Exploring Participative Decision-Making and School Effectiveness. A Case Study of Three Secondary Schools in Maphumulo Circuit.

By

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Dissertation submitted in fulfillment for the Degree of Master of Education in the School of Education in the discipline, Educational Leadership, Management and Policy.

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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Declaration

- I, Sithembiso Wellington Ngcobo, declare that

- The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated is my original work

- This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Abstract

There has always been a need for including school educators in decision-making in schools. Before democracy school governance was in the hands of the principals and parents were represented by school committees which were just there to demand school fees from parents. Therefore, introduction of decentralized decision-making has been advocated by different researchers as a culture that benefits schools and learners. Inviting different stakeholders in decision-making in the schools depends mostly on the leadership style practiced by the principal. As a result, qualitative study was undertaken to explore experiences and perspectives of educators in participative decision-making and school effectiveness. This is a case study of three secondary schools in Maphumulo Circuit. The focus of the study was based on the assumption that educator participation in decision-making in their schools could benefit the school and its clients who are the parents.

The study made use of semi-structured interviews and documents analysis to generate data. Interview sessions were recorded and transcribed before they were analyzed. In addition, the data from transcription was coded and the themes were developed from coded data. Documents were also analyzed, which was done to ensure reliability and conformability of document. The result of the study revealed that: (**i**) School practice a top-down communication, that is when decisions are imposed on educators. Educators participate in decision-making process. (**ii**) There is evidence of educator participation in decision in one of these schools. (**iii**)Enhancing quality education there is a belief that when educators are included in decision-making quality of education offered by the school improves. (**iv**) Teacher's leadership is possible in the situation were democracy prevails.(**v**) Teachers' participation in decision-making process and school effectiveness.(**vi**) The data revealed that educators' involvement in decision-making is crucial in moving the school to the high levels when it comes to teaching and learning and is highly valued.(**vii**) Barriers to teacher participation in decision making. It appeared that in spite of benefits there are also two barriers that hinder educators from participating in decision- making in their schools. (**a**) Communication brake down. It was discovered that is a communication breakdown between school management and the teachers. (**b**) Educator intelligence. It transpired that in these schools there was an undermining of educator intelligence.

24 June 2015

Mr Sthembiso Wellington Ngcobo 214582145
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Ngcobo

Protocol reference number: HSS/0293/015M
Project title: Exploring Participative Decision-Making and School Effectiveness. A Case Study of Three Secondary Schools at Maphumulo Circuit

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 07 April 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
fp **Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr TT Bhengu
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
cc School Administrators: Mr B Bhengu, Ms T Khumalo and Mr S Mthembu
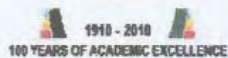
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to parents, MrsPhikisile Grace Ngcobo who passed away on the 31th December 2003 and my father.Mr Joel JamengweniNgcobo who is alive for making me to what I am today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

PDM	Participative decision – making
HOD	Head of department
LTSMC	Learner teacher support material committee
IQMS	Integrated quality management systems

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of educators in participative decision-making and school effectiveness. This would mean that the researcher is interested to know if educators are included or excluded from participative decision-making and how does this affect the school effectiveness.

According to (Smith) 2011 educators form a major component of the school. They are the ones who get in the classrooms and interact with the learners than anybody else in the education system. They call learners by their names, and that is an indication that they know them, understand them and care about them (Smith, 2011). In addition to this, educators face a number of challenges. One of those challenges is that of being decided upon regarding what to do to improve their work which is teaching their learners (Lin, 2014).

This chapter serves to introduce the study by, amongst other things, providing a background to the study, outlines the statement of the problem, the purpose, the rationale, as well as the significance of the study. Moreover, the chapter further outlines the objectives of the study, three critical equations, and the definitions of the key concepts and demarcations of the study. The chapter concludes by providing the summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background to the study

South Africa has been ruled by the government which pursued apartheid policy for a period of more than 300 years. During this period of apartheid government, all powers were centralised in the national sphere of government (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008). The government would make laws, implement and execute them. With the inception of democracy in 1994, the country took a different direction in terms of the location of powers to make decisions. This democratic government adopted a stance and policy of decentralising decision-making to the local level (Bhengu, 2005). Inspired by the new vision of people participation in decision-making processes, people were represented in all spheres of government such as the national, provincial and local governments. This is a real feature of a democratic government. One of the principles of democracy is public participation.

Public participation involves people thinking, deciding, planning and playing active part in developing and operating services which affect their lives (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). People want to be included in decisions that affect their lives (Duignan, 2003). In education, the government of South Africa decentralised school governance. This was made possible by involving parents in the education and through the introduction of School Governing Bodies (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). With regards to the management of school finances and other related issues, section 36 of the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996 [hereafter, the Schools Act]), mandated the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to take responsibility for the maintenance of buildings and school grounds; the appointment of educators, excluding the instructional programmes which are the professional responsibilities (Republic of South Africa, 1996b).

Parental involvement as well as learner in school governance has received much attention from various scholars in South Africa (Heystek, 2002; Brown &Duku 2008; Mncube, 2008; Ndlovu, 2011; Duma, 2014; Chikoko & Magadla, 2012). However, the notion of educator participation in decision-making has not received such attention until recently where the focus is beginning to also shift towards educator participation in decision-making (Bhengu & Ncwane, 2014; Bhengu & Gowpall, 2015) to cite just a few. Educators as professionals want to be involved in decisions that affect their profession. Educators want to take part in the decision- making processes in their schools (Duignan, 2003). It has been observed that some principals allow little or no subordinate participation in school decision-making processes (Van Wyk, 2004; Mncube, 2007). Based on the preceding discussions, it has appeared that a need exists in rural secondary schools to understand how educators feel about this issue and perhaps, strategies can be developed that will ensure that educators are included in decision-making processes in the school. It is hoped that including them in decision-making processes might contribute in enhancing school effectiveness. Once the feelings of educators towards participative decision-making are known, rural secondary schools will be more likely to develop strategies to include them. The next section focuses on the statement of the problem of this study.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Maxwell (2008) defines the statement of the problem as an issue that leads to a need for a study. The aim of the current study was to discover the way educators feel as well as their perspective about educators' involvement in planning activities in their institutions. Given the argument presented in the previous section regarding the willingness of educators to participate in decision-making processes, the underlying assumption is that decision making phas to be participative. Somech (2010) conducted a study about the understanding of the influence of participative decision-making in the organisation. The study sought to focus on teachers' results and effectiveness of educator participation in school decision-making processes. It was discovered that participative decision-making carried an opportunity for getting results that are unachievable by organisations which are using autocratic leadership styles. It has been observed that exclusion of educators from participative decision-making affects the progress of the school.

1.4 The rationale and motivation for the study

I have been serving the Department of Education for 18 years as an educator. In this lengthy period of time I have been exposed to different leadership styles. The study reported in this dissertation sought to explore the experiences and perspectives of educators in decision-making and school effectiveness. There is tendency by some school leaders and managers to exclude educators from participating in decision-making processes of the school. My colleagues in the neighbouring schools share similar experiences. In the school where I am teaching the management particularly the principal has a tendency to apply a divide and rule strategy whereby, there will be some educator that I can call her favourites. These educators are distinguished from the others. They visit the office more often. The principal plans with them. During their planning with school leadership they initiate some activities. The decisions that they have taken would be imposed on educators during the staff meetings. The 'Favourite educators' would turn to be teacher leaders where they will lead those activities. Other educators respond by simply distancing themselves from such activities or carry them out very reluctantly .As a result those activities do not serve a purpose. They fail because a school is not a one man's business but requires a joint effort to achieve a shared vision (Hartley, 2007).There is no problem with teacher leadership because it is a known phenomenon in education. The problem is with the way things are done. Issues or ideas should be tabled in public arena which is a staff meeting. It is in this platform where views

and ideas are discussed. This may suggest that educators are trusted to possess suitable ideas that might better the school image. However, all educators in the school should have been trusted. I was intrigued to find that the study conducted by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2011) concluded that school system in South Africa was underperforming and that teachers were the main reason for the poor performance of the schools. These findings could be the symbolising deeper problems that resemble the preceding discussion where educators are not invited in planning processes in their organisations. Observing and hearing what is happening from the distance pushed me to conduct this study. I wanted to get inside the premises of the three secondary schools in Maphumulo Circuit. The aim was to discover about the inclusion or exclusion of educators from participative decision-making in their schools. This study is worth doing on the grounds that its findings may open debate as to how educators can be included in decision-making in schools. The following paragraph is going to give a brief description on significance of the study.

1.5 Significance of the study

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) argue that educators who are participating in decision-making and collaborative educator-principal leadership contribute to school effectiveness, teaching and improvement in learner performance. My experience working as a teacher convinces me that the views expressed by Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) are valid. This is based on the ground that where collaborative capabilities of teachers are brought together to deal with complex issues, manages indecisive activities and creates other way of doing things then their commitment to the profession increases. This commitment has an impact on school effectiveness. This study sought to explore the experiences, views and perceptions of educators regarding their participation in decision-making at school level. There is therefore, a necessity to understand how the involvements of teachers in planning processes are making impact on school effectiveness. This would mean that current and future leaders can pay more attention on issues concerning their work which aim at increasing learner performance. Therefore, it is anticipated that the insight gained through this study may contribute to the expansion of an understanding of an issue of growing prominence in policy and research, particularly with regards to how the involvement of educators in decision-making could contribute to school effectiveness.

1.6 Objectives of the study

Given the background that has been provided in the previous section, the study sought to achieve the following objectives

- To explore the perspectives and experiences of educators in participative decision-making at schools.
- To raise the need for educators' involvement in participative decision-making at schools.

1.7 Research questions

There are two research questions that drove the study and these are stated as follows;

- What are the perspectives and experiences of educators in participative decision-making at schools?

- How could the involvement of educators in participative decision-making contribute to school effectiveness?

1.8 Clarification of terms

There are three concepts that underpin this study, and these are participative decision-making, school effectiveness and distributive leadership style.

Participative decision-making (PDM)

Participative decision-making forms the core of the policy, research and practice in business enterprises and also in schools (Pounder, 1997; Leithwood & Duke, 1998; Walker, 2000; Somech, 2002; Gamage, 2007). These scholars seem to embrace the idea that flatter management and decentralised power structures carry an opportunity for attaining the result that are unachievable under school's traditional top down bureaucracy structure. For instance, Locke (1995) argues that involving educators in planning activities allows school different opportunities which could be advantageous in building a sound school environment required to sustain a healthy organisational culture, increased productivity, increased educator morale and more teacher commitment (Somech, 2002).

School effectiveness

Creemers and Reezigt (1997) describe school effectiveness as a programme that focuses on theory and explanation about how effective schools look like. These scholars argue that the school effectiveness is the knowledge about 'what works' that would result in school improvement. In view of the literature that has been reviewed thus far, it is argued that where educator participates in decision –making, smooth running of the school can be achieved. This is referred to as school effectiveness.

Distributive leadership

To build an effective school culture and to generate identity requires a distributive leadership approach where everyone is included in decision making of the school (Spillane, 2006). Spillane (2001) further describes a distributed leadership style as a sharing of leadership roles amongst staff members. This term will be used frequently in the study as it informs the topic. The current study seeks to explore the experiences and perspectives of educators in participative decision-making and its effectiveness in the school. Participative decision-making is in line with distributed leadership as both seek to do with stretching leadership activities through numerous people. Tasks are achieved by cooperative efforts of individuals. One may argue that principals as school leaders should consider distributed leadership style to empower educators.

1.9 Demarcation of the study

The study was conducted at three rural secondary schools that were purposively and conveniently selected for participation in the Maphumulo Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal. The schools that were selected were located in historically disadvantaged background.

1.10 Outline of the study

The research is organised into five chapters and an overview of these chapters is provided below.

Chapter One

This is an introductory chapter and presents the background to the study. The chapter outlines the problem statement, purpose and rationale for the study, as well as, significance of the study. The chapter furthermore outlines the objectives of the study, critical questions and demarcation of the study. It concludes with the outline of the study.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature that relates to participative decision-making at schools. In reviewing the literature, the chapter is divided into themes which are informed by the research questions. In addition, this chapter also provides a detailed account of the theoretical framework that guided the data.

Chapter Three

This chapter provides the research design as well as research methodology of the study. Chapter Three also explores the research orientation, research methodology, and data generation methods as well as data analysis. This chapter further presents issues of the trustworthiness, ethical issues, and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four presents and discusses the data that was generated through semi-structured interviews and documents review.

Chapter Five

Chapter five presents the findings of the study. It begins by presenting a summary of the entire study and concludes by making recommendations based on the findings.

1.11 Chapter summary

The chapter has discussed the background to the study, the problem statement and the rationale for the study. This chapter has indicated that the focus of the study was on the experiences of rural public secondary schools educators in decision-making. Therefore, this chapter has introduced the study and has also given the direction on how the report would unfold. The next chapter provides a full account of literature review and theoretical framework that guided the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK#

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter One the study was introduced. The chapter indicated that the focus of the study was on experiences and perspectives of educators regarding their participative decision-making and school effectiveness. This is the case study of three secondary schools in Maphumulo Circuit. These schools were situated in rural area with socio-economic disadvantage background. The details on how the report will unfold were presented.

Chapter Two explores the literature on educator participative decision-making and school effectiveness. The purpose of the chapter is to gain insights about experiences and perspectives of educators in relation between participative decision-making and school effectiveness. The review of related literature considers the national, continental and international perspectives. In addition, this chapter also incorporates the theoretical framework which underpins the study. The chapter is therefore divided into fifteen sub-topics. The study provides detailed description of what is effective school and characteristics of school effectiveness. The chapter looks at the themes that are drawn from the characteristics of effective schools in details and separately. The chapter further discusses concepts such as effective leaders, learner achievement, achieving educational goals and productive school climate. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the theoretical framework with concepts that frame the study.

2.2 What does it mean for the school to be effective?

According to Botha (2010), there are no clear guidelines or assumptions with regard to the assessment of school effectiveness that exists. This argument is supported by Brouilletes (1977) who also argues that no set of shared assumptions about the actual evaluation on school effectiveness. Creemers and De Jong (2007) contend that the studies of school effectiveness have two different aims. The first aim is to identify factors that are characteristics of effective school and the second is to identify differences between education outcomes in these schools. School effectiveness is open for debate by scholars of developed and under developed countries. This means that it depends on the resources and culture, politics and expectations of the community. Sun (2007), Bennet, Crawford and

Carturight (2003) describe an active school as a school in which the learner progresses more than is expected. These scholars focus on results obtained by the learner during formal assessment which could be the examination that is written quarterly. To add on this debate, Molly and Rassool (1999) argue that school effectiveness is a paradigm that is based on leadership, management and organisation. Harris, Bennet and Preedy (1997) raise the point that it is the government who determines how schools should function by the value for money idea. This may suggest that the government controls the schools using its monetary powers unless the school does something like involving parents and community or market the school. After all, these conceptualisations of school effectiveness still remain a complex issue. School effectiveness is largely dependent on context (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2009). School effectiveness depends upon the context of the school and whether the country is developed or undeveloped for a researcher to determine the effectiveness of the school, relies on the location of the school and resources it has (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2009).

2.3 Characteristics of school effectiveness

The study was about the exploration of the experiences in educator's involvement in making decision in their institutions. The study has made a case for educator participation and school effectiveness. Therefore, the study paid particular attention to the connection between educator involvement in planning stages and school effectiveness in developing countries. The reason is that the study was conducted in South African Secondary Schools situated in rural areas of Maphumulo in KwaZulu-Natal province. South Africa is a developing country too. Developed countries have their own criteria for effective schools. (Creemers & De jong, 2007) .The characteristics for effective school in underdeveloped countries include the concepts of educator participation in decision-making. Involving educators in decision-making and school effectiveness, perceptions of teacher's about participation in decision-making, effective leaders, learner achievement or success, achieving educational goals and productive school climate. The next section provides a detailed discussion on each of these concepts.

2.3.1 The concept of teacher participation

Reimers, Carnoy, Brunner, Panneflek, Marches and Machado (2005) contend that the focus must be strengthened on the active involvement of educators with an aim of meeting the student learning needs, fostering their participation in changes and contributing towards changing education system. This is taken to mean that schools cannot transform without the inclusion of teachers in various activities of the school. In addition, Parnell (2012) also shares similar sentiments when arguing that participation is about subordinate involvement in decisions that typically fall within the domain of the manager. It appears that participation involves the process of delegation whereby the principal in the school cannot play the leadership roles by himself or herself since schools are the intensive-business where different individuals must have an input (Hartley, 2007). The current study sought to explore the educators' participation in decision-making and school effectiveness. At this point it is imperative to discuss educators' involvement in decision-making and its effectiveness on the school progress.

2.3.2 Teacher participation and school effectiveness

Leithwood (1992) differentiates schools according to two broad categories. He got Type-A organisations and Type-Z organisations. Type- A organisations refer to those organisations that are very useful for some situations and tasks .These are organisations with centralised management and keeps a clear difference between the status of the employer and the employee and also among levels of management. In these organisations the type of communication they practice is a top –down communication. This would mean that they rely on top-down decision processes. In these schools power to control is emphasised. On the other hand, there is Type-Z organisations. These are organisations or schools where emphasis is on participative decision-making. They are based on authority that is consultative, facilitative in nature (Leithwood, 1992). Here power is shared among the group and not upon other people. Through this authority, teachers are helped to reach their potentials in relation to their work. It helps teachers develop and enhance instructional capabilities. This would mean that this form of power is unrestricted and enhances the productivity of the school on behalf of its learners (Leithwood, 1992). This argument is corroborated by Sarason (1990) when contending that when teachers participate in decision-making they feel that they have a say in issues that affect them. As a result, more commitment to the organisation as a whole is enhanced. Teachers will take responsibility for what is happening in the school. From these

discussions it could be deduced that educator involvement in the decision-making improves the school progress which is the school effectiveness. It is of vital importance to explore what other scholars had to raise in regard to teacher participation in decision-making.

2.3.3 Teachers perspectives towards their participation in decision-making processes

Lin (2014) argues and makes a case for teacher empowerment. In the argument, Lin (2014) raises the point that when teachers are just told about the consequences of decision-making, educators might not get to know the reasons why and how decisions were arrived at. In this regard, the teachers had no opportunity to be included in decisions taken on their behalf. This scholar further holds that their confinement to classroom tasks only might bring about the confusion or misunderstanding between educators and the management team of the schools. Feir (1985) also shares the similar sentiments when arguing that when teachers are empowered they are expected to work with those who are having a say to decision-making about school significant matters. Educators want to take part in school activities beyond the classroom, activities like textbooks selection, curriculum development, learning assessments, students placement, personnel staffing or professional development (Duignan, 2003). In addition, Caldwell and Spinks (1992) raise the point of educator authority which includes authority and expertise concepts. The two scholars contend that authority means the power bestowed upon the school councils or boards that is divided amongst teachers while expertise necessitate dealing with teachers knowledge and skills about decision-making. This is taken to mean that once teachers are empowered with the two skills they will be placed in a position whereby they will be participating in decision-making processes in schools effectively. Once educators are acquainted with these skills a positive and effective culture of teaching and learning will be positively implemented in the schools. This will be made possible by implementing a distinguished leadership style that is congruent with empowered teaching staff.

2.3.4 Effective leaders

Schools are organisation that are complex by their nature and therefore require appropriate forms of leadership to address this challenge (Mestry & Naicker, 2013). Schools cannot be controlled by a single person as it happens where a man is the only head of the family. Schools are the opposite of this scenario because there are people who have an interest in them who are called stakeholders. Harris and Muys (2005) argue that the importance of

effective leadership in contemporary school reform is required. According to the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), principals are given the privilege to represent the Department of Education and are bestowed with certain powers. On the other hand, scholars such as Spillane and Halverson (2008) argue that there is a kind of leadership that pays attention to leadership practice rather than leadership as a role. This leadership practice is called a distributed leadership style (Gronn 2003). It has transpired that an evolving leadership style in South African schools and that currently being viewed as the most suitable leadership style is the one that distributes leadership tasks. One of the studies that have recently been conducted in South Africa is the one done by Mestry and Naicker (2013). In that study, the two researchers sought to understand the perspective and world views of teachers regarding distributive leadership in selected public primary schools in Soweto. All the research participants were Post Level One educators. It emerged in that study that a transition from the previously dominant styles of the apartheid era to democratic styles has not transpired in these schools in Soweto. Therefore, educators from all three schools were of the same view that the principals used positional power to overturn decisions based on discussions made by various committees.

However, the study that is being reported in this dissertation sought to explore the experiences and perspectives of educators in decision-making in their schools. It is noted that the study conducted by Mestry and Naicker (2013) is similar to the current one in many respects. The content is similar on the sense that both studies viewed participative decision-making of educators in their schools as a major component of the story. The findings that the principals of three studied Soweto primary schools practiced autocratic leadership style and it was carried out in primary schools while my study was conducted in secondary schools and in rural setting as opposed to the urban setting. From the study of Mestry and Naicker (2013) it was recommended that South African schools leaders should move away from relying on hierarchical structures which are not conducive in our schools. A more inclusive, participative and consultative, approach is appropriate for a democratic South Africa (Bush, 2007). This approach might enhance learner achievement which is the ultimate goal of the school.

2.3.5 Learner achievement

Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) contend that decision-making has been observed to be the heart of administrative process and that it also forms the image of the school. The type of leadership style determines the value and weight of the decisions taken. The cliché that two heads are better than one seems to be taking the lead in the discussions about decision-making approaches. In the previous subheading which is about effective leaders, it emerged that effective leadership requires joint efforts from the other stakeholders. However, it was acknowledged that teachers are central in the management of schools and that their involvement in decision-making process is important. Viewed that way, it evident that if such a sensitive issue was neglected by the principal, rifts, conflicts and misgivings could result, which could ultimately hinder the realisation of the objectives of the school goals (Olorunsola & Olayemi, 2011). This is taken to mean that the success or failure of the school rests with the teachers. This view is supported by Smit (2011) who argues that teachers are in an operational level of the school. This means that teachers are the ones who interact more often with the learners than anybody else or stakeholders in the school. They affect the learner achievement considerably. On the other hand, an effective school is characterised by the criterion of learner achievement or learner success.

A study conducted by Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) in Ekiti state in Nigeria sought to examine the inclusion of educators in decision-making process in secondary schools. It was a quantitative study which used questionnaires to collect quantitative data. It was found out that teachers in Ekiti State were involved in decision-making processes in their schools. It was evident amongst other things that the items of teacher involvement in decision-making process rated very high with maximum of 93.5% and the minimum was 72.0% of the surveyed respondents. In such a situation learner achievement appeared to be very high. From the study it was found that participative decision-making had a positive influence on school effectiveness. The criterion for measuring effectiveness in this case was learner achievement. This is in line with the submission of Udo and Akpa (2007) who claim that where teachers are adequately included in decision-making processes there would be commitment and support with the principal and the realisation of the school goal will be easy. The ultimate goal of the school is offering quality education measured through learner achievement.

Another study of participative decision-making was carried out in Bangkok, Thailand. The study sought to examine the effects of participative leadership on teacher satisfaction in private international schools. A total of 113 teachers from three private international schools in Bangkok were sampled for the study. Teachers were leaving their schools and the teaching profession experienced high turnover rates as a result of teacher attrition and dissatisfaction (Ngotngamwong, 2011). It was observed that school leaders who practiced participative leadership in their schools can assist in increasing educator job satisfaction and educator retention because participative leadership amongst other things increases productivity (Drake & Roe, 2013). It was discovered in (Ngotngamwong, 2011) that when teachers participate in making decisions that are related to their work, they get satisfaction and produce more work (increase productivity). This statement indicates that learner achievements as one of the criterion to measure school effectiveness in underdeveloped countries is realised.

A participatory leadership explanation was offered by Lin (2014) when the researcher argues that the decision-making of school staffing, curriculum, or resource allocation had been the task carried out by school principals or members of the administrative managerial teams in Taiwan. Conversely, educators were excluded from decision-making processes. Nevertheless, with the introduction of teacher empowerment, educators were expected to be provided with an opportunity to be part of those who are having access to decision-making about school significant matters. It was concluded in this study that empowered teachers could contribute to the increase of teacher's commitment to schools. Teacher's commitment indicates enhancement of learner's achievement. Secondly it was discovered that educator participation in decision-making presented crucial information closest to the causes of the problems of schooling and improving the quality of decisions making (Johnson & Boles, 1994).This argument was corroborated by Somech (2010) of Israel, in the Middle East who contends that theoretically, PDM can increase educator productivity directly and indirectly. Directly, it is thought to increase the quality of school decision-making by giving management team access to critical information close to the cause of the problems of schooling, namely, the classroom (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). This is taken to mean that educator's involvement is believed to increase willingness to implement solutions in class, hence to promote educational productivity which is learner achievement.

2.3.6 Achieving educational goals

From the discussion of educator involvement in decision-making, it transpired that much can be achieved by the school when teachers are involved in decision-making processes of the school. Researchers have discovered that teacher involvement in decision-making processes also enhance school effectiveness. Some of those achievements could be about the school's capacity to attain its educational goals. In that regard, Duze and Chinnel (2011) conducted a study in secondary schools in Nigeria wherein, they wanted to understand the learners and the educator's involvement in decision-making and how their inclusion might influence teachers' attitudes towards school work and school internal discipline. This was noticeable through the frequent breakdown of law and order in Nigerian secondary schools. Such actions were believed to be related to certain decisions having been made without the teachers' inputs.

One of the assumptions on which the study was based was that schools cannot be run just like a household where a man is everything in the family. Schools are government institutions established to offer quality education to the citizens of the country (Duze & Chinnel, 2011). The ultimate goal for schools is to achieve educational goals. Educational goal is nothing else but offering effective teaching and learning to the learners. Achieving educational goals is one of the measures of school effectiveness in underdeveloped countries (Harter & Muthukrishna, 2000). The study by Duze and Chinnel (2011) was a quantitative inquiry and the respondents were the learners and the teachers. The participants in that study were completely different from those of the current study that is reported in this dissertation. The focus of the current study was on Post Level One educators and the learner's testimonies were disregarded completely as they fell beyond the scope of the study. In terms of the Nigeria study, the findings relating to the teachers were worrisome in that school managers who are supposed to know better about the best leadership styles for achieving educational goals were more despotic rather than being democratic in decision-making (Duze & Chinnel, 2011). The implications for democratic decision-making are that achieving educational goals requires joint effort of the principal and the teachers in the school.

One may open a debate here as to how school principals are going to know if they are on the right track in managing schools. Some of the answers can be obtained from Bush (2008), one of the veteran scholars of educational leadership and management. Bush (2008), in his paper on management and leadership improvement in Education, holds the view that the traditional

view in many countries is that principals and senior staff need to be qualified and experienced teachers. However, there is an emerging recognition that to be a leader one is required to undergo a specific preparatory programme for leaders and managers of schools. In many overseas countries a formal development opportunities for aspiring and practising principals were introduced. In other areas they rely on in-service training opportunities. Different trends are currently being taken in relation to improving leadership in the schools and colleges. Nevertheless, nurturing and developing leaders remains the major dimension of school improvement (Bush, 2008). It can be concluded that achieving educational goals rests with the suitable leadership by the school leaders. These discussions lead us to the next subtopic which is a theoretical framework that underpins the study.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The current study that is reported in this dissertation sought to explore and understand the experiences and perspectives of educators regarding their involvement in decision-making processes in schools. In addition, it also aimed at understanding the connections between educator's inclusion in decision-making and organisational effectiveness, and this factor is discussed under shared leadership practice and theory.

2.4.1 Discussion of the theoretical framework

Camp (2001) defines a theoretical framework as an explanation about the phenomenon being studied. On the other side, Merriam (2001) gives a more clarity when arguing that theoretical framework provides the researcher with the lens to view the world. These definitions are relevant in discussing this concept as it will serve as a guideline during the course of the discussion. The study that is reported in this dissertation sought to explore the experiences and perspectives of educators in participative decision-making in their schools. As part of the discussion about the educators' experiences and perspectives, I am interested at understanding the relationship between educator's inclusion in, or exclusion from decision-making processes in their schools. The theoretical framework of this study is discussed under the concept of shared leadership and practice, distributed leadership, teacher leadership, teacher participation and their job satisfaction, areas in which educators want to be included in decision-making and excluded from decision-making. Barriers to teacher involvement which include barriers to teacher's decision-making and authority of decision-making will also be discussed.

2.4.2 Shared leadership theory and practice

According to Duignan (2003) the need for an important shift in the meaning, perspective and scope (depth and breadth) of leadership in schools is advocated. There is a close relationship between shared leadership and a participative leadership. It was discovered that in The National Quality Schools Framework in Australia (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003) advises that schools where leadership is shared by teachers they enjoy more benefit that others do not enjoy. Educational institutions with shared leadership develop and maintain a shared vision and outcomes for learner development and learning. They also authorise educators to share leadership roles for school development that reacts to and manages the processes that lead to sustained improvement. This implies that everyone in the school is included in decision-making. In this type of leadership the leader also practices democratic leadership style as opposed to autocratic leadership style.

This theory is relevant to the current study on the grounds that educators' inclusion in decision-making in the school is the focus of study. Duignan (2003) contends that various reasons exist for teachers to share leadership in schools. This scholar further argues that there are two main reasons; these reasons are pull factors which appear to be attractive to the organisation because they yield desirable results. The other factors are those which are characterised by external environment that drive practitioners to share leadership and make it possible for them to function in an increasing complex and demanding world and are called push factors. So, these two factors constitute the pillars of shared leadership. This view is corroborated by Darling-Hammond (1999) and Crowther (2002) when they argue that the pull and push factors enable teachers to influence learner performance and results in schooling. In addition, it is believed that where leadership roles are shared by different individuals, learners improve in their performance (Mestry & Naicker, 2013)**.** Students' improvement is also linked with a situation where educators are involved in making decisions relating to teaching, learning and assessment (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Dividing leadership amongst the group or with the people involved works in practice as diversity really matters in decision -making (Surowiecki, 2005). This scholar further contend that different individuals and their experiences help in arriving to a better decision or resolution, as it brings ideas that would otherwise be absent if the decision was made by a single individual, even by an expert(Surowiecki, 2005). I have also realised that diverse groups of individuals may proffer a more vigilant, focused and more informed decisions than a skilled decision-maker.

Surowiecki (2005) raises the point that the homogenous groups do not learn easy. This happen because each member has less to contribute and less information to the table... as a result they progress slowly in investigating alternatives. This implies that divergence of views contributes to richer decisions being reached as opposed to the other way round. Viewed this way, one may argue that grouping smarter people (experts) together may also does not function well. The reason for that situation is that likeminded individuals tend to do things in a similar way or pattern. Therefore, according to Surowiecki (2005) people are encouraged to work with others who have different perspectives and knowledge bases when making decisions. This scholar further argues that having the group that is diverse makes it better at problem solving. This would mean that including educators with different knowledge perspectives and experiences in school decision-making processes could bear fruits. Based on Ajzen's work which is based on its' application to decision-making in educational institutions structures helps to give clarity on the reasons for teachers to want to participate in shared leadership in their schools.
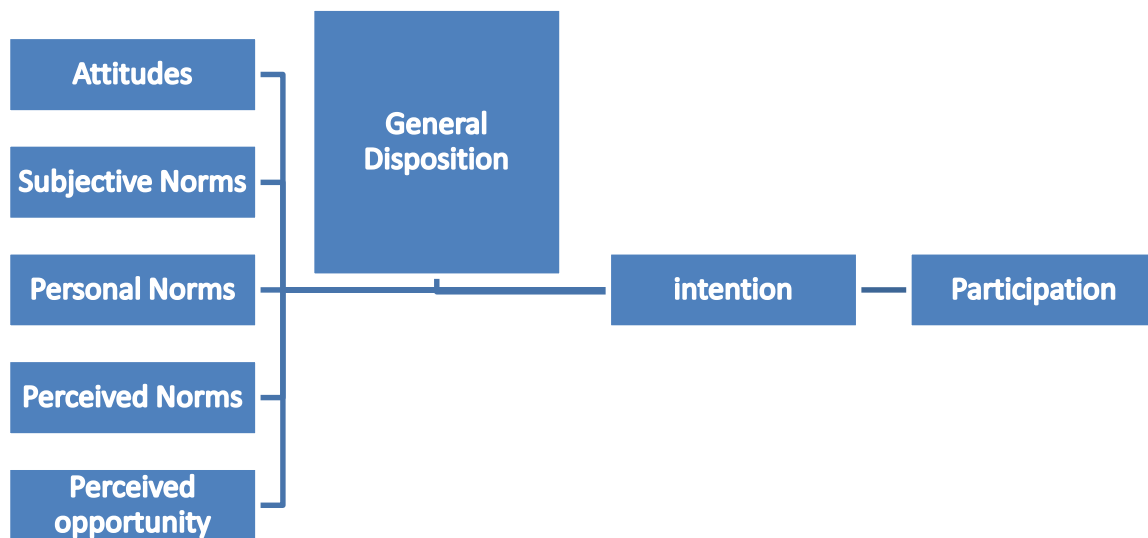
Figure 1: Model of teachers Choosing Participation Shared Leadership in Schools

Here is type of reasoning based on the model that might contribute to a decision to accept the opportunity to participate. The different educators were raising their views on the reasons why they think it would be worth to be included in decision-making in their respective schools. This is believed to improve the standard of education thereby benefiting the learner.

I think that student will improve if I get involved, and I see this as a good thing (attitude).

My colleagues will expect me to do this (subjective norm).

I believe this is the good thing to do (personal norm).

I have the skills and knowledge to lead this group well (perceived opportunity).

These would then generate a general disposition for the teacher to get involved followed by the specific intention to do so in this particular case

2.4.3 Distributed leadership

Involving educators in decision-making depends on the principal's leadership style. This means that the leadership style of a principal determines the school's image (Bush, 2003). The leadership style that frames this study is distributed leadership style which is characterised by participation of stakeholders. Therefore, I am of the view that this theory is of vital importance in terms of giving a conceptual explanation to the practice of distributing responsibilities to the teaching staff at school. Spillane (2006) contends that to build the culture of the organisation and to generate identity require a distributive leadership style where everyone is involved or included in the decision-making of the school. Spillane (2001) defines distributed leadership sty

le as a form of distribution of leadership among the people with an intention to stretch the leadership roles over the work of numerous individuals and the task is achieved through the interaction of many leaders. Therefore, distributive leadership style entails a situation where a leader involves educators in the school to be part of decision-making processes. Scholars of distributed leadership hold the view that this is the emerging leadership style. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) corroborate the definition of Spillane when they contend that distributed leadership affects the school progress positively because where distributed leadership style is practised, means of educators are brought together to deal with complex issues, manage indecisive tasks, and develop new courses of action, then their commitment to the profession increases. This takes us back to an old English saying that two heads are far better than one. The participation of all individuals from different levels, different educational backgrounds, different experiences, different perspectives and different social backgrounds will make a huge difference in terms of school effectiveness (Diamond, 2004). This behaviour of educators influences the learner achievement positively because educators work in a friendly and democratic environment. The argument of the above scholars is

corroborated by the scholar Hartley (2007) when this scholar emphasises that in a knowledge-intensive enterprise such as teaching and learning, it is impossible to complete complex tasks without distributing leadership responsibility. This implies that various stakeholders in education particularly educators who are in an operational level in the school structure must come on board in sharing the ultimate goal of the school which is teaching and learning.

Managing and leading school appears not to be a one man's business. It requires a joint effort of the members of the school. On the same frame of reference, Harris (2005) argues that distributed leadership is concerned with inter-dependency rather than dependency and covers a variety of leaders in diverse roles who share leadership responsibility. From the arguments expressed above, it can be inferred that distributed leadership is the most relevant leadership style to address the research questions of the study. Most of the scholars concur that this leadership style promotes management and leadership styles that encourage 'we' rather than the 'I'. Gone are the days where the principals will utter words like 'my school'. At present educators and management need to talk of 'our school'. Hence, distributive leadership does not seek to do away with formal leadership structures but presumes that a relationship exists between vertical and lateral leadership process (Leithwood, *et. al.,* cited in Mestry &Naicker, 2011). The major aim of distributed leadership is to distribute power and authority as well as building trust relationships between the principal and the entire staff personnel (Hopkins & Jackson, 2003). This is taken to mean that where distributive leadership reigns there is peace and harmony.

After debates have been raised on the issue of distributed leadership in the industrialised countries, a South African scholar (Mokoena, 2011) argues that research about distributed leadership style have been all over but little or none of them talk of the disadvantaged black rural schools. His argument foresees the need for this study to be carried out in the rural secondary schools such as Maphumulo Circuit which is a rural area with a number of disadvantaged poverty stricken communities. It was hoped that this study would raise further debates on various issues such as educators in participative decision-making in their schools.

In the literature of the North, Tschannen-Moran (2001) argues that theoretically, participative decision-making can improve teacher productivity directly and indirectly. Directly, it is thought to promote the quality of educational decision-making by giving administrators access to critical information close to the cause of the problems of the schooling, namely, the classroom. By including the staff in decision-making of the school it gives the principal the chance to know the challenges that educators face in their respective classrooms including contextual factors that they would not have come to his or her attention if the principal practised other leadership styles. It is believed that educators' participation increases a desire to implement solutions in class, thus promotes quality education (Trater, 1993; Griffins1995). Indirect advantages have generally been increased levels of teacher morale and job satisfaction, manifested in less absence and tardiness as well as reduced interpersonal conflict (De Dreu, 2006). It has become clear that distributed or participative leadership style is the one that is suitable for effective school. In South Africa, Mestry and Naicker (2013) in their study concluded that the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making is essential in dealing with the complex challenges that schools are facing. After everything is said and done, I hold the view that distributed leadership could be the remedy in moving the school to higher levels in teaching and learning. The following paragraph discusses teacher leadership.

2.4.4 Teacher leadership

Harris and Tassel (2005) argue that there is close kinship between educator leadership and distributed leadership. This is confirmed in the literature, for instance, Barth (2011) when arguing that the learners benefit from teacher leadership. Barth (2011) further contends that when most teachers lead, the school wins because the school reaches its ultimate goal of quality teaching and learning. This would mean that teacher involvement and teacher leadership is only possible in the schools where distributed or participative leadership is practised. Where teacher leadership is practised, learners and the school benefit. It is believed that educator leadership outside the classroom rests on the context of the school and school system as well as the teacher willingness (Little, 1995).This depends mainly on the leadership style of the principal. The above debates place me in the position to believe that when educators lead they get satisfied with their work.

2.4.5 Teacher participation and their job satisfaction

Lin (2014) holds the view that local school management also known as shared decision-making was famously considered to be the inclusion of educators at a school level decision – making processes. Teacher involvement in school decision-making processes entails empowerment of educator professional knowledge which in return brings about increased learner outcome and effects of classroom management. It has also been discovered that teacher participation is significant as it bears some benefits. Involvement of educators in decision-making is relevant to job satisfaction. Teacher job satisfaction is defined in the study of Ngotngamwong (2011) as the level of educator satisfaction by issues associated with these conditions; learner achievement, ability of decision-making and personal-growth. In this study teachers who were dissatisfied in their school were leaving the profession. Some caused problems in their workplaces. As a result, it was concluded that when teachers are satisfied in their job, they enhanced collegiality which in turn contributes to improved work performance and the rate of attrition is reduced. Teachers who are satisfied in their job also contribute to the student outcome (Woods & Weasmer, 2004). The factors that must be considered to make teachers feel happy in their schools are amongst other things, environment which is the job itself or the working environment (Crossman & Harris, 2006). This is taken to mean that school leaders who practise participatory leadership in their schools can help to increase teacher satisfaction. When teachers are included in processes of decision-making in the schools, the level of their commitment, trust, team spirit and teacher efficacy, productivity as well as teacher morale, increases (Drake & Roe, 2003).Certainly, such a condition will bring about improved performance on the part of the educators in the school. Conversely, there are also areas in which educators want to be involved in decision-making of the school and areas where they want to be excluded.

2.4.6 Areas in which educators want to participate in decision-making and where they want to be excluded

It has been discussed in this study that educator's involvement in decision-making is advantageous to the school most of the times. For instance, Lin (2014) argues that decisions which were made by the educators could be easier implemented by them rather than the imposed decisions. One of the reasons for this is that they tend to become owners of decisions and they are thus inclined to carry them out very strictly. In that study conducted by Duignan (2003), participants were asked about the areas in which they were most likely to be

part in share leadership. The participants showed their interests in the following matters; curriculum, student welfare, special events or targeted activities such as sports carnival, pedagogy, student management, personal interest areas and social activities. In the same study participants were also asked about the areas in which the teachers were less likely to participate in shared decision-making. Participants made mention of these areas, finance, dealing with parents, management and administration, emotional high stakes issues, strategic planning and policy development. On the same argument Forsha (1992) argues that school leaders such as principals should encourage educators to open their fears and their feelings of insecurities with regards to taking responsibility for sharing leadership and decision-making. Forsha (1992) further argues that teachers must be supported, encouraged and facilitate engagement if they are to take collaborative responsibility for educational and curriculum leadership for the schools. Nevertheless, teacher participation in decision-making has some barriers, and some of them are discussed in the next section.

2.4.7 Barriers to teacher's decision-making

Theoretically, much has been reviewed about teacher involvement in school making decision processes. Various researchers have suggested many benefits which the schools enjoy when involving educators in decision-making processes. Out of these benefits that the schools enjoy, there are also two barriers to teacher's decision-making as well (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) conducted a study on teacher inclusion in school decision-making in Taiwan. The study was intending to explore the diverse participation of teachers in school administration. The two barriers discovered by the researcher are teacher's capacity for their involvement and the authority of decision-making.

2.4.7.1 Teacher's capacity for their involvement

Teachers who are empowered need to have the knowledge regarding the decentralised governance of the school where teachers are invited to take part in decision-making process. They need the understanding about the information regarding the function and outcomes of school policies. These arguments observed the requirement for the educators' training about their involvement when it comes to school budget, curriculum and staffing decision-making (Johnson &Boles, 1994). Some complain that the school was overloading them with work when they were involved in this process of decision-making. Mokoena (2011) discovered that some teachers were very professional and wanted this degree of involvement. Others wanted

to be left alone in their classes and avoided all what was happening. However, teachers normally volunteer all the time which means that they participate in the activities of the school according to their own free will. Consequently, teachers raised the issue of workload arguing that they are getting overloaded with responsibilities. This is the barrier discovered in so far as participative decision-making is concerned in schools.

2.4.7.2 Authority of decision-making

Empowered or authorised teachers in making decisions in the schools become owners of the decisions that are taken. Teachers who are empowered with the power of decision-making tend to alter the beliefs and attitudes towards the roles they play beyond the classroom and have to restructure their thoughts regarding what is possible (Camborne, Weiss & Wyeth, 1992). Nevertheless, the in-service activities and retraining for the teachers which enable them to build new roles and attitudes basing them on the developed style of making decision are needed (Chapman, 1990). In a study by Yin (2014), it was observed that these two barriers discussed above represented the very preparedness of educators to take part in decisions of the schools as well as the authorities of decision-makers in their schools. According to Mokoena (2011), it can be concluded that the greater the involvement of the teachers, the greater the opportunities are for developing a positive relationship, enhanced collegiality and ownership of decisions in their schools.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the literature that has been reviewed on the topic. The intention of reviewing literature was to gain an understanding around the experiences and perspectives of educators in participative decision-making in schools and its effectiveness. Therefore, the chapter has referred to national, continental and international literature. In addition, this chapter has also incorporated the theoretical framework that underpinned the study. The next chapter provides details about the research design and methodology that was utilised in generating data that would assist in addressing research questions.

<center>**CHAPTER THREE**</center>

<center>**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**</center>

3.1Introduction

The previous chapter has given a lengthy discussion in regard to literature review and the theoretical framework that frames the study. This chapter is going to discuss the research design and methodology of this study. This study sought to explore the experiences and perspectives of educators in participative decision-making processes in their schools. As part of methodology, the chapter discusses research paradigm, delimitation of the study, sampling of the study, data generation instruments which include individual face to face interview and document review. In addition to the methodology of the study, data generation and data analysis procedures are discussed. This chapter also discusses ethical consideration and trust worthiness. The chapter will be concluded by the chapter summary.

3.2 Research paradigm

Kuhn (1962) describes the research paradigm as a combination of common beliefs and consensus shared between scientists about how problems should be addressed and understood. For example, positivist researchers postulate that there is only one truth or reality, and such reality resides objectively outside of the researcher's awareness (Maree, 2010). This is taken to mean that objective and independent laws of nature exist to which human life is subjected. In this situation, knowledge can be revealed or discovered through the use of scientific methods. The usual methods of arriving at the findings is through the use of survey questionnaires which are constructed to measure certain variables and the effect of each set of variables is measured within controlled settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In addition, the findings are invariably arrived at through the use of statistical techniques and conclusions. Next to positivist paradigm is post-positivist paradigm which follows critical-realist ontology in the sense that these researchers believe that there is a real, objective reality, but human cannot know it for sure. According to this paradigm knowledge is discovered through objectivity, but pure objectivity is impossible. It is further eluded that results are probably true. This is taken to mean that both quantitative and qualitative methods are included in getting reality. Biasness is reduced through qualitative validity techniques called triangulation (Creswell, 2009).

The other paradigm, which stands in direct contrast to positivism is post-modernism paradigm which assumes that there is no one single and absolute truth, and also that no truth is final (Maree, 2010). In the context of this paradigm, the findings are not reached through the use of figures and statistical techniques as it is the case with positivist researchers. In this paradigm, we get to know things by using words that describe the meanings that participants attach to their views and actions. Critical Theory researchers believe that reality can be understood, but only as constructed historically and connected to power (Maree, 2010). This is to mean that knowledge is influenced by the way the researcher wants it to go. Knowledge is constructed through researcher-participant by mean of action research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

After studying a number of research paradigms which are positivism, post-positivist, post-modernism and critical theory, I became to settle on interpretivism paradigm due to its relevance for the problem studied. Researchers of this paradigm hold the view that there is no definite reality or truth relating to this social world; instead a combination of realities or truths exist that are historical, local, specific and non-generalisable (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Maree, 2010).Literally speaking, this may be taken to mean that in interpretivism paradigm there are, at worst, many ways to know the truth and at best, there are many truths that human create as they interact with their social world.

Research participants in particular, present their experiences, perspectives, beliefs, ideas and values, according to the way they perceive the phenomenon being studied (Maree, (2010). Interpretivism paradigm was deemed relevant for the study because it sought to explore the experiences and perspectives of educator's in decision-making in their schools. As we may be aware, issues of experiences are individual and cannot be objectified but remain subjected to individual interpretations; hence the need for interpretive paradigm in helping understand the participants' experiences. According to this paradigm the researcher and the participants construct knowledge together and decide about whose knowledge is important (Maree, 2010).Interpretivism paradigm is distinguished from other paradigms such as positivism on the grounds that they assume that there is one truth about natural or social events. It is their assumption that in the scientific method, it is not enough that there is evidence but it has to be measured (Bertram &Christiansen, 2014).

Interpretivism paradigm is relevant to this study in the sense that the researcher and his participants are involved in a dialogue in discovering many truths to build evidence. The above discussion is corroborated by various scholars in qualitative research. For instance, Maree (2010) argues that interpretivism is a paradigm that has multiple interpretations to a particular issue. This means that you are at liberty to raise your views on the particular issue the way you perceive it. In the case of this study, the participants used their experiences and perspectives when responding to the questions that I posed to them. Devos (2002) argues that interpretivism is in line with qualitative approach since both allow the researcher to interpret the data in his or her own perspectives through interaction with the participants. This argument is corroborated by Maree (2010) who defines the qualitative research as an approach whereby the use of words is dominant to get the meanings. He further elaborates that a qualitative study is descriptive, holistic, experience and contextual in its design and aims at producing rich description of investigated phenomenon. The researcher has chosen a qualitative approach for this study. One of the reasons was that words would be used in discussing the experiences and perspectives of educators in regard to their involvement in decision-making processes at school level. The next section focuses directly on the discussion of the research design that was used.

3.3 Research design

A research design can be taken as a plan or strategy which specifies the allocation of participant, the data gathering method to be utilised and the analysis of data to be done (Maree, 2010). A research design appears to be an umbrella term because it embraces different data gathering techniques as mentioned above. Maree (2010) further contends that in the study of literature, six types of qualitative research designs are often discussed. These are conceptual studies, historical research, action research, case study research, ethnography and grounded theory. The research design that was used in the research was a case study. Yin (1994) defines a case study design as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context. Educators were studied holistically in relation to their lived experiences. This is taken to mean that their experiences with regard to distributive decision-making in the schools were studied. This is a case study of three public secondary schools in a rural area in Maphumulo Circuit.

3.4 Methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (1988) contend that methodology is about the tools we use to know the reality when gathering and analysing data of a studied phenomenon. This is the case study of three Secondary Schools in Maphumulo Circuit. In this study interviews and document reviews as instruments of data gathering were used. In fulfilling this task, the researcher arranged interviews with his participants. In addition, I also reviewed relevant school documents to corroborate what has been discussed with the participants. This methodology was deemed appropriate for this study on the grounds that the study is qualitative by nature. In this section a discussion of five items is made, and these include delimitations of the study, sampling, data generation methods and documents review.

3.4.1 Delimitation of the study

This research study was conducted at three rural public secondary schools in Maphumulo Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal province. The participants of the study were Post Level One educators, also referred to as teachers. Two educators from each school were selected. The schools that the researcher selected were all located in a disadvantaged poverty stricken community in Maphumulo area.

3.4.2 Sampling

According to Maree (2010), sampling refers to the sequence followed by scholar to select the portion of the population for the study. After studying different sampling strategies which are available in qualitative research approach, I settled on purposive sampling. According to Baily (1994), purposive sampling is defined as the judgement used by the researcher to choose those participants who best fit the purpose for the study. The study explored participatory decision-making of educators in their schools. For that reason the participants in this study were educators since this study is focusing on them. These educators as participants were drawn from three public secondary schools in Maphumulo Circuit. From each school, two educators were selected. This suggests that a total of six participants were involved in the study. The researcher has anticipated that these educators would be less likely to be resistant to this study. These educators were people who had a good interpersonal relationships and mutual respect with the researcher. Marshall and Rossman (2006) contend that transparency and trust between participants and a researcher can be beneficial in

exploring social changes causality and social identity. From this discussion it transpires that it would be of vital importance to know how data is going to be generated.

3.4.3 Data generation methods

Data generation instrument refers to the device or tool used to gather data, such as participatory observation, interviews, focus groups, expert's opinions, case studies and literature search (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).To generate data, semi-structured interviews and document review were used.

3.4.3.1 Semi-Structured interview

Krumar (2005) describes interviews as a formal face-to-face interaction between two or more people on specified date and time and with a specific purpose or objective in mind. This suggests that a researcher and participants have common understanding about when the interviews are done and for what purpose. They agree on date and time that will be convenient for both of them. Mutual trust and a good interpersonal relationship are of importance, before, during and after the interviews. Out of a number of interview types, I chose semi-structured interview for the study. Maree (2010) defines semi-structured interviews as interviews that are commonly used in research projects. Maree (2010) further argues that a semi-structured interview has a tendency to produce data that the researcher is not aware of. This is due to the fact that not everything has to be predetermined, but in conducting semi-structured interviews, guides are used to direct the discussion. Probes and follow-up questions can be asked for clarity purposes. In addition, the interviewer is given the probing opportunity. Probing helps the researcher to direct the research to the phenomenon being studied (Leedy, 2010). Semi-structure interviews were deemed to be relevant to the study.

In this study participants who were level one educator were interviewed. These were educators who taught in rural public secondary schools in Maphumulo Circuit. Interviews took place in a relaxed atmosphere and venue that was mutually agreed upon. Interviews did not happen in schools; it had been anticipated that such meetings might disturb educator's contact time with the learners. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes. Each participant was interviewed twice. First, they were interviewed during the data generation process and also when I wanted them to clarify certain issues that I could not check during the interviews. As I have explained elsewhere in this report, this technique is known as

member-checking. That is when the participants have to verify what he or she has said during the interview (Maree, 2010).

Educators were the most relevant participants in this study because the research was about them. I met them on different places during formal and informal gatherings. Moreover, the schools were situated in the same geographic area. It was observed that the review of documents was an essential method of generating data to complement that data generated through the use of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviewed were conducted first. The reason was that it is important to get data from the participants first. The data from participants shed more light and gave direction to the phenomenon being studied. Thereafter, documents review followed as a way of also checking if what the participants had said could be corroborated by the documents kept at school.

3.4.3.2 Documents review

Besides utilising interviews as the major technique of generating data, the review of documents was also used to complement this method. Document review is when the researcher is using document to focus on all sorts of written communication that may give light on the subject being study (Maree, 2010). These could be published or unpublished documents. In this study minute books and instruction books were reviewed. In the minute books I was looking for the agenda of the meetings in relation to the focus of the study, which was the educator's involvement in decision-making at a school level. In addition the researcher was also interested in knowing decision-makers in the schools and whether educator's views are taken seriously in matters that require decision-making. Moreover, the researcher was reviewing the instruction books in these schools. He was also interested to know from the instruction books the types of messages communicated. The researcher was curious to know the people who appeared often in the books who are instruction givers. It is anticipated that people who appear often in the books are most likely to be people who got more power in these institutions. Having discussed the way data was going to be generated, the researcher thought that it was also relevant to know the procedure to be followed when generating this data.

3.5 Data analysis procedures

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define data analysis as consisting of three types of activities. These are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. In the context of this study, I reduced data by focusing on issues in the data that addressed the research questions. Other items that were not relevant to the questions were left out. The data was displayed in well-organised themes that were in a position to enable me to make conclusions and make informed recommendations. Data analysis also entails looking at relationships and possible explanations that lead the researcher to suitable conclusions. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) describe data reduction as the procedure of choosing, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that is found in transcriptions.

3.6 Issues of trustworthiness

It is always important in research that the findings can be trusted as trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed alternative ways of ensuring trustworthiness for qualitative researchers. The framework that these scholars proposed has four criteria, namely credibility (in preference to internal validity), transferability (in preference to external validity or generalisation), dependability (in preference to reliability) and confirmability (in preference to objectivity) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.6.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (2005) contend that to ensure credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Qualitative research deals with question, how congruent are the conclusions with reality? To meet credibility with my participants I did a number of activities including letting them read the transcription and give approvals for the content.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) argue that credibility can be enhanced during the interview and during data analysis. During data gathering stage, the researcher may use mechanical means to record data. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) contend that when the interview is recorded *verbatim*, the data becomes more accurate. In the case where the researcher is jotting down notes during interviews, he or she may not be able to write word by word as uttered by the participant. That is the reason in this study I decided to use an audio-device to record the interview. I had hoped that the credibility would be enhanced through recording

the participant's verbal expressions of their experiences. After interview analysis, various scholars such as Cohen *et. al.*, (2011); Bertram and Christiansen (2014) argue that the credibility can be enhanced by giving the interview transcripts back to the participants to check and make some comments on whether the transcripts reflect what they said in the interview. This is also known as member-checking.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability can be regarded as being about the external validity if one uses quantitative research language. It is concerned with the degree to which the conclusions of one study can be applied to another situation (Cohen, *et. al.*, 2011). It is always difficult to show that the conclusions and findings are transferable to other situations and populations. To overcome this shortcoming, I ensured that I provide thick descriptions of the whole process of generating data and analysing it. Providing detailed descriptions of the whole process including describing the context of the study is helpful for the other researcher to conduct a similar study if they wish to do so.

3.6.3 Dependability

According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), dependability is addressed provided that the process within the study is reported extensively, thereby affording the future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessary to arrive at the same results. For the purpose of this study, the research design and methodology as instruments utilised in gathering data were explained in minute details. A more detailed discussion on this issue is provided in the subheading on instrumentation.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Guba and Lincoln (1985) define confirmability as the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. In that regard steps have to be undertaken to help ensure, as far as possible, that the research's conclusions are the results of the experiences and views of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). The major criterion for confirmability is the degree to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). What is of utmost importance here is that what one is finding should not be the preferences of the researcher, but should be the outcomes of the participants. In keeping with that principle, I had to make sure that my

interpretations of what the participants had said were referred back to them to confirm. Member-checking was the main technique that was used in that regard.

3.7 Ethical Issues

Creswell (1998) emphasises that a qualitative researcher has to contend with a number of ethical considerations that may emerge during the data generation phase in the field. Bertram (2003) also emphasises the importance of the ethics in research, especially when working with people. Some of the major principles to be strictly followed in any research are autonomy of the participants. In response to that principle, I had to acknowledge the participants' autonomy by writing letters to the principal as gatekeepers, seeking permission to conduct the study in schools under their jurisdiction. I also sought and obtained consent from all the participants to participate in the study; they were also made aware about their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. In addition, their right to privacy and confidentiality was guaranteed by amongst other things, ensuring that the content of our discussion was not disclosed to anyone and that anonymity was maintained throughout the study. For instance, to protect their identities and that of their schools, *pseudonyms* were used.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has focused on the research design and methodology that was utilised during the study. Research approach and paradigm adopted in this study were discussed. Case study design was explained and the reasons for adopting it were presented. The sampling method that was used for the study, the data generation methods and data analysis were presented. Ethical issues and trustworthiness were also discussed. The next chapter focuses on the data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research design and methodology that was used in this study. This chapter presents and discusses data that emerged during data generation process. This study made use of two data generation methods, namely, semi-structured interviews and document review. The data was generated from three secondary schools in rural area of Maphumulo Circuit, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The brief profiles of these schools and of all the participants are presented first before the themes that emerged after the analysis are discussed. The purpose of presenting the profiles first is to try and enable the readers to make an association between the data and the context within which the data was generated. What follows next is a brief discussion of the profiles of the three schools, and later on, the profiles of the participants.

4.2 Profiling the three schools

The data that is presented and discussed in this chapter was generated in each of the three schools and these are sometimes referred to as case studies or case study sites. The brief profile of each school is provided below.

4.2.1 Mike Secondary School (MSS)

Mike Secondary School (MSS) is not an old school in Maphumulo Circuit, having been built in the 1990s. It is situated in deep rural areas of Maphumulo and it is surrounded by vast land with scattered rondavels as it is typical of rural communities of olden days. The school is very small in terms of learner population. At the time of the study, MSS had an enrolment of278 learners ranging from Grade 8 to Grade 12. These learners were accommodated in 10 classes. The school had a staff complete of 11 educators consisting of a school principal, 2 heads of departments (HODs) and 8 teachers.

4.2.2 Echo Secondary School (ESS)

Echo Secondary School (ESS) is a typical rural school in Maphumulo Circuit, having been built in the early 1980s. It is situated in deep rural areas of Maphumulo and it is surrounded by vast land with scattered rondavels as it is typical of rural communities of olden days.

Compared to MSS, this school is not small at all in terms of enrolment. The school serves the surrounding community with very few learners who come from other areas. At the time of the study, ESS had a population of 550 learners ranging from Grade 8 to Grade 12. These learners were accommodated in 15 classes. The school had a staff complete of 22 educators consisting of a school principal, 2 heads of departments (HODs), 1 deputy principal and 17 teachers.

4.2.3 November Secondary School

November Secondary School (NSS) is a typical rural school in Maphumulo Circuit, having been built in the 1970s. The school was the oldest of the three schools that participated in this study. NSS is situated in deep rural areas of Maphumulo and it is surrounded by vast land with scattered rondavels as it is typical of rural communities of olden days. The school is almost the same size as Echo Secondary school in terms of learner population. The school serves the surrounding community with very few learners who come from other areas. At the time of the study, NSS had an enrolment of 460 learners ranging from Grade 8 to Grade 12. These learners were accommodated in 12 classes. The school had a staff complete of 18 educators consisting of a school principal, 2 heads of department and 15 teachers.

4.3 Profiling Participants

This summarises the profiles of all participants of the three schools. The study sample consisted of teachers only because the study was focused on them. The table below captures their gender, age category, qualifications, teaching experience, as well as teaching experience in their current schools. Below the table is a brief discussion about the content of the table. *Pseudonyms* have been used in order to conceal the identities of the participants and the schools.

Educators Profiles

Echo Secondary School (ESS)	Mrs Ntanzi	Mr Thango
Gender	Female	Male
Age Category	30 – 40	40 -50
Qualification	Bed Hons.	NPDE
Teaching Experience	13 years	18 years
Years in the current school	10 years	18 years

November Secondary School (NSS)	Miss Gcaba	Miss Ngubo
Gender	Female	Female
Age Category	40 – 50	40 – 50
Qualification	BA Degree	BA Degree, PGCE, BEd
Teaching Experience	20 years	Hons.
Years in the current school	19 years	10 years
		10 years
Mike Secondary School (MSS)	Mr Zulu	Mr Ngcongo
Gender	Male	Male
Age category	30 – 40	40 – 50
Qualifications	BA , PGCE	BEd
Teaching experience	8 years	15 years
Years in the current school	8years	10 years

Table 1:- **The Profile of Participants**

The profile of participants from table 1 above show that three participating educators were males and another three were females. The profiles also show that two of them were in an age category of between 30 – 40 years, therefore, relatively young. The table also shows that the participants had a wealth academic expertise. Two of them got senior degrees (Honours Degree) and others had bachelor degrees with the exception of one who had a diploma qualification only. All of them were qualified educators. Most of these participants had similar range of between 10 – 20 years in the current school. Miss Ngubo for instance, had 10 years of teaching experience in the current school. Mrs Ntanzi had 10 years teaching experience in the current school and other three years in other schools. Mr Ngcongo as well had 10 years teaching experience in this school and 5 elsewhere. It appears that they were educators who were sufficiently experienced to be able to contend for any promotion post in the education system.

4.4 Discussing themes that emerged

There are eight themes that emerged. These are top-down communication; educator participation in decision-making processes; school managers imposed decisions on educators; enhancing quality of education; positive teacher leadership; teacher leadership as dependent on school management; teacher participation in decision-making processes and school effectiveness; barriers to teacher participation in decision-making. Each of these themes is discussed in the next section.

4.4.1Top-down Communication (one way communication)

There are views that highlighted that educators were not involved in decision-making processes in their schools. Educators claimed that they were not invited when decisions were made. One of the participants who subscribed to this view is **Mrs. Ntanzi** who had this to say:

> *In most of the times we feel excluded because…eh…not all the times that we have meetings with the management where we are given an opportunity to say whatever we feel about a particular issue. At the end you see that the things are not happening accordingly.*

Similar sentiments were also expressed by participating educators who claimed that they were not invited in decision-making processes in the schools. **Mr Thango** said this:

> *To me, I would say no. When we have meetings the decisions made by post level 1 educators are not considered. You will find out that when the management is calling a meeting they have already met and decided according to the agenda that will be presented in the meeting.*

It is in this school (ESS) where the principal openly told me that he did not provide an agenda of the meeting to the educators before or during the meetings. The principal further said that he knew that educators should be given the agenda of the meeting but he did not do so. The communication book was also nowhere to be found. Instead, the principal handed over the pieces of governing body minutes of their meetings. Educator exclusion from participative decision-making was also confirmed by educator from NSS, who said:

> *The management just take a decision that involves you and you may not know why and how they took that decision* **(Miss Gcaba)**.

The same sentiment was also shared by **Miss Ngubo** of the same school who said:

> *The management will come with a decision that has been already made to us. So…I don't remember when they gave us that time to decide.*

In the staff meeting held on 23 July 2015, and another one held on the 4th of August 2015, it is indicated that the agenda was actually centred on the school management team. The instruction book is also one sided. The management give instructions to the educators. No educator appeared in the instruction book. The issue of top-down communication in schools is addressed by scholars such as Mestry and Naicker (2013). These scholars argue that schools are organisations that are complex in nature and therefore require appropriate forms of leadership to address this challenge. These scholars further argue that schools cannot be controlled by a single person as it happens where a man is the head of the family. Schools are the opposite because there are people who have an interest in them who are called stakeholders. Harris and Muys (2005) argue that the importance of effective leadership in contemporary school reform is required. In addition, Spillane and Halverson (2008) argue that there is a leadership that pays attention towards leadership practice rather than leadership as a role. This leadership practice is called distributed leadership style. Bush (2003) contends that leadership style of principal determines the school's image. It has been found that to build the culture of the organisation and to generate identity requires a distributive leadership style. In this style educators are involved in decision-making of the school (Spillane, 2006). This is taken to mean that the participation of all individuals from different levels, different educational backgrounds, different experiences, different perspectives and different social backgrounds will make a huge difference in terms of school effectiveness.

It was also discovered that empowered educators could contribute to the increase of teacher's achievement. Secondly, it was discovered that educator participation in decision-making presented crucial information closest to the causes of the problems of schooling and improving the quality of decision-making (Johnson&Boles,1994). This argument is corroborated by Somech (2010) of Israel, in the Middle East who contends that theoretically, PMD can promote teacher productivity directly and indirectly. Directly, it is thought to promote the quality educational decision-making by giving administrators access to critical information close to the source of the problems of schooling namely, the classroom (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). This is taken to mean that teacher's involvement have been found

to increase a desire to implement solutions in class. In that way, it helps promote educational productivity which is leaner achievement. This discussion puts me in position where I have to conclude that managers who exclude educator in decision-making are those that practice autocratic leadership styles. In this leadership style the manager is the only person who makes decisions in the organisation.

4.4.2 Educator participation in decision-making process

There is evidence that in Mike Secondary School there were some traces of educator participation in decision-making processes in the school. Educators who subscribed to this view hold this:

> *I think Post Level One educators are included in decision-making processes in my school. The reason could be that in my school there are committees. These committees are run by Post Level One educators. This means that in whatever decisions that are made in school, Post Level One educators are part and parcel of that decision. So I believe that Post Level One educators are included in decision-making processes in my school* **(Mr Zulu).**

In the staff meeting the educator was reporting on behalf of the Leaner Teacher Support Material Committee (LTSMC) that they received the textbooks and stationery and they believed that it corresponded with the requisition they made on the 10thof February 2015. This view was supported by **Mr Ngcongo** of the same school when he had this to say:

> *When it comes to academic activities in my school, we are all involved. There is no activity that is taking place without a meeting where we sit down and discuss. So, in that nutshell I can say yes, we are involved.*

In the instruction book of the school there were instructions that invited educators to a meeting. It just stated that the meeting would be discussing June examinations, sports competitions and so forth. There was no name of the educator who would be presenting that issue or agenda. In the minute book there were minutes of the presentation by the educator. In the staff meeting held in 4 March 2015, the educator was presenting the examination management plan for the first term.

Rumors, Camey, Panneflek, Marcheses and Machado (2005) contend in their project on teacher participation that the focus should be strengthened on the active involvement of educators with an aim to afford the student learning needs, fostering their inclusion in changes and contributing towards changing education system. This means that schools cannot transform without the inclusion of teachers in various activities of the school. In addition, Parnell (2012) also shares the same sentiment when this particular scholar argues that participation is about the subordinate involvement in decisions that typically fall under the domain of the principal.

Educator participation is proven to be of benefit to the school. This view is expressed by Sarason (1990) when contending that when teachers participate in decision-making they feel that they are considered in issues that have to do with them. As a result more commitment to the organisation is enhanced. Teachers take the responsibility for what is happening in the school. From these discussions it could be deduced that educator participation in decision-making process improves the school progress which influences school effectiveness. Educators are in the operational level in the school structure and they are indispensable need in influencing learner performance. I see no reason why they are not involved in decision-making processes in school. In addition, involving educators in decision-making processes does not only improve the effectiveness of the school but also enhances the quality of education.

4.4.3 Enhancing quality education

It appeared from the previous discussions that when educators are included in decision-making in the school quality education is enhanced. Besides various pieces of literature cited elsewhere in this report, policy frameworks such as the Schools Act, propagate the view of teacher participation and the notion of enhanced quality of education (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). The Schools Act further calls for active participation of all stakeholders in the education of the country. The aim is to enhance quality education. When educators were asked about the effect of their inclusion in decision-making, particularly in relation to the provision of quality education, all the participants raised the common understanding on this issue. This is what one of them had to say:

> *Yes, if educators are involved in decision-making they become motivated and dedicated. They become owners of the decisions taken* **(Mr Zulu)**.

His sentiment was shared by his colleague **Mr Ngcongo** who said:

> *You cannot exclude educators from decision-making processes if you want to give quality education to your learners. Educators are the agents of the transformation.*

In Mike Secondary School there is evidence of teacher involvement that was found in the documents. The arguments of these educators were supported by Mr Thango and Mrs Ntanzi both from Echo Secondary School. These participants hold that where educators actively participated in decision-making, there were positive developments towards improved quality of education. This is what one of them had to say:

> *Yes, we want quality education for our children and learners. Educators know more about the curriculum. We are the ones who identify learners' needs. So…I think some of the decisions must include us. Importance of educator inclusion in decision-making is paramount in bringing about quality education* **(Mrs Ntanzi).**

Her colleague Mr Thango also shared the same sentiment when he said:

> *I think educators must be fully involved in drafting the curriculum since educators are working with the learners. Quality education will be promoted if all stakeholders are involved* **(Mr Thango).**

The views expressed by educators from ESS were that in reality in their school they were not given such opportunities. The minute and instruction books were so vivid when it comes to the issue of teacher inclusion in decision-making processes. No evidence in the form of documents was handed to me by the principal. Nevertheless, educators expressed the belief that if they can be involved quality education could be enhanced. Participants from NSS held the same views when they said:

> *Yes, it could afford quality education if post level one educators are included in decision-making in the schools. The reason for this was that they are the ones who are involved with learners in most of the times* **(Miss Gcaba)**.

This argument was corroborated by **Miss Ngubo** from the same school who said:

I think it is important that educators are involved in decision-making processes in the schools because we are part of the staff. Whatever is done in our school we should be involved. All this can move the school upwards.

When analysing the documents of NSS which are the minute book and the instruction book there was no evidence of educator inclusion in decision-making processes. Educators wanted to be part of decision-making body in order to uplift the standard of education in the school. What was said by all participants in the study appear to be in line with what was discovered by Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) who contend that decision-making has been observed to be the heart of administrative process and forms the image of the school. It was further discovered that the success or failure of the school rests with the educators. This idea is corroborated by Smith (2011) who argues that teachers are important stakeholders in education and education cannot exist without them. Smith (2011) claims that educators are in the operational level or structure in the school and learner success takes place where there is quality education.

This is taken to mean that when teachers are invited in decision-making in their schools, there would be commitment and support with the principal and the realisation of the school goal will be easy. The ultimate goal of the school is offering quality education measured through learner achievement. It appears that teacher involvement in participative decision-making has an impact on quality education. It is advisable to include educators in decision-making processes in schools. Inclusion of educators in decision-making is informed by the participative or distributed leadership style. To achieve quality education you need to involve them to whatever you do at school.

4.4.4 School managers impose decisions on educators

It emerged from the data that many educators in the study were not taken serious by the management when they raised their views. There were also those who held different views. There are views that say:

Sometimes you feel that you are not taken seriously when you are saying something. You can see that this thing is not considered. It must come from them, for an example, you report the matter to the school management; sometimes they will tell you that you

were supposed to use your own discretion. To me, it sounds as if oh…that thing was not important. I am not taken serious **(Mr Zulu)**.

When perusing the document it was not easy to detect any evidence that could corroborate or reject the above argument. This is because this is about communication. Another participant who held the same view is **Mrs Ntanzi** from ESS who said:

Yes, things we spoke about are not considered. It is just a process that they will come to us but at the end of the day our decisions on the particular issue are not implemented.

Mrs Ntanzi's sentiment was also corroborated by another participant, Mrs Thango who said:

No, the management would come out with the final decisions. Sometimes they impose decisions to us as post level one educators expecting us to take everything without questioning things. We are not taken serious **(Mr Thango)**.

It emerged from the data that staff members had no inputs on important issues relating to the school and them. School management tended to impose its views on the teachers. The school management and teachers discussed issues without providing the staff members with an agenda or providing space on the agenda for them to add items that they wanted to be discussed in a meeting. Another participant who shared the same sentiment was **Miss Gcaba** and she had this to say:

It depends, eh …if you say something first and they (management) think that thing was supposed to be raised by them; yours will not be taken serious.

The minute book of the school was found to be management centred. This means that there is no agenda in the minute book that is addressed by an educator. The instruction book is also a one way communication with no slot to be presented by the educators. This appears to mean that educators are told by management to do this and that.

In a study conducted in South Africa by Mokoena (2011) on participative decision-making, it emerged that the principal was no longer the only decision maker in the school. The Schools Act also promulgates for active participation of all stakeholders in all areas of decision-making processes. However, research has discovered that some principals allow little or no subordinate involvement in the processes of decision-making because they believe that it is unproductive (Bush &Heystek, 2003; VanWyk, 2004; Mncube, 2007). In South Africa too,

principals of the schools need to adopt management styles that will make them to be aware that the schools are intensive educational business that require joint efforts to fulfil their goals by involving teachers in school's activities (Hartley, 2007).

In South Africa, a study conducted by Mestry and Naicker (2013) concluded that the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes is essential in dealing with the complex challenges that school are facing. According to Mokoena (2011), it is the greater involvement of teachers which was viewed as leading to developing positive relationship, enhanced collegiality and ownership of decisions in their schools. From the discussion it transpires that when educator's views are not taken serious it will be taken to mean that they are excluded from decision-making. They will simply distance themselves from decisions that were imposed to them. The behaviour of educators affects the school progress negatively. Other participants hold the view that they are only considered on matters relating to teaching and learning.

4.4.5 Affording quality education

The argument I have advanced has been that quality education exist in a school when educators are included in decision-making as proposed by the School Act. In the work of Udo and Akpa (2007), it is argued that ultimate goal of the school is offering quality education measured through learner achievement. The term learner achievement can be used interchangeable with the term productivity. On this aspect there was unanimity among the participants. All the participants shared the same sentiment when they argued that when educators are involved in making decision in their schools the quality education offered in the school could be enhanced. This is evidence from one educator who said:

> *Yes, if educators are involved in decision-making they become motivated and dedicated, so they own the decision* **(Mr Zulu).**

Mr Zulu's argument was corroborated by another educator from the same school who also argued that:

> *You cannot exclude educators from decision-making processes if you want to give quality education to your learners. Educators are the agents of transformation* **(Mr Ngcongo).**

This sentiment is also expressed by Mrs Ntanzi from Echo Secondary School who said:

Yes, we want quality education for our children and learners. Educators know more about the curriculum. We are the ones who identify learners' needs. So…I think some of the decisions must include us. On the same note: *I think educators must be fully involved in drafting the curriculum since educators are working with the learners. Quality education will be promoted if all stakeholders are fully involved* **(Mrs Ntanzi).**

Actually, all the participants were of the same view that quality education could be afforded when educators are included in decision-making processes by the management. However, it seemed that this aspect was not taken seriously by school management of the three participating schools. For instance, educators from November Secondary Schools in the fictitious name of **Miss Gcaba** said:

Yes, it could afford quality education if post level one educators are included in decision-making processes in the schools. The reason for their importance is that they are the ones who are involved with the learners' learning activities. They work hand in hand with the learners most of the time.

Miss Ngubo from the same school also shared the same sentiment where she said:

I think it is important that educators are invited in decision-making processes of the school because we are part of the staff. Whatever is done in our school we should be involved. All this can move the school upwards to a better level.

Orolunsola and Olayemi (2011) contend that decision-making has been observed to be the heart of administrative process. It was emphasised by the participants in this study that the success or failure of the school rests with the educators. This view is supported by Smit (2011) who argues that teachers are in an operational level or structure of the school. The effectiveness is characterised by the criterion of learner achievement or learner success. Learner success takes place where there is quality education. This argument is also corroborated by Somech (2010) who contends that theoretically, PMD can promote educator productivity directly and indirectly. Directly, it is thought to promote the quality of educational decision-making by giving administrators access to critical information close to the cause of the problems of schooling, namely, the classroom (Tschannen-Morana (2001). This is taken to mean that teachers' involvement appeared to increase a desire to implement solutions in class; hence to promote educational productivity which is learner achievement. It

has appeared many times in the discussion above that educators are the ones who interact with learners more than anybody else in the education spectrum. To achieve quality education you need to involve them in whatever you do at school.

4.4.6 Positive teacher leadership

Teacher leadership is about teachers taking various leading roles in activities of the school. Barth (2011) argues that learners benefit from teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is possible in the situation where democracy prevails. In a democratic environment educators interact with the management frequently. When most teachers lead, the school wins because the school reaches its ultimate goal of teaching and learning (Barth, 2011). Where teacher leadership is practiced, learners and school benefit. It has been discovered that when educators lead they get satisfied with their work.

It has emerged from the data that in some of these schools there was teacher leadership. This is where educators are given opportunities to lead various activities in the school. It was discovered that in some of these schools teacher leadership take place. There are views that say:

> *I think there is a positive relationship because if you are leading some activities you are allowed to air your ideas, air your views. This happens because you lead a certain committee (***Mr Zulu***).*

His colleague supported this argument when he said:

> *It depends on the nature of the activity which the teacher leads. In academic activities you will find that the teacher is receiving 100% support from management. When it comes to activities like sports, you don't get a support because it has no impact on teaching and learning* **(Mr Ngcongo)**.

In this school there was a series of staff meetings where an educator would present activities that were to take place in the school. For instance, on the 12th of March 2015, it was a Grade 12 career exhibition trip; on the 19th of May 2015, there was going to be a game sport.

This sentiment was also shared by another participant who had this to say:

> *Eh…as a teacher, I'm a leader. Fortunately, in that role of leadership we get support. We, as a committee identify learners with learning barriers and refer them to the*

management. We are even able to identify learners who are abused at homes. We are involved in that regard **(Mrs Ntanzi)**.

A colleague from the same school corroborated the existence of teacher leadership in his school when he said:

> *In my school, most committees are led by post level one educators. Post level one educators are subject heads, leaders of cultural activities, sports, IQMS and Teacher Liaison Officer. But the problem is…I have just found out that these areas of leadership demand a lot of work. To me, it's just like that the management is shifting the responsibility to Post Level One educators* **(Mr Thango).**

It is in this school where the minute book was not supplied to me as a researcher. Therefore, I was not in a position to see the agenda and minutes of the meeting .**Miss Gcaba** from NSS also affirmed the point of teacher leadership in her school. This is what she said:

> *We, as post level one educators are allowed to decide which way to take to promote teaching and learning. After scrutinising your views they will come back   and   tell you the outcome. If they think it promotes teaching and learning they will give it a try.*

In the minute book it appeared that at the meeting held on the 13th of June 2015, there was a slot by an educator which was given to Post Level One educator on examination programme. The instruction book is top-bottom communication form.

4.4.7 Teacher leadership is dependent on school management

It appeared from the discussions that there was a school where educators were not given the platform to perform any leading role. They had to adhere to what was said by the school management with them playing no initiative or any creativity at all. There was no educator involvement in activities that took place in the school. An educator who subscribed to this view had this to say:

> *It is the same because we are not given a platform for the leadership. If you come with an idea of leading a certain activity that idea will be just ignored because it comes from the post level one educator. It is not easy, in the way   that   this   management style lead to the teacher to be just inactive. Any activities that the educators lead will not be considered even if it is for the benefit to the learners* **(Mrs Ngubo***).*

When I looked at the minute book nothing appeared that had to do with teacher leadership. People who appeared most in the minute book and the instruction book of the school were members of the school management team where they were giving instruction to the educators. The work of Harris and Tassel (2005) shows that there is a close relationship between teacher leadership and distributed leadership theories. It is emphasised that in a knowledge-intensive enterprise such as the school where teaching and learning is the measure concern, it is impossible to complete complex tasks without distributing leadership responsibility (Hartley, 2007). This is taken to mean that in a situation where leadership roles are centred around the management of the school, progress is negatively affected. This is confirmed by the fact that distributed leadership is primarily concern with integrating both formal and informal leadership and the way they produce different types of activities (Harris, 2004). Distributed leadership style is about delegating the task to fellow educators. Educators too are at liberty to choose his or her area of interest to lead (Lieberman, 2007).

In a study conducted by Naicker and Mestry (2013), it emerged that the school management of a primary school in Soweto were not involving educators in decision-making processes of their schools. This had a bad impact on the part of the educators. Educators were inactive, passive and carried out the instructions imposed on them by the management very reluctantly. This would mean that they did not own the decisions taken because they were excluded from doing or saying anything in the school. Decisions were taken by the management alone. The South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996 promotes educator involvement in decision-making processes in schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Therefore, if we as management team and Post Level One educators work together, learners will benefit most because we will offer quality education as encouraged by the Schools Act.

4.4.8 Teacher's participation in decision-making processes and school effectiveness

The data has revealed that educator involvement is crucial in moving the school to the higher levels when it comes to teaching and learning and is highly valued. Almost all participating educators shared the same sentiment that it is an indispensable need in growing the school. A participant who subscribes to this view said:

> *Hmmm…that is a lovely question Mr Ngcobo. Surely if the principal of my school can*
> *actually embark on a struggle of engaging us as educators, there will be a better*

education and better improvement in terms of the results. You will know exactly what is expected of you because you are now involved. He/she must involve educators, consult them before you do anything, you get them engaged. Once you do that the school will get better results **(Mr Zulu).**

Then referring to the minute book and instruction book of the school there was no indication that educators were included in the agenda except in the examination writing process. It appeared that the inclusion of educators in this aspect was mainly due to the view that educator's efforts were required for the success of the examinations processes. This argument of Mr Zulu was supported by his colleague, **Mr Ngcongo** who had this to say:

Our principal keeps on reminding us that we are the masters of our subjects. Teachers' involvement in teaching and learning is measured by examination final results.

Literally speaking, this means that the concern of the principal was on teaching and learning. Anything outside this perimeter was regarded as of less importance. Documents such as minute book and instruction were silent about teacher involvement. **Mrs Ntanzi** from ESS had this to say in this regard:

> *Eh…I think if we are 100% included in decision-making that can make the school to move higher levels when it comes to teaching and learning. When the principal notices something strange in the classrooms he comes to us to discuss it together. We can come with strategies that can stop those problems from happening; for example, learners who stay in toilets during learning hours.*

In Echo Secondary School, agenda for minutes was not provided. Communication book was a one way communication too. Educators in the school were just told what to do or what is supposed to be**. Mr Thango** from the same school said:

> *Yes, it's one of his duties but he cannot do it alone. For the principal to move the school to a higher level, he needs to involve educators. We want to see our school moving forward to a higher level. If educators are involved in decision-making, the school could move to higher levels in terms of teaching and learning. But the problem is imposing. We do sit together and talk about issues of the school but the problem is implementation. It is very easy to come up with an idea but the problem is implementation (laughing).*

At ESS no agenda for the meetings were indicated in the minute book. In addition, there was no evidence of educator involvement and the instruction book is a one way communication. Coming to November Secondary School, one participant had this to say about the need for educator involvement in the affairs of the school:

> *The principal must see to it that the school is giving out good results. The principal cannot do this alone, the educators are important in fulfilling this challenge. Educators are the ones who teach these learners. The principal must include them in decision-making processes of the school* **(Miss Gcaba)**.

In November Secondary School, there was nowhere in the minute book of this school where an educator had been given an opportunity to present a slot during any of the meetings. I managed to peruse it and had sufficient time to do so. However, no evidence of educator's involvement was found. The communication book was there but it is a one way communication. All educators so far value their involvement in decision-making processes. Participant from NSS who holds the similar view had this to say:

> *Yes, it will be easy because once you are involved in decision-making; you will be there when discussions are taking place. You will be there when you agree to each other and how you are going to do something. If I am involved it will make the work of the principal easy. The principal will be aware of the things he was not aware of in the classrooms. In so doing the culture of teaching and learning moves forward* **(Miss Ngubo)**.

In NSS there was no evidence of involving educators in decision-making process in the school that appears in the minute book and the instruction book was management dependent .It has appeared in the above discussion that educator involvement in decision-making is important in taking the school to a higher level. This was confirmed by the versions that educators become the co-owners of the decision. The school management and educators work towards acquiring a common goal which aims at creating the culture of effective teaching and learning.

A similar study was conducted in Kenya by Ndiku, Muako, Simunyu, Mukasa and Judy (2009), which sought to examine the improvement of decision-making in schools through teacher participation. However, that was a quantitative research, and it was discovered that school heads (principals) used their superior powers, knowledge and experience to control the

working of the school. In such situations, educators are not part of the school activities. The above-mentioned scholars hold the view that this behaviour of the principals affects the school progress negatively; therefore, teachers do not work to their maximum potential. Bell (1992) argues that principals must use modern management styles, which are contrary to traditional management approaches.

According to Bell (1992), the modern management styles are bottom-up, participative ,consultative, team and task orientated including listening and responding to the real needs rather than telling and prescribing. When a participative decision-making is practiced in the schools it results in positive contribution to the school programme. Diamond (2004) contends that when PDM is used corroborative capabilities of educators are brought together to deal with complex issues, manage ambiguous tasks, and develop new courses of actions, then their commitment to the profession increases. This would mean that participation of all individuals from different levels, different educational backgrounds and different social backgrounds will make a huge difference in terms of school effectiveness.

4.5 Barriers to teacher participation in decision-making.

Theoretically, much was reviewed about teacher involvement in decision-making in schools. The literature reviewed shows that there are many benefits that the school enjoy when involving educators in decision-making processes. It has also appeared that in spite of benefits there are also two barriers that hinder educators from participating in decision-making in their schools. The two barriers discovered by the researcher are communication barriers and undermining of educator's intelligence.

4.5.1 Communication Breakdown

It emerged from the data that some of the barriers to teacher participation in decision-making was the existence of communication breakdown between school management and the teachers. Most participants subscribed to the view that communication between the school management team and Post Level One educators was not good. For instance, one of the participants who shared this view had this to say:

Yes, there are barriers. Amongst those is a lack of understanding between the principal and educators. If I say something that when I perceive it will enhance better results and help the school. The principal will simply sabotage you. Do you

understand? Why do the principal sabotage you? It is because it comes from Post Level One educator. That's the problem **(Mr Zulu)**.

The views and experiences expressed by Mr Zulu were also shared **Mr Ngcongo**; this is what he had to say in this regard:

I can say communication is the barrier in my school. The principal do not want to hear our concerns. For an example, educators must pay when they accompany learners in the educational excursions. This has made us to decide not to honour learners' excursions. It was then when he realised that we are not happy.

It emerged from the data that at MSS there was no agenda for meetings as reflected in the minutes of meetings. The absence of the agenda implied that the teachers had no platform make inputs into what can be discussed in a meeting or to raise their views of any kind except in the examination times. The welfare of educators did not seem to be taken any seriously by school management. The people who gave instructions to the educators was as it is expected, the school management team. These instructions appeared too often in the instruction and communication books. Coming to Echo Secondary School, the same story was told when an educator was asked if there were any barriers related to educator involvement. The educator said:

Yes, something like communication. Sometimes there was a circular and ended up not reaching us, at the end of the day we lose that information or workshop. We found ourselves in a state of not knowing what was happening. We did try to talk to one of the SMT member to make him feel that the things that are happening do not sound well to us. That made me realise that…we do not know whether that thing is done intentionally or what… **(Mrs Ntanzi**).

Her arguments were supported by her colleague (Mr Thango) who had this to say:

One of the barriers in educator involvement in decision-making is communication. There should be should be a communication book. For an example, a learner in my class was expelled and asked to come with a parent. All that happened without my

consultation. To me, that means a problem. The problems of the class must be dealt with by the class teacher as a manager of the class **(Mr Thango).**

It is in this school (ESS) where the meetings were held without submitting the agenda to the staff before or during the meeting. The principal had to tell me that they just disregarded that point. But they know that it is a principle that should be carried out. In November Secondary School educators also shared the same sentiment when they argued:

Yes, there are some barriers. You report a learner who has shown ill-behaviour; during the hearing you are not invited. That is a barrier. The educators concern should be there when the decision is taken. This is unfair…so unfair. There is a communication breakdown or a lack of communication with the management team **(Miss Ngubo)**.

In the documents handed to me I did not find any evidence of educator involvement in setting up of the agenda, either before or during the meeting. Documents referred to were minute book and instruction or communication book. Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) contend that effective leadership requires a joint effort. It also appeared that teachers are central in the management of schools and their involvement in decision-making process is such a sentimental issue and its neglect by the principal could cause a lot of tensions, rifts, conflicts, and even misgivings which may hinder the realisation of the objectives of the school goals. This is taken to mean that the success or failure of the school rests with the teachers. This view is supported by Smit (2011) who argues that teachers are in an operational level of the school. This should be made possible by building sound relationship staff members. Teacher satisfaction cannot be over-emphasised when it comes to fulfilling the educational goal which is teaching and learning. Teacher satisfaction is defined in the study of (Ngotngamwong (2011) as the level of teacher satisfaction by matters related to these conditions, students' achievement, decision-making ability and self-growth.

In this study it appears that many teachers who participated in the study were dissatisfied in their schools and highlighted that they had decided to leave the profession. Some were engaged in causing problems in their workplaces; they were not happy in their schools. Factors that must be considered to make teachers feel happy in their schools are amongst other things, environment which is the job itself or the working environment (Crossman &Harris, 2006). According to Ngotngamwong (2011), when teachers are satisfied in their job,

they enhance collegiality, improve job performance, the rate of attrition is reduced. Teachers who are satisfied in their job also contribute to the student outcome (Woods &Weasmer 2004). This is taken to mean that leaders who practice participative decision making in their schools can help increase teacher satisfaction. In addition, Drake and Roe (2003) hold the view that when teachers are included in decision-making in the school, the level of their commitment, trust, team spirit and teacher efficacy, productivity and teacher morale increases. It becomes clear that educator involvement in various activities of the school happens best where there is healthy communication between management and post level on educators.

4.5.2 Educators Intelligence

It also transpired that in these schools of Maphumulo Circuit there was an undermining of educator involvement in decision-making, and such tendencies contributed to barriers in educator involvement. People who subscribed to this view hold this:

> *Undermining the intelligent of other people is problematic. The principal and the school management appear to be the only people who are knowledgeable in the institution (***Mr Zulu***).*

In this school (MSS), as mentioned earlier, no evidence of educator involvement was found in the minute book and instruction book. This sentiment was shared by another educator who had this to say:

> *Another thing, I would feel again, but eh... that is a personal view. Undermining,   I don't think it is a good idea where you find the learner and the   parent   in   the principal's office and you are not aware that what it is all about. Eh...because I am a class teacher all things concerning with a class from A to Z rest with me. I mean…everything. Another example, you will find that the principal make an announcement in assembly and you get shocked because you were not called to sit in a meeting before announcement is made to the learners. When we go to the meetings we go there without an agenda. Our staff meetings are just a one man's show* **(Mr Thango)**

In ESS document were made available there but there was no agenda of the staff meeting found. In situations like this the definition of distributive leadership could be a solution.

Harris (2005) defines distributed leadership style as the leadership that is concerned with inter-dependency rather than dependency and covers a variety of leaders in diverse roles who share leadership responsibilities. When this definition can be followed there could be no undermining. Managing and leading school is not a one man's business. Leadership and management of the school promote 'we' rather than 'I'. When practicing a distributed leadership style the school becomes our school. In addition, this leadership style does not seek to do away with formal leadership structures but presumes that a relationship exists between vertical and lateral leadership processes (Naicker &Mestry, 2011).

This is taken to mean that this is about redistribution of power and authority as well as the building of trust relationships between the principal and the entire staff personnel's (Hopkins & Jackson, 2003). Mestry and Naicker (2013) argue that this democratic leadership style involves the stakeholders in decision-making processes and deals with complex challenges that the school faces. With this style, instructional programme and school governance become successful. This is confirmed by the following concepts: teacher leadership, redistribution of power and authority, building of trust relationship, creating sustainable school climate, teacher outcomes, job satisfaction, productivity and motivation (Mestry & Naicker, 2013). It is evident that three rural secondary schools that were studied seem not to practice participative decision-making. Undermining educators' intelligence entails about taking decision alone as a principal, which impacts negatively to our most important clients, who are the learners.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion of the data that emerged from the analysis of semi-structured interviews and documents reviews. The data was presented in eight themes which were mentioned and discussed. The next chapter provides a discussion of the findings that were drawn from the data presented in this chapter. Thereafter, recommendations are made.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has thematically presented and discussed the data that emerged from semi-structured interview and document review. This chapter outlines the conclusions of the study that emerged from the analysis of the themes. Before the findings are presented and discussed, a summary of the study is presented; this is followed by the findings and eventually, recommendations based on the findings are made.

5.2 Study summary

Through this study, I intended to discover and understand the educators' experiences regarding their participation in decision-making and its relationship with school effectiveness. The study also sought to explore the extent to which teacher participation related in any way to school effectiveness in the Maphumulo Circuit. This was a case study of three secondary schools. One of the motivating factors was that the leadership styles practiced by some principals in the neighbourhood schools were exclusionary of the educators. Related literature, including the discussion of theoretical framework was explored. In the third chapter, the study was located within the interpretive paradigm. I did that with an intention to know my participant's experiences and perspectives in decision-making in their schools by constructing the knowledge together. The third chapter presented an extensive discussion of the research design and methodology in order to answer the research question that frames the study. After generating data I then presented it in the fourth chapter. The last chapter presents the findings as well as makes recommendations based on the data that is presented in Chapter Four.

5.3 Findings of the study

The findings are presented by using research questions that guided the study. The research questions will enable me to find how successful I was in getting the data that I intended to find before the study commences.

.3.1 What are the experiences and perspectives of educators' participative decision-making in their schools?

The discussion below provides the findings about the major experiences of the principals towards educator involvement in making decision in three secondary schools in Maphumulo Circuit. The findings show that the experiences of the teachers are largely negative. Their experiences are that of exclusion from participating even in shaping the agenda of the staff meetings. It emerged from the data that the teachers played no part is shaping the agenda of meetings. The normal practice is that of circulating the agenda of meetings before the meetings start. Such practices enable participants in the meeting to prepare properly. Secondly, once the meeting starts, the other usual practice is that of adopting the agenda of a meeting. Should there be issues that other members who were not part of the planning for meeting will get opportunity to add items that they wanted to be discussed in the meeting because they feel they are important. Unfortunately, the findings show that such opportunities were not afforded to the participants in this study. Instead, everything is imposed by school management. Detailed discussions on these issues can be found in **Sections 4.1; 4.2; 4.4 and 4.8 of Chapter Four.** There are also other sections where the educators' perspectives are discussed in greater details and the story has emerged is not a good one. Statements such as this "*The management just take a decision that involves you and you may not know why and how they took that decision*" coming from Miss Gcaba captures the essence of all other participants regarding their experiences of involvement in decision-making processes in their schools.

The other findings relating to the teachers' experience of involvement is about principals' leadership styles. It should be acknowledged here that the study was not about principals' leadership styles. However, there is a very close relationship between stakeholder participation generally and the style of leadership that prevails in an institution. For instance, where leadership is open to other stakeholders to participate, you will find that the participation of various relevant stakeholders is embraced and encouraged. The finding in this study is that by and large, participation of educators lacked. However, some semblance of involvement existed. For instance, out of six participants from six schools only two participants mentioned that their principal's approach to leadership was democratic leadership style. This is where educators were said to be involved in some areas of

decisions of the school. Mr Zulu Mike Secondary School claimed that: *"I think post level educators are included in decision-making in my school"*. Even here, this participant was not convincing in the sense that he was not decisive in his statement. One may conclude that this is just a partial democracy because educators are only included in the form of committees. These committees report to the management which means that the management team will hold the upper hand when it comes to implementation of those decisions taken by committees. Educators feel that they are considered in issues that affect them when they participate in decision-making processes (Sarason, (1990).

From this discussion it becomes clear that educators want to be involved in matters that have to do with their work. If they are invited to discuss these matters, they become co-owners of the decisions taken. This could also mean that senior members of the team and educators work together for the fulfilment of the shared vision of the school. This is also shared by scholars who argue that educators feel they have a voice in matters that affect them if they are involved in decision-making processes in their schools (Sarason, 1990).

5.3.2 How does the involvement of educators in participative decision-making enhance the quality of education?

According to the data presented, it emerged that, from the teachers' perspectives, therefore involvement in decision-making process in the school enhances the quality of education. Such perspectives were based on the view that educators were the ones who interacted with the learners on daily basis. The learner's strengths and weaknesses are known by them. This is taken to mean that when they are given an opportunity to be engaged in issues of teaching and learning they can do wonders when it comes to learner achievement. *"If educators are involved in decision-making, quality education could be afforded"* Miss Gcaba emphasised. However, it was found that educators did not enjoy this right to participate in making decisions about their professional lives and that of their learners in the schools. A detailed discussion of how the educator feels about their participation and also about being left out of decisions in their schools is found in **Sections 4.1, 4.4, 4.7** of **Chapter Four**.

The notion of active teacher participation and its influence of the quality of education provided in the schools have been highlighted by various scholars in the field. For instance, Somech (2010) contends that PDM is thought to promote the quality of educational

decision-making by giving administrators access to critical information close to the source of the problems of schooling, namely, the classroom. This is taken to mean that teacher's participation is believed to increase a desire to implement solutions in class, hence to promote educational productivity which is learner achievement.

5.4 Recommendations

This study has made two sets of recommendations. The first set is directed at secondary school principals. The second set of recommendations is directed at the research community.

5.4.1 Recommendations directed at secondary school principals.

It was observed from the data that educators were not invited in decision-making processes in their organisations. Decisions in most of the times were centred within the school management team led by the principals. It also appeared that Post Level One educators wanted to be included in decision-making processes in their schools. Literature has indicated to us that when educators are involved in decision-making processes, the school benefits and the quality education offered to their learners improves. Therefore, it is advisable that school principals should engage everybody in the school when making decisions because those decisions are implemented by educators as they are in the operational level.

5.4.2 Recommendations directed at research community

Another recommendation is directed at research community. There has been an outcry in South Africa that the level of learner achievement in key learning areas such as numeracy and literacy in primary schools remain low compared to other countries in Africa and the world. In the context of secondary schools, learner achievement in subjects such as Mathematics and Science has remained too low compared to other countries. However, various scholars have been cited in this report and many suggest that where educators actively participate in decision-making processes, learner achievement is enhanced. It has also been shown that ownership of decisions has remained high where educators are invited to engage in deeper discussions about issues that affect their professional lives.

In view of the issues raised in the above paragraph, it is evident that a study is needed that will on a large scale, interrogate the issue of educator participation decision-making and school effectiveness, particularly in schools that are located in rural communities. This might bring about awareness to those school leaders who still use positional power to deprive educators of their right to be engaged in deeper discussions about issues that affect them and how and such issues might be resolved.

5.5 Implications of the study

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) argue that educators inclusion in decision-making and supportive educator-principal leadership contribute to school effectiveness, a quality of teaching as well as improvement in learner performance. I share similar views as those of the scholar cited above. Empirical evidence from this study and others, seems to suggest that where collaborative means of the educators are brought together to deal with complex issues, manage ambiguous tasks and develop new courses of action then their commitment to the profession increases which also affects the school's progress positively. This would mean that when educators are engaged in decision-making processes in their schools, the school wins. Educators become satisfied with their work. In addition, learners achieve good results in the school. Learner achievement has been regarded as one of the measures of the school effectiveness. There is therefore, a necessity to identify leadership styles that are associated with effective schools. In doing so, current and leaders to come can target their efforts on aspects of the work that are more likely to be effective and efficient in improving learner performance. It is therefore anticipated that the insights gained through this study may contribute to the expansion of the understanding of an issue of growing prominence in policy and research, particularly with regards to how the involvement of educators in decision-making could contribute to school effectiveness.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings and made recommendations that are directed at two sets of stakeholders. These stakeholders are secondary school principals and research community. This chapter begins by providing a summary of the entire study before presenting the findings which are organised under the research questions. The conclusions have indicated the fact that educators do not have positive stories to tell about their participation in decision-making processes. Although in only school November Secondary

School, there were some semblances of teacher leadership, the study largely indicated that where there were some elements of involvement in decisions made, these were merely cosmetic and related to examinations. This study has not come up with anything new; the educators' experiences link with a huge body of literature in South Africa which suggests that school principals and their approaches to leadership have not embraced stakeholder participation in schools.

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