leadership camps. From the interviews, it would seem there are a number of different ways in which learners are made aware of the concept of leadership. Interestingly enough, in most instances, the initial exposure was experienced through the traditional schooling system. However, in the home-schooling environment, most knowledge is transferred from parents or older siblings, through observation on the learner's part, or through intended and structured discussions on the subject of leadership.

After investigating where the participants learnt about leadership, I wanted to find out what they knew about leadership, as well as what their views on leadership were. I also wanted to establish whether they considered leadership development to be of any importance to them.

Sally, Bill and John, found it quite easy to explain what they think a leader is and provided a clear description. Although their responses differed, they all spoke to what the description of a leader is and correlated with the general conceptualisations discussed in Chapter 2. This included the elements of what youth leadership is and which abilities youth leaders and adult leaders should have. They mentioned that a leader is someone who is supportive, really believes in themselves, responsible, takes action in the group, participates, is organised, considers others' opinions, creates structure and has an understanding of who people are. Most of their answers relate to working with others and taking them into consideration when being a leader and collaboratively working together to achieve a goal.

All the participants found it easy to explain what a leader is except Tom. He found it difficult and ended up providing examples of who he thought were good leaders. The extract from my researcher's journal gives my thoughts on this immediately following the interview.

### Researcher's journal entry 4-3: Reflection on Tom's interpretation of a leader (24 April 2017)

*Tom finds it difficult to explain what a leader is but he is able to provide me with examples of who he thinks good leaders are. He mentions Nelson Mandela as someone who he regards as a good leader. He explains that 'he was the one who tried to settle the whole thing of racial discrimination and prejudice. I respect him for that because he managed to lead the people into a better light. When it comes to other subjects like art then I respect Van Gogh as a leader. He was able to lead people into not just making an expression of what they actually see and he was mocked because of that. He has taught us to explore yourself (sic) in an impressionist way and to never be ashamed of what we draw.'*

According to Tom, he finds it difficult to describe what a leader is because most of the time he works alone, indicating a certain preference towards isolation or individualism. All the participants acknowledged that leadership and being able to lead is an important aspect of everyday life. Sally and Bill stated that everyone will at one time or another be in a situation where leadership is required. Most of the learners said that leadership depends on the person and their specific preference and abilities. They were also of the opinion that you have to be a born leader and that leadership is a talent, underpinned by skills or abilities that are inherently there from the beginning.

When interviewing the parents, I shifted my focus to their thoughts on what learner leadership is and their views on the importance of instilling leadership abilities in their children. Tom's mother described learner leadership as 'putting children in a leadership position', which is something she does not necessarily approve of. According to her, this simply puts one child in charge of another and does not in all instances translate into that child actually leading the other. She sees this in her own home when she asks the eldest to be in charge of their younger siblings. The elder children do not necessarily lead but rather use the power of the position they are in to get things done. She compares this with what, in her opinion, happens in a traditional school, where children are put in charge of a class or are leaders in the school, even though they don't have the necessary skills to lead and may often abuse that perceived position of power, which she doesn't consider to be

leadership. In Tom's mother's opinion, the learner as a leader should have the ability to speak their mind, rather than being the one with the 'big mouth'. She mentioned that learner leadership may also be regarded as leading- and directing yourself, especially in the home environment. Because home-schooling is less rigid, it becomes the child's responsibility to create their own structure and to learn how to manage themselves to achieve their goals. These were Tom's mother's direct words:

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-7: Tom's mother's interview (24 April 2017)**

*"Like I said, I create space for them to be independent thinkers, which in my mind is equal to being a leader. Even if you only leader (sic) yourself, you know. Only if it is just for your own direction."*

Bill's mother described learner leadership as 'learners learning to lead', which may happen in any situation. She stated that learning about leadership and developing leadership skills may be achieved through play. According to her, there are opportunities to lead through play, as well as opportunities to follow the leader in the group. For example, when an older child plays with a younger child, the older child automatically becomes the leader and the younger child follows them. She described play as a healthy place to learn to lead, as indicated below.

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-8: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)**

*"Play is a very good way to learn to lead. They also learn to follow. Play is a very good way to learn to lead in the home-schooling environment. They have the free time to do so."*

John's mother's views on leadership echoed his. When asked what she thinks learner leadership is, she did not provide a clear description but stated that she believes that some people are natural born leaders and others are not. These were her exact words on the matter:

#### Verbatim transcript extract 4-9: John's mother's interview (21 April 2017)

*“Ek glo mense is ‘n gebore leier of nie. Ek glo mense het dit of het dit nie. Dit is soos ball sense, of jy het dit of jy het dit nie.”*

**Translation:** *I believe people are either born leaders or they aren't. I believe people have it or they don't. It is like having ball sense, you have it or you don't.*

Sally's mother is also of the opinion that one is either a natural born leader or not. She states that when one of her children exhibits leadership abilities, she allocates more responsibility to that specific child to help them develop their skills.

When focusing on the importance of leadership development and leadership in general, the parents' responses varied. Some of them explained that leadership development is important while others said it is not.

Sally's mother said that without any doubt leadership and its development is very important. Leadership skills and the ability to lead will be necessary somewhere in her child's life. John's mother considers the development of her child's leadership abilities as important but said that as a parent one shouldn't place too much pressure on a child to take on leadership positions. According to her, if a child really shows the ability to lead, a parent may take it from there and further develop their leadership skills and abilities. In their household, John does display leadership abilities, but his sibling prefers to be the follower and feels safe when John is the leader.

For Tom's mother, leadership development is not too important. She is of the opinion that to be able to be a leader you should have the talent to do so. She also adds to Sally's and John's mothers' views that you should be a natural born leader. For Bill's mother, leadership development is important, but only to a certain extent. It is important in the sense that leadership is the fruit of what she teaches her children. The focus, however, is not on leadership development. As far as she is concerned, it happens because she equips her children with certain values and skills. The following two extracts from the verbatim transcripts of Bill's mother's interview illustrates this perception.

#### **Verbatim transcript extract 4-10: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)**

*"I always taught my kids when they were small that you can always pay someone to check your spelling, you can use your calculator to do your maths but you can't replace good manners and you can't replace respect. To be able to actually do the thinking, the guys who are actually leaders in the world do the thinking. They do the imagining and the reflecting."*

#### **Verbatim transcript extract 4-11: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)**

*"My focus isn't on leadership but it happens because I am teaching you self-confidence, responsibility and your place in the world. I am teaching you on (sic) what you are good at and also appreciating what others are good at. For me leadership is not the focus but the fruit."*

She emphasises that the success of learner leadership depends on the opportunities that children are given to explore leadership and also the support they receive from their parents, siblings and friends.

#### **4.4.2. Theme 2: Environments in which leadership development happens**

Hewes, Khan & Ali (2009) identify three key environments in which young people learn and develop skills. These environments refer to the family environment, in the context of their schooling and what learners do in their leisure time. These environments should provide opportunities for learners to learn about leadership and to apply their leadership skills and abilities. These environments are part of the micro- and mesosystems in the Bronfenbrenner (2005) ecological model. As stated in Chapter 2, due to the nature and target group of this study, the emphasis is on the microsystems and mesosystem in which learners interact with the world around them.

##### **4.4.2.1. Family- and schooling environment**

In keeping with the Bronfenbrenner (2005) ecological model, the first and probably most prominent microsystem is the family- and schooling environment, which is considered as a single, interlinked environment in this context.

It was evident throughout the course of the interviews and the data analysis process that family plays a vital role in all of the participants' lives. The structure and function in each household differ in various ways. This includes what the learners are exposed to and how they are exposed to certain things, their responsibilities and the opportunities they have in their household and family environment. When I asked the participants to describe a normal day in their lives I noticed that both learners and their parents have the freedom to structure their time according to what they regard as important. The flexibility of time and choice is a key element in the home-schooling environment. In all the families I interviewed, it was also evident that collaboration in this flexible environment is considered key to balancing their schooling and family lives. I will elaborate on the roles that families and family members play under the third theme – key role players.

In all the households, the father works full-time, while the mothers have the time, ability and flexibility to attend to- and accommodate the needs of their home-schooled children. John's mother owns a business and has the flexibility to structure her time according to what is necessary. A normal day in John's family's home is quite relaxed. They wake-up later in the morning because they go to sleep late at night. Normally at 9 o'clock, after breakfast, John and his younger sibling sit down to their school work and continue until they are done with the day's academic responsibilities.

Their mother helps them to structure their academic work, but they are responsible for their own time management and to complete their tasks. John's mother mentioned that the children attend computer classes on certain days of the week and she takes them there. At lunchtime, the family sits down for a meal, and afterwards, the children may spend the rest of their time on their hobbies or extramural activities. John's whole family participates in extramural activities which normally start in the evening and they plan their days accordingly. For this family, travelling is very important. John's mother said that they enjoy travelling together as a family and visiting different parts of the country is important. She explained that because they are home-schooling, they have the luxury to travel and plan trips at any time of the year. These trips allow her children to explore and broaden their horizons, while the travelling also doesn't interfere with her children's schooling because their education schedule is flexible.

Tom's family also has an adaptable home- and schooling environment. Tom's mother is a homemaker, while his father is employed full-time. Tom's youngest sibling attends a

traditional school, so in the morning when his father and sister leave, Tom and his mother enjoy some free time. Tom usually sleeps until his mother wakes him, which at times may be late because he prefers working until late at night. After waking up and using some free time, Tom and his mother have breakfast together while they talk. Tom's mother refers to this time of the morning as their informal learning time. Tom's extramural activities are scheduled for the morning and afterwards, he has to do his academic work. His mother helps him to plan for certain subjects throughout the year and occasionally encourages and guides him to reach his academic goals. However, on a day-to-day basis, Tom is responsible to effectively manage himself and how he uses his time. His mother had this to say:

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-12: Tom's mother's interview (24 April 2017)**

*"I think when you are in a nice environment, obviously you work so much better. As adults we can control that. Children have no control over that, which is unfair. We created a safe, conducive space for Tom to work in. Which proved to be very effective."*

Bill's home-schooling environment is also very flexible. His parents manage their own business, which allows his mother to sometimes work from home. Bill's family is very involved in their community. He and his siblings are youth church leaders and his father facilitates cell groups every week. Bill's mother is also involved in arranging various home-schooling events, which he attends with his siblings and their peers. Bill and his siblings structure their own academic work and have to manage themselves to achieve their required academic outcomes. Bill's mother does, however, provide support and guidance when necessary.

In Sally's home, some aspects are slightly different since they have a more structured approach and a school day is scheduled in the home environment. They also achieve this by mirroring a classroom environment with desks and chairs where Sally and her siblings focus on their academic work. Sally's parents both work and operate the family business, so the children help to make the home environment function effectively and efficiently. Sally and her mother described their home as very organised. Sally mentioned that in the morning she makes breakfast for everyone. They have breakfast together after which they all go to work. Sally and her siblings tend to their academic responsibilities until lunchtime, they then have to manage their lunch break to include time off from their schoolwork while also doing some household chores. After lunch, they return to their academic work, but only if they still

have work left to do. As a group of siblings, they generally have the responsibility to manage their own academic workload and time. In the afternoons, they mainly participate in extramural activities. Sally mentioned that she and her siblings work together to complete all their household chores and schoolwork. On weekends Sally and her siblings have free time to socialise and enjoy their hobbies.

In all four cases, the learners indicated that they have flexible home- and schooling environments and that it is their responsibility to manage themselves, their workload and their time. In some instances, the parents provide guidance by collaboratively working with their children to plan their academic workloads. On occasion, the parents will monitor the progress of their children's academic work and motivate them to work faster or more effectively.

#### **4.4.2.2. Extracurricular environments**

The second microsystem or environment refers to the extracurricular activities which the learners actively participate in on a daily basis outside the home- and family environment. All the learners are involved in different activities, which include sports, home-school specific events and camps, as well as community and religious events. These environments differ from their home environments in that they involve interaction with others outside of their immediate family, while the activities in these environments also differ from their day-to-day home-based activities.

As mentioned, all the learners interviewed are actively involved in various extramural activities. Most of these activities involve groups, with varying levels of interaction with peers and older people alike. Sally attends music classes with a tutor and is accompanied by her siblings. She is also a dance teacher and teaches dance to younger children. She mentioned that being a dance teacher taught her how to deal with situations and to take control when it comes to younger children. It also helped her to improve her interaction with peers of the same age. One of Sally's other interests is photography, an interest she shares with one of her siblings who often goes with her to photo shoots. When we talked about her extramural activities I specifically asked her about the arrangements that have to be made when she wants to participate in one of the activities. She explained that she first has to persuade her parents and do the necessary research, including finding out how much it will cost, the times and how much it will influence her academic work. She finds persuading her parents the

most difficult part. Because Sally is involved in various activities she interacts with both younger and older people. She also takes on different leadership roles depending on the situation and activity, for instance, as a dance teacher she has to be the leader while during music classes she is being taught and has to follow the instructions of her tutor. Sally actively chooses these environments, based on her interests, and feels at ease with them.

While Tom also participates in extramural activities, he admitted that these activities are more focused on individual growth and performance. He does tap dancing which he considers exercise and also takes piano- and animation classes. He mentioned that he wants to pursue animation as a career and that he prefers working alone. In the mentioned environments, Tom rarely interacts with more than one or two people at a time and when he does, he generally does not take on the role of leader, as he mostly follows the directions of a tutor or instructor.

Bill said that he likes sports and plays ice hockey, softball and does mountain biking for his extramural activities. He explained his role on the ice hockey team as the motivator, which is most important when his team is losing or lagging behind. Bill is also actively involved in his church and youth groups. Some of his responsibilities in the church and youth groups are to attend weekly meetings and helping to arrange certain church events. In these groups, Bill is often expected to guide and facilitate conversation. Bill and his siblings also serve in the broader community by doing outreach work in townships. He also attends home-schooling camps and participates in a home-school concert arranged by home-schooled learners every second year. John also takes part in planning the concert. Basically, the learners take full responsibility for arranging the concert and are encouraged to share opinions and brainstorm ideas, which include decisions around themes, costumes, music and so on. I noticed that both learners are encouraged to arrange their own activities and to explore their interests on their own terms. As with Bill, John also likes to participate in a number of sports. Both John and Bill take part in a large number of similar extramural activities, which place them in the same environments. They both also have to balance their roles and responsibilities in these environments, with what is expected and required of them in their home- and schooling environment.

#### **4.4.3. Theme 3: Key role players who contribute to learner leadership development**

This section explains how these key role players are involved in the home-schooled learners' lives. This theme refers to the interaction the learner has with their siblings, family, friends or community, and how these interactions assist with leadership development. Home-schooled learners are exposed to a number of different interactions with a large array of people (in terms of age, gender, race and backgrounds), and not only peers. This suggests that they could have a better understanding of the bigger picture, due to more exposure to different levels of interaction. This, I believe, instils a level of independence, which leads to the development of key leadership skills, and is unrivalled in the traditional schooling environment.

In the home environment, parents play the role of the educator and parent, but even more so, the mentor. The parents spend more time with their children and have a very close relationship with them. In all the interview responses, the parents shared their stories on how they create spaces for their children to further explore their interests and abilities, while also encouraging them to speak their minds and engage in conversation. In so doing, they become independent thinkers and young people. The parents also attempt to instil a sense of responsibility and purpose in their children.

Bill's mother said that it can be quite challenging taking on the role of being the parent and the educator, especially when schooling children from different ages and phases. She explained how she learnt to be creative to accommodate various grades and different levels of thinking. During our discussion on this topic, she made these two statements:

#### **Verbatim transcript extract 4-13: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)**

*"I had to get over thinking 'classroom', to get into thinking much more."*

#### Verbatim transcript extract 4-14: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)

*"We do the same work and we stimulate (sic). What happens is the older ones stimulate thinking with the younger ones. And the younger ones have interesting things to say because they have other questions. They want to know things about but (sic) how did that one feel, or you know things that have less academic value. It is more emotional thinking and talk."*

The interaction between siblings in the home-schooling environment is evident. Sally not only structures her own time, she is also responsible for directing and motivating her younger sisters to create structure. Sally and her siblings work closely together to structure their time around school work, doing household chores and arranging and attending extramural activities together. Sally said that being in a confined space, such as their in-house class, you need to learn to get along with your siblings. Although this is challenging for her, she also emphasises the benefits of being 'forced' to interact closely with her siblings and that it helped her to build better relationships with her family. She has also had to learn to adapt and resolve conflict. Sally said that in her mind, her older siblings often act as leaders and mentors. John and Bill also have close relationships with their siblings, and they are all involved in every aspect of one another's lives.

All four learners who participated in the study, have younger siblings and they take the role of being the older 'leading' sibling very seriously. Bill described himself as being his younger brother's mentor and that he has to set an example for him. He spends most of his time with his brother and feels that he will follow his behaviour. When asked what his responsibilities as the older sibling are, he explained that one of his responsibilities is setting an example. He finds that setting an example for his younger brother is one of the most difficult things to do, but realises how important it is. The extract below is Bill's response when asked about his responsibilities as the older sibling.

#### Verbatim transcript extract 4-15: Bill's interview (25 April 2017)

*Question: What kind of responsibilities do you have because you are the older brother?*

*Bill's response: "Ja, um, this is one of the hardest, making sure that I set an example for my youngest brother because I realise when I say I am not a fan of broccoli, he will also say he is his also (sic) not a fan. So, I realise that I have to check myself (sic) up in a way. I mentor him. That's my main responsibility."*

As for other siblings, Bill shares a room with one of his older siblings and says that although they don't have a lot in common they do interact a lot. Sally is also an older sibling and explains that being older means that she has to set an example for the younger ones. She says that because she is older, she feels the pressure of being the responsible one and sometimes thinks it is a bit unfair. She also thinks that taking on more responsibility is a good initiative from her parents and she respects it. Tom and John also have a close relationship with their siblings and mention the usual brother-sister rivalry. Where Sally and Bill describe their relationships with their siblings as being very interactive and hands-on, John's and Tom's relationships with their siblings are less interactive and more self-aimed. It is clear that there are varying dynamics in sibling- relationships and rivalry in home-schooled households, which could potentially lead to different outcomes in terms of development.

Other key role players outside the immediate family include peers and friends. John, Bill and Sally mention scenarios and situations where they interact with peers and friends who do not include their siblings. Tom said he enjoys working alone and prefers limiting his interactions with people outside his immediate family. The interaction with peers and friends in Tom's case is not as evident as in the other participants' responses. In Sally's case, she interacted mostly with her sisters. They function as a team and work together to get things done, while they also participate in the same extramural activities and share different hobbies. Sally and her sisters do socialise but her siblings fulfil the roles of friends as well.

When explaining the role that friends play in his life, John mentioned that normally people assume that home-school learners don't have friends and that they don't socialise as much as learners in a traditional school. According to John, this is not the case. He participates in various team sports and most of his friends are also home-schooled learners. They see

each other every week on the sports field and at social events. John also mentioned that in the home-schooling community the learners arrange their own courses and social events. It is also at these events and gatherings where John saw a few of his friends taking on leadership positions. He mentioned that in this group they work together and support one another, whether it is while practising as a team or doing something else.

John told the story of when he first started participating in one of his activities, he was still unsure of the game and didn't know many people. He said that all the home-schooled learners who also participated in the same activity made him feel welcome, supported him and helped him to feel more at ease. He said those who were so supportive and encouraged him, were not the captains of the team, but to him, they were good examples of natural, yet unelected, leaders.

Bill, who spent the longest time in the traditional schooling system before becoming a home-schooled learner, said that he wouldn't mind going back to school because there are more opportunities to socialise. He said that because he is home-schooling, he only sees his friends once a week at sports practise or events. In Bill's case, he has long-standing friendships with learners who are not home-schooling, which is possibly the reason for his response, but he has, however, made friends with home-schooled learners.

#### **4.4.4. Theme 4: Application and mastery of leadership**

Application and mastery refer to the opportunities in the home environment, as well as outside the home where learners can apply their new-found and developing leadership skills and abilities. Mastery refers to successfully being able to lead and act as a leader in various environments. Parents and learners were able to provide various examples of where the learners felt that they were leading and they also mentioned certain situations inside and outside the home environment where learners were required to lead and take action.

Bill's mother explained that when Bill and his siblings became teenagers, they gave them the opportunity to function more independently. She explained that she and Bill's father refer to these new-found responsibilities and the freedom of making your own decisions as being an 'appie-adult' (apprentice adult). She mentioned that the title of 'appie-adult' varies from one child to the other. When they, as parents, see their child is starting to think about the world around them, they allow them to be 'appie-adults'. This involves giving them an

allowance to buy their own clothes and toiletries, make their own decisions and become more independent. She explained that she always reminds her children when they are in the 'appie-adult' phase, that they will always be there for them, but they are becoming adults and they have to make their own decisions. She elaborated by saying that Bill and his siblings have the freedom to speak their minds. In the extract below, Bill's mother explains the concept of being an 'appie-adult':

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-16: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)**

"We sort of do this family ritual when they are approximately 13 years old, it differs from child to child or when we see they are really starting to think about the world. Then we tell them we have seen in you (sic), you are now an appie-adult. We don't have teenagers in our house. We have appie-adults. We tell them we are not going to leave you, we will be with you all the way, next to you to help you. But you are the adult and you have to make the decisions. We also give them an allowance and they have to buy their own toiletries and clothes and things like that. They can't get to the shop without me. I have to take them, so I will be with them, close by if they have to decide between this or that and they can ask me. I am thinking of this one, but that one (sic) and the price, etc. We can help them and they can listen to us or not listen to us. They will get to learn (sic) the real-life experience of taking responsibility. So, we have decided to do that kind of (sic), okay you are big and we believe in you. Don't worry we will teach you but you are an apprentice, learning to be and to live like an adult. So, um, it is a process and it takes some time, we have to be more hands-off and sometimes we have to be okay this didn't work. You did not take responsibility so we need to take some more (sic) from you."

Bill has been given the title of apprentice adult and with that title comes certain responsibilities and consequences, should those responsibilities not be met. Bill's mother also explained that she always encourages her children to speak their minds. During the 'appie-adult' stage she invites them to sit with the adults and listen to- and take part in adult conversations, usually along the lines of the following statement:

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-17: Bill’s mother’s interview (25 April 2017)**

*“You know you are not a child any more, come sit with the adults. You don’t have to say anything, just listen.”*

She explained that as parents, they intentionally put their children in situations where they have to take part in adult conversations so they may learn how adults communicate. This does not only relate to the topics of adult conversations but also how adults communicate with each other. At first, Bill and his siblings only listened, sometimes they didn’t want to be part of the discussions but with time, they learnt about life and developed opinions and expressed their views. In the following extract, Bill’s mother explains where Bill and his siblings apply their ability to listen, communicate and express their opinions:

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-18: Bill’s mother’s interview (25 April 2017)**

*“So typically in our home when we have cell groups, they will have really meaningful things to say. The adults will then listen and appreciate it. So we have learned them (sic) that you have something to say, maybe not at first, so learn first. So, probably the questions you have, someone else also has. So take the boldness (sic) to ask.”*

Bill mentioned that he now reacts better to conflict situations or makes better decisions in situations where there is peer pressure. He also has the ability to reach out to others when necessary and often reflects on situations and tries to take valuable lessons from his experiences. These lessons help him to improve his ability to deal with situations and be a leader. Bill believes that he has the necessary skills to think independently and identify when to take the lead in a situation or when to step back. In the following extracts, Bill described how home-schoolers, including himself, apply leadership.

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-19: Bill's interview (25 April 2017)**

*"Home-schoolers tend to, not all, but home-schoolers tend to think for themselves. Say there is a situation and something goes wrong, they don't go to whoever is leading and say something is wrong and say I don't know how to fix it. They try to fix it themselves, try to see what is needed. Then if they still can't fix it, they will go to the leader and say, I need these tools, will you please provide it so that I can solve the problem or I can fix it (sic)."*

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-20: Bill's interview (25 April 2017)**

*"By leading myself (sic) I realise that I can use the same strategies to lead others."*

When considering Sally's situation, most of her application happens in the home. She manages her own academics, as well as helping her younger siblings, mentoring them in the same way she was mentored by her older sister. Sally also displays leadership abilities in the way she arranges all aspects of her extramural activities while collaborating with her parents and siblings to achieve certain goals and objectives. She is also a dance teacher, and here she has to apply leadership skills to maintain order in her class, while also teaching her students how to dance. In my opinion, Sally displays a number of key qualities that a leader should possess, even though she does not consider herself to be a leader. This can, for instance, be inferred from the following two statements:

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-21: Sally's interview (14 April 2017)**

*"I have to be an example and get them to do their work when my parents don't feel like it or don't have time. Other than that, I would say I basically just have to make sure that there is food on time and help with whatever my mom asks."*

#### Verbatim transcript extract 4-22: Sally's interview (14 April 2017)

*"Personally, I don't think I am a good leader. I think sometimes I do get stressed when I have to be a leader and the negative side of leadership takes over. Because I think I am not a born leader, it takes a lot of me (sic) to just jump into a situation and take control. Even though I can do it, I wouldn't say I am a good leader."*

For Sally's mother, the application and mastery of leadership development in the home environment is a byproduct of instilling discipline and a sense of responsibility. This is conveyed by providing a structured home- and schooling environment and allocating specific tasks, which in effect requires Sally to apply leadership skills when taking on certain leadership roles in the home. Sally's mother used the following analogy to explain her opinion:

#### Verbatim transcript extract 4-23: Sally's mother's interview (14 April 2017)

*"Hulle word soos diamante verhit by die huis en daar is waar die leierskap ontwikkel."*

**Translation:** *They are heated like diamonds at home and that is where leadership develops.*

John remembered that he felt like he was leading a group when they were arranging and participating in the concert mentioned earlier. He was the leader and the children in the group were younger than him. He was responsible to communicate with them, conveying messages and ideas on how to achieve the common goal of a memorable concert. He had to keep the little ones calm before the show and made sure that everyone in his group was well taken care of. John mentioned that one can be in any position and still be a leader. Being a sports team captain doesn't necessarily make you a leader. John is of the opinion that when participating in sports he often conveys certain leadership qualities, even though he is not the captain. He is also responsible for his own academics and making sure that he plans effectively and manages his time in such a way that he can get through his academic work, while also tending to his other tasks in and around the home. John's mother mentioned that if John is not done with certain sections of his work or if he does not manage to get to his chores, he is not allowed to attend certain social and extramural activities. John's mother also encourages him to speak his mind and share his opinions and thoughts. She also made

it clear that she constantly reminds him that he needs to listen to others and take their thoughts and opinions into consideration. John's mother explained that in the home-schooling environment, John and other home-schoolers interact with different people who often vary in age. She explained that these interactions with different age groups and socialising with a variety of children and adults is common in the home-schooling environment, something which is different to the traditional schooling system. These interactions are also not one-dimensional, as John is sometimes 'forced' to take on certain roles, not always simply being the listener and doing what adults tell him to do. In a sense, this is also the application and mastery of leadership skills, as it requires John and other home-schoolers to be adaptable, forcing them to leave their comfort zone and interact with a diverse group of people.

In Bill's case, he explained that his father helps and tutors him in mathematics. He mentioned that they disagree on various aspects when doing maths and in this situation, he has to show composure and listen to what his father has to say to resolve the conflict. He has the skills to listen to- and reason with his father, which he sometimes finds quite difficult to do. Bill's younger sibling relies on Bill to help him with certain academic work and Bill enjoys this kind of relationship. In the following interview extract, Bill's mother elaborates on the situations where Bill applies leadership in the home environment.

**Verbatim transcript extract 4-24: Bill's mother's interview (25 April 2017)**

"In the home environment, someone needs to take leadership with certain things. I stand back more and more as they grow up. It is very house (sic) orientated, it would be something like, it's Friday night and mom is not going to cook. Are we going to eat something, somewhere Bill? And then he would start and say, okay let's write down. You say this and you say this. You know that kind of thing. In our environment Bill is often the mediator. He finds a way to get things together. Who sits where, what do we watch and how the whole thing works out. And in some way, in his quiet way he finds a way in which it can work. It used to be mom and dad's role which they gradually take over because we give them the opportunity to. Obviously with boundaries."

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented and analysed the data according to the identified themes. It began with an introduction of the home-schoolers and their parents who participated in this study. It then explained the themes and how the themes for the data analysis were established. It went on to present the findings, reflections on- and interpretation of the data, supported by interview extracts taken from the verbatim transcripts. The learners' responses were given according to the topics and the discussion followed with excerpts from their parents' responses. In some cases, the learners' and parents' responses were combined.

The first themed focused on knowledge and awareness of leadership and learner leadership. The subthemes related to knowledge and awareness were the initial exposure to the concept of leadership, content and context of this initial exposure, the meaning of leadership, understanding of what is a leader, including their views on leadership and the importance of leadership development in the home environment. The second theme focused on the different environments the learners are exposed to and how these environments may provide opportunities for and possibly contribute to learner leadership development. The subthemes in which this analysis was done related to the family environment, in the context of their schooling and through what learners do in their leisure time. The third theme focused on the key role players and the interaction between them and the home-schooled learner. These key role players include the learner's immediate family as mentors and support structure, extended family, friends, peers, external groups and the community. The last theme referred to application and mastery of leadership. This relates to the opportunities inside as well as outside the home environment where learners can apply their new-found and developing leadership skills and abilities.

In the final chapter of this study, the findings are discussed further by using the existing literature as the necessary backdrop. I then refer to and answer the relevant research questions that were initially posed in Chapter 1. Finally, I conclude this dissertation by explaining the significance and limitations of this study and making recommendations for future studies.

## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 introduced the participants and presented the collected data. In this final chapter, the findings are presented, analysed and compared with the existing literature discussed in Chapter 2. As part of this analysis, the similarities and contradictions between the existing literature and the findings of this study are highlighted. This is done to better conceptualise the process of learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment, while also identifying the absence of information in the existing body of knowledge that could potentially open new avenues of research. By comparing similarities and contradictions between existing literature and the findings of this study, I am able to answer the secondary research questions which, in turn, led to answering the primary research question: How does learner leadership development happen in the home-schooling environment? The section concludes with a discussion on the significance and limitations of this study and recommendations for future research.

### 5.2. CORE FINDINGS

This section presents the core findings that emerged from the data analysis, in line with the identified themes used throughout this study. The table below is a summary of the core findings, grouped under the identified topics. A discussion of the core findings follows after.

**Table 5-1: Summary of core findings**

Themes	Core findings
Theme 1: Knowledge and awareness of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The traditional schooling system is often a source of initial exposure to leadership.</li><li>• Formal knowledge about leadership is transferred to a limited extent through a curriculum.</li><li>• Knowledge of leadership is gained by observing key role players' actions.</li><li>• Learners learn about leadership through play.</li><li>• Learners learn about leadership through informal discussions with key role players.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents' views on and knowledge of leadership influence their children's views on leadership.</li> <li>• There are some misconceptions and skewed perceptions about leadership development and leadership skills.</li> <li>• Learners generally don't view themselves as leaders.</li> <li>• Leadership and leadership development is regarded as important but was not the focus in all the cases.</li> </ul>
<p>Theme 2: Environments applicable to learner leadership development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership development happens most often in the home environment and environments where learners participate in extramural activities.</li> <li>• Leadership development is based on these environments because they are the spaces where learners interact with key role players.</li> <li>• These environments expose learners to different scenarios where leadership is evident and where they may practise leadership skills.</li> <li>• The home environment is generally very flexible and can be adapted to suit the home-school family's needs and preferences.</li> <li>• This flexibility supports and underpins the informal nature of learning about leadership.</li> <li>• Some families strive towards a structured home-schooling approach, where duties are allocated to individuals, whereas others use the flexibility of home-schooling to do what they want, when and where they feel it should or can be done.</li> </ul>
<p>Theme 3: Key role players in learner leadership development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key role players are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parents</li> <li>○ Siblings</li> <li>○ Friends and peers</li> <li>○ Members of the community</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents generally take on the roles of mentors, educators and caretakers.</li> <li>• Mothers play a more active role in the learners' day-to-day activities and development.</li> <li>• Older siblings often also take on mentorship roles and learners themselves mentor younger siblings.</li> <li>• Friends and peers provide opportunities to practise and apply leadership knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Members of the community are sometimes regarded as mentors, while at other times learners explained they lead the younger members of their community.</li> </ul>
Theme 4: Application and mastery of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners practise leadership, even though formal knowledge about the subject is lacking.</li> <li>• Learners actively take on leadership roles in the home and during extramural activities.</li> <li>• Leadership development is a process of learning by doing.</li> <li>• When applying leadership skills, learners are led into the adult world by their parents and older siblings.</li> <li>• Learners are responsible to manage themselves and their academic-, home- and extramural responsibilities.</li> <li>• Application of leadership skills often takes the role of mentoring younger siblings.</li> <li>• Leadership is regarded as a byproduct of developing other skills and characteristics.</li> </ul>

### 5.2.1. Theme 1: Knowledge and awareness of leadership

Most learners initially learnt about leadership and became aware of it during their time in the traditional schooling system. This often happened when they were told by a teacher what a leader is when they were elected to positions such as class leaders, sports captains and during group work in class, or by observing the actions of other peers in leadership positions. Some formal, structured knowledge about leadership was transferred as part of the schooling curriculum. This was, however, not explored in great detail or over a long time. It

only served to make learners aware of leadership, and not to teach them about its intricacies. In the home-schooling context knowledge about leadership is gained by observing the actions of different key role players in the home environment and in other environments during extramural activities. They also learn about leadership through informal discussions with key role players, often when the topic is prompted by their parents. Learners also learn about leadership through play. This happens when the learner plays or interacts with siblings, both younger and older, friends and peers. During these interactions, learners learn to lead, as well as how and when to be the follower.

Parents and learners think leadership and leadership development is important, but in all cases, it was not the focus. Instead, it was regarded as a byproduct or natural progression that accompanies the establishment of certain values and acceptance of responsibilities. Learners generally do not view themselves as leaders, even though they actively take on the role of leader and have the skills to be leaders when called upon. This may be attributed to the fact that they view leadership as part of a joint effort in a group to achieve a common goal and not as being placed in an authoritative position.

It became apparent during the data gathering and analysis process, that parents' views on and knowledge of leadership influence their children's views since most of the learners echoed their parents' perceptions. This included some misconceptions and skewed perceptions about leadership development and leadership skills, which may be attributed to the lack of formal knowledge about leadership and leadership development.

In general, all of this highlight the fact that learning about leadership in the home-schooling context, including how awareness is created and knowledge is gained, is informal and unplanned.

### **5.2.2. Theme 2: Environments applicable to learner leadership development**

Leadership development happens mostly in the home environment, where schooling also takes place, and a variety of other environments where learners participate in extramural activities. Leadership development is based on these environments because they are the spaces where learners interact with key role players, are exposed to different scenarios where leadership is evident and where they can practise leadership skills and apply their knowledge about leadership.

During the data-gathering and analysis process, it became evident that the home environments are generally very flexible and can be adapted to suit the home-school family's general needs and preferences. Some families strive towards a very structured home-schooling approach, with specific duties allocated to certain times and individuals, whereas others use the flexibility of home-schooling to do what they want, when and where they feel it should or can be done. This flexibility supports and underpins the unplanned or informal nature of learning about leadership, as little emphasis is placed on following a routine or set timetable, except when it is preferred.

In these environments, learners are tasked with a range of responsibilities including managing their academic work and different tasks in the home. This is done individually, as well as working together with their younger- and older siblings. Learners are also encouraged to take on and arrange activities outside the home, where additional responsibility is placed on them. More often than not, parents do not assist with these arrangements and responsibilities. This is an active choice on their part, as they see it as a learning opportunity for their children. As such, learners participate in several types of extramural activities and environments, where opportunities exist for them to take on leadership roles or to be led by others. These are the environments where learners interact most with friends, peers and the community, providing exposure to a different set of circumstances than that of the home environment.

### **5.2.3. Theme 3: Key role players in learner leadership development**

The key role players are the learners' parents, siblings, friends and peers, as well as members of the community. Generally, parents take on the roles of mentors, educators and caretakers in the home. The mothers, however, play a more active role in the learners' day-to-day activities and development and have positioned themselves to be at their children's side during the day, while most fathers are employed outside the home. In all of the cases, the mother either did not work or worked from home, further embracing the flexibility that home-schooling offers.

Older siblings often also take on mentorship roles, and when the learners themselves are the eldest, they are expected to mentor their younger siblings. This leads to an interesting dynamic of either learning by observing the actions of older siblings, or learning by doing. Friends and peers, on the other hand, provide learners with opportunities to practise and

apply leadership knowledge and skills, outside the home. This also applies to members of the community who are, however, more diverse than friends and peers, especially in terms of age, and they are sometimes regarded as mentors, while at other times learners explained that they lead the younger members of their community.

#### **5.2.4. Theme 4: Application and mastery of leadership**

The application or practise of leadership skills happens in the home and at extramural activities. Learners mostly practise their skills without formal knowledge about or training on leadership and all its intricacies. Developing, applying and eventually mastering these skills is a process of learning by doing. When applying leadership, learners view themselves as part of a group working towards a common goal, as opposed to being in an authoritative position. The home environment is the first place where learners practise, and as they grow older, they are encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills when participating in extramural activities. There are, therefore, two levels of application, with a certain degree of overlap, but the home environment precedes that of extramural environments.

Learners are given responsibilities and have to manage themselves and their academic work, household chores and extramural activities. As such, learners also have a lot of freedom to choose how and when they want to apply themselves. Parents and learners both indicated that even though they view leadership and its development as important, it is not the focus. Instead, it is viewed as a byproduct of developing other skills and characteristics, such as time- and self-management, as well as taking on and accepting responsibility.

The data collected indicated that learners are, however, not left solely to their own devices, as they are more often than not supported by a parent or an older sibling to a certain extent. In this way, learners are led into the adult world while being given the freedom to apply what they have learnt.

### **5.3 FINDINGS AND THE EXISTING LITERATURE**

This section interprets the findings of this study by using the existing literature as a backdrop for discussion and reflection on the identified themes. It is important to note that although the four main topics are in a specific order, it doesn't imply that the process of learner leadership development in the home environment happens in a linear fashion. Even though these themes are presented in the most logical order of occurrence, these phenomena are

very much intertwined and more often than not occur simultaneously, to some degree or extent.

This section also investigates how the existing literature is applicable to the home environment and specifically the home-schooling context. Before proceeding to the explanation on the findings, it is important to note that most of the literature is based on adult leadership theories, or related to what happens in the traditional schooling environment and youth in general. For the most part, the literature is not specifically focused on the home-schooling environment, which is largely due to the dearth of information and literature in this field.

### **5.3.1. Similarities between existing literature and research findings**

#### **5.3.1.1. Theme 1: Knowledge and awareness of leadership**

Knowledge is referred to as the first step in the learner leadership development process (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). This element refers to the instance when learners are initially exposed to the concept of leadership, what they know about leadership, and how knowledge is transferred specifically in the home-schooling environment. Although knowledge and awareness are labelled as the first step in the developmental process, knowledge about leadership and awareness of own leadership skills and abilities may continually develop throughout the process of learner leadership development.

When focusing on the home environment and the way in which knowledge is gained and awareness is created, the findings of this study support the notion that the youth often accidentally learn about leadership (Klau, 2006). This is also the case in the home-schooling environment, where parents and learners do not necessarily regard learning about leadership as very important and the structured way in which knowledge may be gained is not always evident. In all of the participants' responses, and more specifically the parents' responses, it was mentioned that they generally do not focus on learning about leadership. When learning does happen, it is unintentional or unplanned. This includes informal discussions with family members that touch on the topic of leadership, observing the different leadership roles others play in the home environment and in peer groups. Knowledge about leadership is acquired by teaching these learners about responsibility, how to deal with different situations, how to think independently and put themselves in a

situation where leadership is required. Although the emphasis is not on leadership, the learners are still able to inadvertently acquire knowledge on certain aspects of it.

Other available leadership learning opportunities include attending home-school camps, where the topic of leadership is often dealt with or curriculum-based studies. However, not all the home-schooled learners in this study attend these camps and not all of them follow the curricula that incorporate learning about leadership. Generally speaking, very little knowledge about leadership is acquired from formal or structured sources and knowledge is mainly shared through activities in the home environment

Pace (1987) asserts that the number one issue for an agenda that promotes the scholarly study of leadership, is the link between family and leadership, and while leadership is learnt, not inherited genetically, much of what the potential leader brings to eventual leadership is learnt from his or her family exposure. Participating parents and learners believed that leadership abilities and skills are something that one is born with. In most cases, parents and learners believed one is born with the ability to lead and that leadership is a talent that some have while others do not. Learners also did not perceive themselves as leaders but said that when they are in a situation where leadership is required, they will be able to lead.

In a sense, this is a contradiction, however, it may possibly be due to the lack of or the inaccurate nature of available knowledge that parents and learners have about leadership and leadership development. In most of the participants' responses, they first learnt about leadership when they attended a traditional school. In all these cases, the learners only mentioned being placed in a leadership position but were unable to elaborate on learning theoretically about leadership before taking up the position. In the home environment, this was also the case. A few participants mentioned some form of theoretical learning, which touches on leadership but nothing was mentioned that effectively established knowledge on the topic. As a result, learning opportunities are provided to learners before they actually know what is expected from a leader. In most cases, learners are placed in the leadership position without the necessary knowledge of what is required of a leader. In the home environment, most learners absorb information and knowledge about leadership by doing and observing. This also relates to (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002) observations about youth leadership, which indicate that leadership knowledge represents what the youth need to know about leadership before they can apply these concepts.

Further related to perceptions about leadership, authors such as Nelson (2010) and Brantley (2016) explain that adults view leadership on the basis of experience, whereas youths perceive it as active participation. This echoes the finding of this study since learners viewed leadership as a collaborative effort to achieve common goals and objectives and positively influence their siblings. Being supportive and part of a group were also considered synonymous with being a leader. Home-schooled learners perceived the idea of leadership and what it is as a supportive, influential role rather than an authoritative position. Adult leadership is generally linked to authoritative power, whereas youth leadership is generally linked to the power of influence (Sacks, 2009; Brumbaugh, 2013; Brantley, 2016). This statement rings true, especially when considering the parents' views on what learner leadership is. Most of them said that it is learning about leadership, and correctly so, but they also said that it is putting one learner in charge of another. These contradicting views between adults and the youth about leadership are supported by both the literature and the research findings.

#### **5.3.1.2. Theme 2: Environments applicable to learner leadership development**

Bronfenbrenner formulated the ecological systems theory to make the point that development cannot be explored or explained by any one single concept, like biology, but rather by a more multidimensional and complex system of layers (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Each of these layers forms a system of relationships and has an influence on the development of the child (Krishnan, 2010). The environments in which a learner develops form the spaces and context in which interaction with key role players and development happens. In keeping with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the research findings indicated that in the home-schooling environment a series of independent, yet interlinked, microsystems or environments can be identified, which as a collective form a so-called mesosystem. These environments manifest in the immediate home environment, in which family interactions and schooling takes place, as well as various spaces outside the home where learners are exposed to and able to interact with peers, friends, other adults and the community. Usually, the environments outside the home are spaces that actively persuade, are chosen and entered into by the learner, since this is where they practise their hobbies and spend their leisure time.

The home-schooling situation and its associated environment may be regarded as unique because the teaching and learning events shifts from the traditional school to the context of

the family (Oosthuizen, 2005). The development of leadership skills ideally also begins to happen in the home environment (De Vries & Korotov, 2010).

The literature indicated that the home-school environment contributes to the potential of leadership development of the home-schooled learner because it is less restrictive and can be moulded to suit the needs and preferences of the learners and their parents (Taylor, 2012). In some cases, the participants' home environments were unstructured and creative, whereas in others the participants chose to replicate the structured nature of a traditional school. The malleable nature of the home-schooling environment allows parents to engage in deeper levels of development with their children (Schultz, 1998).

As expected, the research findings demonstrated that the learners feel comfortable in their homes because these spaces are actively made by their parents to be supportive and beneficial towards both the learning and family environment. In this environment, the learners receive adequate support and guidance from their parents to develop and learn, including leadership and leadership skills, while other siblings also provide additional support, mentorship and guidance (Calvert, 2005). An important aspect is that these home-schooling environments are very flexible and offer the learners the time and space to focus on developing and nurturing their skills and overall development, including those skills and abilities required to become a leader.

The amenable nature of these environments also allows each learner to explore their own unique interests and beliefs in more depth and detail, at their own pace, leading to a more detailed understanding and experience and improved overall development. The learners are responsible for their own time management and they have the freedom to be more creative and to invest in their own interests and hobbies. Parents in the home environment also encourage their children to explore new activities and spaces. It is through this encouragement that home-schooled learners begin to explore the world around them, entering into new microsystems or environments in which they are able to engage with their peers, other adults and their community. Because these environments are centred around certain collective or common goals and interests, learners are able to start taking on leadership positions. These environments, including the home, become the realms in which learners are able to practise and apply that which they have learnt about leadership.

### **5.3.1.3. Theme 3: Key role players in learner leadership development**

Adolescent experiences centre around family and friends (Bass, 1990). It is almost self-explanatory that with home-schooling, a learner's experiences, interactions and development centres more securely around the immediate family. In this sense, home-schooled learners' development, education and everyday life differs from other schooling systems and are subject to altered stimuli, which is largely conveyed by his or her immediate family.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) differentiates between various systems or environments, in which various key role players can also be identified. These role players influence and encourage the learners' development. In the case of this study, parents are recognised as the role players who have the most influence on the successful development of the learners' leadership skills and abilities. This is because in the home-schooling context, parents are expected to fulfil various roles, which include that of primarily the caretaker, but also educator, mentor and friend. Fulfilling these multiple roles may be challenging and parents and learners have thought of creative ways to make things work effectively. Parents and learners have to collaborate to achieve certain goals.

It is often believed that young people cannot possibly be leaders because they do not have the experience and consequently the ability to lead. They may be ready to rehearse leadership but not necessarily perform it (Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2002). In the home environment, young people are given opportunities to practise their abilities from early on. Parents play a vital role in initiating the process of developing leadership skills, as they create opportunities for their children to take the lead in the home. The learners gain experience by doing and observing what their parents and siblings do when taking on leadership roles. These opportunities to learn about leadership come from real-life situations and experiences, instead of a theoretical basis. Home-schooled learners enjoy less peer dependence than other forms of schooling (Seago, 2012). Home-schooling places the additional responsibility of a child's education squarely on the shoulders of the parents. That being said, it also means there is a higher level of interaction between learners and their parents, leading to a deep-rooted partnership and interdependence which improves the overall development of the learner. If the parents are well equipped to undertake this responsibility, it improves this development tenfold. The home-schooling context also offers increased interaction with other adults, both in the home and at extracurricular activities. The

findings of this study resonate with the statement that one of the critical key elements in the development of the youth is adult-youth partnerships (Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2002). This is visible where learners are encouraged to engage with adults around topics of conversation, plan and arrange extramural activities, as well as interacting with other adults in their communities during these activities. To a certain extent, home-schooling forces learners to increasingly and actively participate in arranging their interactions with people and groups outside their own peer groups and homes. In all the studied cases, parents encouraged their children to speak their minds and participate in adult conversations, as it is a space where they may learn and practise the skills they have acquired.

Other key role players are the home-schooled learner's siblings. Siblings, and the interaction between them, contribute greatly to learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment. Interaction with siblings provides opportunities for the learner to develop leadership skills and creates a space where leadership can be applied, practised and mastered. Leadership is first applied in an environment where the learner feels comfortable, along with feeling at ease with the people on who they are practising their leadership skills and knowledge. Interaction with siblings also equips the learner to have better interaction with friends and social groups. Adolescents begin to understand and grasp the meaning of values and their role in social groups, and they subsequently begin to understand their role and influence in leading people (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). As mentioned earlier, learners learnt about leadership by observing different roles in their families and peer groups. Friends and peers are also key role players in the development of leadership skills. Learners mentioned that they notice and understand the different dynamics in their families, friends and extended peer groups. Knowledge about leadership cannot be transferred without these interactions. Some learners said they actively take on the part of the leader when the opportunity calls for it, while they do not mind being the followers either. In their opinion, leadership is a collaborative undertaking with the purpose of achieving a common set of goals. They understand that when leadership is required, and no one else is taking on the role, they can and should step in. Interestingly enough, even though most of the participants said that they actively do this, they still do not regard themselves as leaders.

#### **5.3.1.4. Theme 4: Application and mastery of leadership**

In the home-schooling environment, opportunities to apply leadership skills take on various forms such as being able to successfully lead themselves and apply self-management in

their daily activities and responsibilities. Elements critical to the development of the youth include granting young people decision-making power and the responsibility of consequences (Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2002). In the home environment, parents allocate a number of responsibilities to their children. These include, among others, daily chores, helping to run the household every day and helping siblings with academic work. Learners have to take responsibility for these tasks, while also accepting the consequences should they not complete them. Learners are granted decision-making power and encouraged to become independent thinkers, who have to manage their own time and complete their work.

The research findings indicate that the parents of home-schooled learners tend to play a facilitative- rather than authoritative role. It has enormous power when adults play a facilitative, respectful, liberating role, rather than one of control, restriction and discipline (Stoneman, 2002). The findings suggest that parents prefer to allocate certain responsibilities and tasks. These equip their children with certain skills and abilities that give them independence and the right to make their own decisions. Parents take a step back from being in charge of the home environment, to facilitate a more collaborative partnership with their children. Although parents allow their children to make their own decisions and manage their own time, they also support them and provide advice and guidance when necessary. In so doing, children have the opportunity to apply leadership. Nelson (2010) states that learning by doing is an effective method of leadership development according to the youth.

According to MacNeil (2006) leadership is a related process combining ability (knowledge, skills and talents) with authority (voice, influence and decision-making power) to positively influence and impact diverse individuals, organisations and communities. In the home environment, the emphasis is on skills, talent, voice, influence and decision-making power. Knowledge about leadership is generally lacking or misdirected. In all the cases, parents encourage their children to speak their minds. At first, they encourage their children to be part of adult conversations and observe how adults deal with certain situations. Then these learners are encouraged to give their opinion and participate in the discussion. Learners are encouraged to make their voices heard, but they need to support their ideas, opinions and contributions with research and reflection. In the adolescent stage of developing new

leadership, these opportunities allow learners to start appreciating the connection between leadership and authority (Sacks, 2009).

Learners are also allowed to explore their own interests and have the responsibility to investigate and arrange other extramural activities outside the home. Klau (2006) states that efforts to instil leadership in the youth were largely extracurricular, occurring through opportunities like student government newspapers and clubs. This is still applicable because learners participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports and cultural activities, where they interact with older people, peers and friends. These learners need to function in a team and interact with their team members for their teams to succeed. Learners mentioned that they attended home-school camps where the topic of leadership is discussed and exercised. However, during these camps, only the person selected has the opportunity to lead the group. Once again, it is evident that there is no emphasis on awareness and knowledge about leadership and its development before putting the learner into a specific leadership position. While participating in extracurricular activities, these learners also choose to take on additional responsibilities, using these opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge they have learnt in the home environment. Some of the learners indicated that they are teachers themselves, or manage and arrange events and group activities. It is clear that there are various opportunities to practise and apply newly developed leadership skills, however, to capitalise on the freedom which home-schooling offers, learners must want to actively explore new environments and situations in which they can apply themselves.

### **5.3.2. Contradictions between literature and research findings**

In comparing the research findings with the available literature on the topic, a few contradictions and differences were noted. This section aims to identify and explain these contradictions based on the researcher's experience and first-hand interaction with the participants. It should be highlighted that these contradictions may be attributed to the fact that the literature focuses on learner and leadership aspects in general, or in the context of the traditional schooling experience, not taking into account the unique nature of the home-schooling environment, as research on the topic is relatively limited. These contradictions, therefore, inform potential topics or new avenues of research that could be further explored in the realm of home-schooling and learner leadership development.

According to the literature, when looking at youth leadership development, the practice is often not mentioned, since the focus is more often than not on the content and not on the context of how youth leaders are learning leadership (MacNeil, 2006). In the home-schooling environment, however, it would seem that the practise of skills and ability is often mentioned and highlighted as an important developmental tool, rather than the content and theory relating to leadership and leadership development. Throughout the interview process, learners and parents were able to provide examples of real-life situations where leadership skills and abilities are practised and applied, while very few content-rich sources of knowledge about leadership could be identified. I noted that learners in the home environment learn by doing, rather than learning before doing. Parents do not regard leadership development as very important, but rather consider it as a result or skill that develops because their children have developed characteristics and abilities. This does, however, create a situation where leadership may develop incorrectly or where the potentially skewed perceptions and opinions about leadership are transferred from parents to their children. This is because the motivation or belief behind certain actions and traits, of parents and learners alike, are not grounded in proven theory and the practice of leadership and leadership development. There is a need to improve access to available sources about leadership, which would enhance parents' understanding of leadership and learners' development of the skill.

On the leadership role that parents fulfil, as adults in the home environment, the literature suggests that adults are unwilling to relinquish their own positions of power and decision-making (Marais, Yang, & Farzanehkia, 2000). The research findings, however, indicate that the parents of home-schooled learners are not against relinquishing power and decision-making responsibilities but instead prefer to do so. They regard this as an opportunity to equip their children with certain skills and abilities, through learning by doing in real-life contexts. One of the parents said that childhood is not a rehearsal, it is real life and children need to be able to adapt to and accommodate real-life situations and problems.

### **5.3.3. New insights and findings absent from literature**

New insights and findings gained during this research mainly relate to how the existing body of knowledge may be applied to this specific and unique case – the home-schooling environment. The existing body of literature did not clearly indicate whether or not the process and its respective elements are applicable to the home-schooling environment,

which is most probably due to the lack of research on this method of education and how it links to development in general. The research showed that the general process of learner leadership development and the elements which define the process can be applied to the home-schooling environment. The manner in which these elements are defined, as well as what they involve, however, may possibly differ from the traditional schooling sense or development of youth leadership, the depth and detail of which could possibly be explored with further studies. But, as stated, the main elements are evident.

The study also provided further new insights by identifying the different perspectives on the leadership developmental process, as presented by various literature sources, and combining them into a newly defined perspective. The different elements were also further unpacked and presented in a new light, which is the home-schooling context.

#### **5.4. ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In the next subsection of this chapter, the secondary questions posed in Chapter 1, are answered. The secondary research questions will lead to- and assist in answering the primary research question of this study.

##### **5.4.1. Secondary research question 1**

###### ***Which leadership opportunities are available in the home-schooling environment?***

In the home-schooling environment, a number of learner leadership opportunities are evident. The opportunities are perhaps not as well defined and structured as in the traditional schooling system, but it would seem there is a larger variety of opportunities, which are often very flexible. This is obvious in various situations in the home where learners act as mentors to their siblings, while also developing and acquiring the ability to manage themselves and their time. The initial push for creating opportunities for leadership development, in most cases, comes from the parents. Parents will start off on a small-scale by allocating certain responsibilities to their children and over time give them more, often bigger responsibilities. In so doing, the children are exposed to more situations and they learn to accept these responsibilities and make them their own. Over time, learners become empowered and take the initiative to arrange things themselves, including a variety of different extramural activities, where they can also further develop their leadership skills. When they attend these extramural activities, learners are also exposed to a larger choice of interactions with people

who are older and younger than they are, and so not limiting their exposure to a single peer group. This increases the sphere of opportunities for leadership development, while also creating situations with varying degrees of difficulty when it comes to applying leadership.

In homes where learners have younger and older siblings, they have the opportunity to be both mentor and mentee. They are mentored and taught by their parents and older siblings, who are better versed in applying leadership in certain situations. When a learner has younger siblings, these roles are reversed and they say that they feel a certain sense of responsibility to be a good role model to their younger siblings.

#### **5.4.2. Secondary research question 2**

***What are the specific needs of home-schooled learners in terms of leadership development?***

An identified need as it pertains to learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment is that knowledge and awareness of leadership can improve. In most cases, the learners explained that their initial exposure to leadership was in the traditional schooling system. In the home environment gaining theoretical knowledge is less evident. Learners learn by observing their parents and siblings, and by being placed in a situation where they have to apply skills and abilities, which they do not necessarily know they have. Learners are also subject to absorbing misconceptions, incorrect perspectives or views about leadership, especially if their parents have limited and misinformed opinions about it. The research findings indicate that both home-schooled learners and their parents would benefit greatly from a structured and well-informed knowledge base about leadership and all its facets. This could be included as part of their curricula or presented through leadership-oriented programmes.

#### **5.4.3. Secondary research question 3**

***How do learners explore the possible opportunities for leadership development in their home-schooling environments?***

The research findings indicate that, for the most part, learners in the home-schooling context experience and perceive leadership development in an indirect, unintentional and unplanned way. These unplanned opportunities for leadership development are created

through play, unstructured discussions with- and mentorship from parents and siblings, as well as observing and learning from the actions of family members. In some instances, more structured learning about leadership and the creation of leadership development opportunities were apparent. Here, learners took it upon themselves to arrange and manage such opportunities, with parents providing support and guidance from the sidelines. This was then an active decision to explore new opportunities outside their home environment.

#### **5.4.4. Secondary research question 4**

##### ***What are the leadership development experiences and opinions of both home-schooled learners and their parents?***

Although leadership and leadership development are regarded as important in the home environment, the emphasis is not on leadership. Instead, leadership development happens by emphasising aspects, characteristics and skills, which collectively lead to the development of leadership. This indicates an unstructured and unintentional development of leadership qualities. As one of the participants said, 'Leadership development is not the focus in the home environment, it is the accidental or unplanned fruit of it.' Generally speaking, leadership development happens by observing the actions of other key role players, or through learning by doing. The interviewed learners and their parents all had positive views about home-schooling and becoming leaders in this environment. This indicates, through their perception and lived experiences, that the home-schooling environment can foster and assist the process of leadership development.

It should be noted that, due to a lack of formal education and knowledge related to leadership, the perceptions surrounding leadership and its development are not always entirely correct. These skewed perceptions or opinions are also transferred from parents to their children, which in some instances could be detrimental to the process of leadership development.

#### **5.4.5. Primary research question**

##### ***How does learner leadership development happen in the South Africa home-schooling context?***

Learner leadership development in the home environment happens in an informal, unstructured manner. Firstly, knowledge about leadership is acquired through informal

discussions between parents and learners and by them observing the different roles that their parents and siblings play in the home environment. Acquiring knowledge of leadership in the home environment is not regarded as very important to learners and their parents. Greater importance is placed on equipping the learners with skills, abilities and knowledge, which in turn leads to the development of leadership skills and characteristics. In the few instances where some structure is provided, it is in the shape of attending certain home-school oriented camps or leadership development camps, which are relatively few and far between. Learners in the home-schooling environment also participate in various extramural activities. These activities also provide opportunities for the learners to interact with their peers and where they are placed in situations where leadership skills or the ability to lead is required. Parents are key when it comes to creating a conducive space in the home to develop leaders, they have to initiate the development process and then learners must be willing to use these opportunities to develop as leaders.

## **5.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY**

The significance of this research study firstly lies in the fact that it explores the lived experiences and perceptions of home-schoolers and their parents about how learner leadership development happens in the home-schooling environment. It, therefore, adds to the currently limited body of knowledge related to the home-schooling- and learner leadership development areas, and more specifically so in the South African context. This study may potentially also pave the way for future research into the niche that is leadership development in the South African home-schooling environment.

Regarding research on youth leadership, a lot of value was derived from the existing body of knowledge related to adult leadership theory. “The bottom line is youth leadership development theory needs to be created” (Brumbaugh, 2013, p. 17). This study is a small, but relevant step towards generating new information related to youth leadership development theories. The research findings may also be considered and applied to learner leadership development in the traditional schooling system and the youth in general, since these learners also have homes, parents and siblings, with who they may interact and learn from in a similar fashion.

This study also sheds new light on the learner leadership development process by taking a new perspective on it. It provides information about the developmental process, specifically

applicable to the home-schooling environment and how it takes place, from both the parents' and the learners' perspective.

Furthermore, this study and its findings may provide information and insight to the home-schooling community including parents who are considering home-schooling for their children's education. This study may assist new parents by answering some questions related to the home-schooling environment, as well as assist current home-schooling parents to better structure their environment or enable them to create leadership learning opportunities for their children. As mentioned previously, formal knowledge and theory on learner leadership development in the home environment are limited and this study could initiate the process of adequately informing parents and home-schooling learners about what leadership is and how leadership development happens in the home.

Lastly, researchers such as Van Schalkwyk and Bower (2011) and Seago (2012) indicated that there are clear information gaps in the existing literature related to qualitative studies, in which researchers observe the transformational leadership behaviour of children and their parents in the home-schooling environment. These researchers stated that this research may provide rich descriptions of the experiences of both parents and learners alike. Parents could in other words contribute to research on learner leadership development by providing dense narrative accounts of the routines and rituals followed by their children, which may facilitate the growth of transformational leadership (Seago, 2012). This study and its findings directly address this identified field of research and provides a glimpse into the magnitude of perspectives and lived experiences of parents and their home-schooled learners. In closing, Seago (2012) suggested that the home-schooling environment could act as a perfect leadership learning laboratory where students are able to observe and interact with adults. This study supports this notion and has begun to highlight how this developmental process takes place, while also exploring the dynamics and elements, which suggest this notion to be true.

## **5.6. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

As with any research, there are certain limitations and should, therefore, be mentioned. Firstly, it is important to note that this is a qualitative study and the findings cannot be generalised. Secondly, the participants were from the same general area and only home-schooled learners between the ages of 16 and 18 years old, completing the FET phase of

their secondary schooling careers were identified to participate in this study. Furthermore, by using single case study research as part of my research methodology, it limited the number of participants, which once again makes generalisation impossible. The use of convenience sampling also limited the participants in terms of their location, as all of them come from the greater Pretoria region. Finally, the findings of the research are also limited to my interpretation, which is based on my background and lived experiences, as I incorporated a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm.

## **5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the next section, I make recommendations for future research in the field of learner leadership development, specifically focusing on the home-schooling environment. After establishing the findings of this study in Chapter 4 and comparing it with the literature investigated in Chapter 2, I recommend the following initiatives for future studies:

- Investigating the level of success of learner leadership development in the home-schooling context. With this initiative, I suggest that research could be done in identifying the leadership positions home-schoolers have taken on after completing their schooling.
- Collaboratively working with home-schooled learners and their parents to provide guidelines for improving the initial knowledge and awareness of leadership in the home. This recommendation is derived from the research finding that general knowledge and awareness of leadership and leadership development has few theoretical underpinnings.
- A comparative study on learner leadership development in the traditional schooling system and learner leadership development in the home-schooling environment. This recommendation is reinforced by the research findings and accompanying participant responses, which indicated that there are distinct differences in how leadership development takes place within these different modes of education.
- Further research on the role that both younger and older siblings play in the development of home-schooled learners. This could be branched out into trying to understand the differences between the development patterns of learners with siblings, and learners who are the only child. This study and its findings indicated

that siblings may play a significant role in learner leadership development, a role which is intensified within the home-schooling context.

- Action research in terms of learners contributing, developing and establishing leadership development models and programmes for youth leadership development, which takes into account their own opinions and inputs. The outcomes of this research could be juxtaposed with the existing body of knowledge related to adult leadership models, to see what similarities and inherent differences there are. Research finding indicated that there is a void in terms of learner leadership development models that are applicable to the South African home-schooling context.
- Exploring the leadership development that happens in the lives of home-school learners, considering the various phases of their development, from being a toddler all the way to becoming a young adult. Literature explored as part of this study suggested that adolescence is the most ideal developmental stage for the establishment of leadership skills. More empirical research is however required to establish whether or not this is true, especially within the home-schooling context.

## **5.8. CONCLUSION**

Learner leadership development in the home environment does indeed happen and the process in which this development takes place may relate to the same process in which the youth is supposed to develop as leaders. It is, however, in the finer details of the overarching themes of knowledge and awareness; environments; key role players; application and mastery, where home-schooling gives a different nuance to learner leadership development.

The home environment may be a conducive space to unlock the potential of our future leaders as it may, in fact, nurture leadership and leadership development at least as well as the conventional system (Montgomery, 1989). Parents and immediate family members, however, play a crucial role in this respect and are often the driving force behind a learner's development. Learners, on the other hand, must be willing to shoulder the responsibilities, develop and sharpen their skills which over time will make them leaders.

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## Appendix A: Interview protocol – Learners

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – LEARNERS

1. Tell me about home-schooling: How does it work?
2. What must you do during the day? Describe the day of a home-schooling learner.
3. Why did you choose home-schooling as a mode of education?
4. How long have you been using home-schooling as a mode of education?
5. Do you have any siblings? Are they also home-schooled? Tell me more about your relationship and interaction with your siblings.
6. What responsibilities do you take on as a sibling? What kind of responsibilities do you have at home?
7. Do you participate in any study groups, community projects, sport or cultural activities? Tell me more about these activities?
8. Are these activities based on teamwork or individual performance? What does it entail?
9. Do you go on any excursions with your peers or as part of a group? Tell me more about these activities?
10. Who arranges your activities? What do you need to do?
11. Have you ever been a sports team captain, group leader, etc.? What were your responsibilities and that of the group that you had to lead?
12. When was the first time you had to be a leader? Tell me more about the situation you were in?
13. Can you describe a situation where you had to lead other children?
14. When do other children lead you?
15. What do you think is a leader?
16. What do you think makes a good leader?
17. Where did you learn about leadership? Tell me more about this learning experience?
18. Do you think you are a good leader? Why?

## **Appendix B: Interview protocol – Parents**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – PARENTS**

1. Tell me about home-schooling: How does it work?
2. How long have you been home-schooling your child?
3. What are your primary reasons for home-schooling your child?
4. Does your child participate in any study groups, community projects, sport or cultural activities? Tell me more about these activities.
5. Are these activities based on teamwork or individual performance? What does it involve?
6. How do you think that home-schooling, as a method of education, contributes to your child's development as a whole? Please explain.
7. What is your understanding of learner leadership development?
8. Do you consider leadership development as an important aspect of your child's overall development? Motivate your answer.
9. How does leadership development in the home-schooling environment differ from that in the traditional schooling system?
10. How do you create leadership development opportunities for your child in the home environment?
11. What do you consider are the advantages and/or disadvantages of home-schooling in terms of learner leadership development?

## Appendix C: Letters of consent



### Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

Dear .....

Date.....

#### LETTER OF CONSENT

As part of my master's degree studies I am currently preparing to engage in research related to learner leadership development within the South African home schooling context.

#### Title

Learner leadership development within the South African home schooling context – A case study.

#### Purpose

This study will aim to explore the home schooling environment in order to understand how learner leadership development takes place within this context.

#### Nature

Due to an increase in home schooled learners and the ever-present importance of leadership development at a young age, the need arises to evaluate and explore how learner leadership development takes place within the home environment. Subsequently, the primary purpose of the study is to work collaboratively with home schooled learners and their parents to determine how learner leadership development takes place within the South African home schooling context.

#### Methodology

The research methodology and the nature thereof will be conducted as a case study. The researcher intends to purposively select Grade 10-12 home schooled learner and their parents.

Parents and learners utilising home schooling and mode of education will participate in a face-to-face semi structured interview with the researcher. During the interview the research process and relevant activities will be explained. Interviews will be held at a time and venue convenient to participants' schedule. These discussions will be tape recorded.

All data collected will be encoded and collated to ensure that the results may not be related to a specific learner or parent. Confidentiality will be held in the utmost priority and be applied throughout the course of the study. All participants will be provided with comprehensive feedback with respect to the study.

#### Estimated time frame

Semi-structured interviews should start in April 2017 and will continue until the end of April 2017. Each participant will conduct a semi-structured conversational face to face interview within their home-environment or at a convenient venue with the researcher. You will be consulted and a convenient time of day and date will be negotiated with you for when interviews can take place.

Dr. Pretorius, [lp@edupret.com](mailto:lp@edupret.com), Mobile: 082 958 3519, M.Ed. Consent forms – Participants, 2017

As researcher, I need to apply for ethical clearance from the university before engaging in any form of data collection. Such clearance will only be granted if all participants have given their informed consent. There is an outline below of which internationally accepted ethical principles are applicable when working with human participants.

**Autonomy and voluntary participation:**

You have the right to decide to participate. You will not be coerced. This means that the researcher will not exert inappropriate pressure or undue influence to recruit or retain participants. You will have all the information in order to make an informed choice. You will be allowed to ask any questions prior to making a decision to participate/not. You also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process without any negative consequence.

**Full disclosure:**

You will be provided with sufficient information about proposed activities, the expected benefits, or material risks i.e. anything that might influence your decision to participate or not. You will also be consulted during the research process and will be debriefed after the conclusion of the research process.

**Confidentiality**

Although this study does not plan to delve into sensitive or personal issues, you have a right to privacy and your anonymity will be protected meaning that no identifiable information will be reported either in writing or orally. Codes and pseudonyms will be used to hide your identity. You also have a choice of whether your responses and behaviour be known to more than the researcher.

**Safety in participation**

You will not be at physical or psychological risk or harm of any kind. This means that you will not be placed in circumstances which may cause undue stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem.

**Trust**

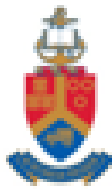
I shall report findings in a complete and honest way without any misrepresentation using formal yet comprehensible English. I will not fabricate data or alter findings to suit interest groups. I shall give credit and acknowledgements appropriately and disseminate the practical implications of our research in a comprehensible way. As a participant, you will not be party to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Your co-operation would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response, which would start a mutually beneficial involvement.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this the research or have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the researcher, Bianca Pretorius at telephone number 060 966 9519 or send her an email at [bfpretorius@hotmail.com](mailto:bfpretorius@hotmail.com). If you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research project is conducted, please speak to the researcher or if an independent person is preferred, consult with the chairperson of the Ethics Committee (Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria).

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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

### CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY PERTAINING TO LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HOME SCHOOLING CONTEXT.

This is to state that I, \_\_\_\_\_ a home schooling parent have been informed and fully understand the nature and purpose of the research project. I thus agree to participate in the study being conducted by Bianca Pretorius, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria.

#### A. PURPOSE

I understand that this is not an experimental study and have been informed that the purpose of this study is to explore home-schooling as a mode of education, in order to determine the effect it will have on learner leadership development as opposed to and as an alternative to the traditional schooling system.

#### B. PROCEDURE

I will be asked to conduct a semi-structured conversational face to face interviews within my home-environment with the researcher. During the first interview the research process and relevant activities will be explained. Interviews will be held at a time and venue convenient to my schedule. These discussions will be tape recorded. I will be kept informed of the research process at all times. I will also be consulted to check data and details provided by myself to ensure a true reflection of my experiences.

#### C. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences or penalty.
- I may do so by informing the researcher verbally, in writing or by telephone. She has provided me with her contact numbers for this purpose.
- I am at liberty to contact the researcher at any time if I have any questions or concerns about the study.
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL.
- I understand that the findings of this study will be disseminated within an academic context.

I have carefully studied the above and understand this agreement. I thus freely consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of signing: \_\_\_\_\_

Although I have signed, I would still like to know or suggest:

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*If you would like to discuss any aspect of this the research or have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the researcher, Bianca Pretorius at telephone number 080 958 2519 or send her an email at [bipretorius@hotmail.com](mailto:bipretorius@hotmail.com). If you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research project is conducted please speak to the researcher or if an independent person is preferred, consult with the chairperson of the Ethics Committee (Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria).*

## Appendix D: Letters of assent



Dear Parent/Guardian/Caregiver

Date:

### **LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE HOME SCHOOLING CONTEXT LETTER TO PARENTS**

As part of my Master's Degree studies at the University of Pretoria, I am investigating learner leadership development within the home schooling context. Details of the study is outlined below for your convenience.

#### **Title**

Learner leadership development within the home schooling context – A case study.

#### **Purpose**

This study will aim to explore the home-schooling environment in order to understand how learner leadership development takes place within this context.

#### **Nature**

Due to an increase in home schooled learners and the ever-present importance of leadership development at a young age, the need arises to evaluate and explore how learner leadership development takes place within the home environment. Subsequently, the primary purpose of the study is to work collaboratively with home schooled learners and their parents to determine how learner leadership development takes place within the home schooling context.

#### **Methodology**

The research methodology and the nature thereof will be conducted as a case study. The researcher intends to purposively select Grade 10-12 home schooled learner and their parents.

Parents and learners utilising home schooling and mode of education will participate in a face-to-face semi structured interview with the researcher. During the interview the research process and relevant activities will be explained. Interviews will be held at a time and venue convenient to participants' schedule. These discussions will be tape recorded.

All data collected will be encoded and collated to ensure that the results may not be related to a specific learner or parent. Confidentiality will be held in the utmost priority and be applied throughout the course of the study.

All participants will be provided with comprehensive feedback with respect to the study.

*B. Pretorius, bjp@pretorius@hotmail.com, Mobile: 060 966 9519, M.Ed. Consent forms – Participants, 2017*

### Estimated time frame

The conducting and completion of the interviews should start in April 2017 and will continue until the end of April 2017. Learners and parents will be expected to answer questions during the interview fully, to the best of their ability and as truthfully as possible.

In keeping with the ethical principles of research, you as the legal custodian need to provide permission for your child to participate in the interviews. Learners should also give their assent by signing the provided document as well. Please provide your consent by signing and filling in the required information.

I have carefully studied the above and understand this agreement. By signing this I hereby grant permission for my child to participate in the interviews as described above.

Name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of signing: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of signing: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this the research or have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the researcher, Bianca Pretorius at telephone number 060 966 9519 or send her an email at [bfpretorius@hotmail.com](mailto:bfpretorius@hotmail.com). If you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research project is conducted please speak to the researcher or if an independent person is preferred, consult with the chairperson of the Ethics Committee (Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria).

Your co-operation would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response which would start a mutually beneficial involvement.

You're sincerely

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## Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

Dear Learner

### **INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY ON LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITH IN THE HOME SCHOOLING ENVIRONMENT.**

#### **What will happen to me?**

Nothing will happen to you. If you want to be part of this study it will be expected from you to fill in an online questionnaire. This will be done anonymously and will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers.

#### **Will the study help me?**

Yes. You will gain insights pertaining to how leadership development takes place within the home schooling environment.

#### **Do my parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) know about this project?**

Yes. This study was explained to your parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) and they gave permission that you can participate in this study if you want to.

#### **Do I have to participate in this study?**

No. You have the ultimate choice whether or not you want to participate in the project. No one will be upset if you do not want to participate in the study. The choice remains yours and yours alone. You are also at liberty to discontinue your participation at any time during this study.

#### **What if I have any questions?**

You can ask any questions you have about this study. You or your parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) can also phone or email the researcher, Bianca Pretorius by telephone number 060 966 9519 or send her an email at [bpretorius@hotmail.com](mailto:bpretorius@hotmail.com) at any time should you have any questions regarding the study.

#### **Signing your name below means that you agree to be part of the study in the manner prescribed above**

Name of the learner: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the learner: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this the research or have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the researcher, Bianca Pretorius at telephone number 060 966

9519 or send her an email at [bjpretorius@hotmail.com](mailto:bjpretorius@hotmail.com). If you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research project is conducted please speak to the researcher or if an independent person is preferred, consult with the chairperson of the Ethics Committee (Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria).

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## **Appendix E: List of interview transcriptions**

Transcript of interview with Sally (14 April 2017)

Transcript of interview with Bill (25 April 2017)

Transcript of interview with Tom (24 April 2017)

Transcript of interview with John (21 April 2017)

Transcript of interview with Sally's mother (14 April 2017)

Transcript of interview with Bill's mother (25 April 2017)

Transcript of interview with Tom's mother (24 April 2017)

Transcript of interview with John's mother (21 April 2017)