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## **Declaration**

**Unless specifically indicated to the contrary, this research report is the result of my own work.**



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**November 2011**

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**“In learning to know other things, and other minds, we become more intimately acquainted with ourselves, and are to ourselves better worth knowing.”**

**Philip Gilbert Hamilton**

## **Abstract**

The present research explores teachers' perceptions of participative decision-making (PDM) in a public high school in Durban, South Africa. PDM is also termed as participative management. This study attempts to investigate level one educators' experiences of participation in decision-making. Hence, it is a qualitative exploration of the nature of their participation in decision issues and how they perceive the school's actions with regard to participative decision-making. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were administered on ten level one educators within the school setting. Five themes were identified through the use of thematic analysis. These themes are as follow: collective activity, shared influence, expression of individual perspectives, the acknowledgement of educators' input, and the implementation of cooperative governance. The integration of educators' experiences in the literature on PDM, generated an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions. In essence, the findings of this research suggest that level one educators are not meaningfully engaging in decision-making in the school environment. In conjunction with this assertion, the school lacks a comprehensive framework to engender effective participative decision-making, as well as, significant involvement of level one educators. Essentially, the present research provides insight into the experiences of educators in a public high school and therefore, contributes to the body of knowledge on participative management.

**Key terms:** Participative decision-making, participative management, teacher involvement, level one educator, public high school, South African context, school governance, and qualitative research.

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## **Chapter One**

### **1.1. Introduction**

In recent years, there has been a proliferation in publications pertaining to participative decision-making. Evidence attesting to this, is the vast array of literature on the need for participative management and the consequences of participation in decision-making within organisations. In line with this assertion, the current study attempts to investigate level one educators' perceptions of participative decision-making in a public high school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

Level one educators are subject teachers who do not occupy formal roles in school management. A subject teacher is a person who has qualification(s) and skills to teach a particular learning area such as biology and physics in school. A public school in South Africa is controlled by the government. Evidently, the challenges experienced by educators in public schools have been well documented on a national and international scale. Issues pertaining to school authority and governance are found to be areas of interest for scholars. This also includes the issue of teacher involvement in schools. Notably, the new democratic South Africa has passed legislations with the aim of transforming public institutions from the old autocratic system, in order to adopt a democratic approach (RSA, 1996a; RSA, 1996b; DoE, 1996). Participation is a vital process in democracy because authority flows from all stakeholders. Hence, school authority must be based upon the consent of educators as attested by the South African Schools Act of 1996. In light of the above, this research aims to explore the approach of the current school with respect to

participative management. More importantly, this is done by taking into account level one educators' perceptions from their point of view.

This chapter presents the problem statement, the study aim and objectives, research questions, and the structure of the dissertation respectively. The problem statement provides the context for this research and is the focal point of the study. The study aim and objectives provide the purpose for conducting this research and generate research questions. Research questions presents the specific questions that this research intends to answer. Last, the structure of the dissertation provides an overview of what is covered in subsequent chapters.

## **1.2. Problem statement**

The need for cooperative school governance is declared in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and, in the preamble of the South African Schools Act of 1996. This view was supported in the White Paper One by the Ministry of Education, which announced that school decision-making authority in the Public Sector would be shared among the community, learners, parents, and educators in ways that support the core values of democracy (Department of Education, 1996). Hence, a study which explores the nature of cooperative governance in a South African public school is essential. This is because the issue of school management from educators' perspectives has been under searched. Even though, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Section 41(1)(h)) attests that principals and educators work cooperatively in mutual trust by adhering to agreed procedures; however, research indicates several limitations with regard to the practice of participative management in schools (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002). For

this reason, the present study will address the challenges put forward by educators with a specific interest in the experiences of level one educators in a public high school.

Although, the need for participative management and cooperative governance is highlighted in the legislation, however, this does not signify it is taking place in schools as advocated. Evidence shows that some principals are used to the traditional method of taking decisions on their own without any input from relevant educators. Further, a study conducted by Tyala (2004) reveals that teachers have been oriented to being the recipients of instructions. Hence, these teachers view management as the sole prerogative of principals and people occupying managerial positions. Therefore, a gap exists between the attestation of the South African Schools Act of 1996 and, educators' conception in relation to collaborative school management. According to the South African Schools Act of 1996, school management and educators are expected to inform each other on matters of common interest and coordinate their actions. Thus, school management does not possess absolute authority over school governance. This implies that educators have an active role to play in school management and thus, their participation in decision-making cannot be omitted. For this reason, this study's participants are level one educators because they do not occupy formal managerial positions. In addition, Thurlow, Bush and Coleman's (2003) findings depict obstacles to participative management in schools. These authors found that teachers in public schools discontent with inadequate consultation with regard to policy changes. In addition, scholars suggest that the current topic area is under researched and overlooked.

According to Tayla (2004) with reference to South Africa's educational case, by and large, there is an absence of comprehensive research and literature on democratic educational management. Furthermore, research in this area pays little attention to the complexity of issues faced by teachers operating in disadvantaged circumstances. This assertion implies that research tends to focus on broad management issues and wide generalisations. Ultimately, the challenges with respect to school governance and collaborative management are largely ignored (Fullan, 1999; Sayed, 1997). In light of the abovementioned legislations and the subsequent challenges within educational management in South Africa, the present study attempts to develop an understanding of how level one educators perceive the notion of participative decision-making in a public high school. Moreover, this research explores the nature of participation in decision-making with reference to level one educators' experiences. This research draws on international and South African literature to build a conceptual framework to facilitate the understanding of participative management in schools. Hence, opposing ideas, assumptions and empirical findings are integrated to investigate the notion of participative management and educators' perceptions.

### **1.3. Study aim and objectives**

The central purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of participative decision-making amongst teachers from a qualitative perspective. Specifically, this study seeks to understand level one educators' experiences of participation in a public high school. Consequently, the nature of participation is explored by taking into account the perceptions and experiences of level one educators. This research will incorporate the areas of strength and limitation with regard to school participative management. In order to generate an in-depth understanding, this study



investigates the process and extent of participation, challenges, gaps, policies regarding participation, as well as, attempts made to facilitate participative decision-making in the current school. Thus, positive and negative interactions of participative management are explored through the lenses of level one educators. By allowing level one educators to share their experiences, this study also aims to develop an in-depth understanding of how school governance addresses issues of participative management. In conjunction with this, the study explores level one educators' subjective experience of participative decision-making, as well as, their understanding of these experiences within the school setting. Hence, a qualitative study is best suited for this research as this allows the researcher to generate an in-depth understanding of the topic area.

The research objectives include:

- To investigate how level one educators perceive the notion of being able to participate in decision issues concerning the school as a whole.
- To explore the extent of participation in the decision-making process in terms of level one educators.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

1. What are level one educators' perceptions of participative decision-making?

How do they perceive the notion of being able to participate in decision issues?

How important is participation to level one educators?

2. What is the process of participation in decision-making for level one educators?

What are the policies for participation in decision issues?

What attempts are made to facilitate participative decision-making in the school setting?

3. Do level one educators participate in decision-making processes?

How do level one educators participate?

What does it involve?

4. What are the gaps experienced by level one educators in participative decision-making?

What are the challenges faced by level one educators?

What can be done to improve the process of participation in decision-making?

## **1.5. Structure of the dissertation**

Chapter two presents the literature review and theoretical framework. This chapter begins with an introduction to give an overview of the content. The aim of this chapter is to conceptualise the concept of participative decision-making. First, international literature on participative management will be examined. Second, international literature on school participative management will be explored. Third, South African policies regarding participative decision-making in education will be investigated. Fourth, literature on participative decision-making in

South African schools will be discussed. Fifth, Somech's (2002) theory of teacher participation in decision-making will be explored. In essence, the goal of this chapter is to provide integration of empirical findings with conceptual frameworks of PDM, as well as, the integration of South African policies on school participative management. In conjunction with this, Somech's (2002) theoretical framework upon which this research is embedded, is discussed in terms of its application to the current study. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

Chapter three explores the research methodological approach. This chapter begins with an introduction outlining the content of the chapter. Then, a description of the research design employed in the study is provided. Further, a discussion on the sampling method and the sample is presented. This is followed by a description of the data collection technique and procedures. Subsequently, a detailed discussion on data analysis and ethical consideration is presented. In addition, the reliability and validity of qualitative research, as well as, the limitation of the design are presented. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

Chapter four provides the results and the discussion of the themes. First, the aim of this chapter is to present, clarify and describe the themes developed from the data. Second, this chapter explores and discusses the themes in relation to the literature, theoretical framework, research questions, and objectives.

Chapter six is comprised of the research summary and conclusion. This chapter provides a summary of the study; states the contribution made by this study; and also suggests recommendations for future research

## **Chapter Two: Literature review and theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The concept of participative decision-making (PDM) has been widely researched. Evidence attesting to this, is the wide array of international studies exploring the subject of participative management. In South Africa, literature on participative decision-making is gaining momentum and scholars are establishing the relevance of PDM in organisations, as well as, its application. Further, international research has established participative decision-making as an effective tool for management (Daniels & Bailey, 1999; Witt, Andrews & Kacmar, 2000). In support of this statement, the large body of knowledge on participative management ascertains that PDM has been well-documented in organisational research (Daniels & Bailey, 1999; Lantam, Winters & Locke, 1994; Pearson & Duffy, 1999). However, an overview of the literature in South Africa indicates that participative decision-making has been under researched. Hence, a coherent body of knowledge on PDM is still yet to be developed in South African literature. In this regard, this chapter presents a detailed understanding of participative management internationally and nationally. Thus, the subsequent areas are explored in this chapter: the conceptual definitions and processes of PDM, the role of stakeholders in participative management, the conception of PDM in organisations and the educational sector, South African policies for school participative management, as well as, the conceptualisation of PDM in the South African context.

## 2.2. Collective management

Participative decision-making is a term that has generated contesting views and different conceptualisations. These diverse conceptualisations are indicative of the complexity of the construct of participative management. Regardless of the conceptual framework, research suggests that the end result has been a focus on the effects and outcomes of different dimensions of participation (Scully, Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1995; Black & Gregersen, 1997). Heler, Pusic, Strauss and Wilpert (1998) define participative decision-making as the direct (personal) or indirect (through representatives) form of participation, ranging from minimal to comprehensive levels, by which individuals and groups secure their interest. This definition ascertains that participative decision-making is a shift from traditional management which excludes employees with no formal managerial positions in the decision-making process. Further, this view of PDM posits that individuals can represent themselves or involve a third party. Moreover, this perspective also recognises the different levels of participation. The implication is that, certain individuals do contribute more in the decision-making process as opposed to others who contribute less. However, some scholars have challenged this notion and argue for equal contribution between all members in decision-making (Scully et al., 1995; Anderson & McDaniel, 1999).

To illustrate the disagreement above, Anderson and McDaniel (1999) describe participative decision-making as a process to increase the flow of information through the organisation. The basis of their argument claims that participation must not differentiate between the levels of influence employees have in the process. Even though, it is important to acknowledge that employees occupy different levels in the organisational hierarchy, it is also essential to minimise

these distinctions in the process of decision-making. In order to argue for this point, research has evidently depicted participative management as a collective process (Locke & Schweiger, 1979). This means, the collective can coordinate their actions effectively if all members occupy equal levels in the process of decision-making. Hence, a distinction of employee influence levels should be avoided in the process of decision-making. PDM aims to encourage individual members within a group to bring forth their ideas and perceptions, generate discussions, and reach collective agreements. Therefore, every member must become equally involved in expressing their ideas and opinions. Therefore, some scholars argue that for the purpose of participative decision-making, influence sharing among members at unequal places in the organisation, must provide each member with an equal opportunity to participate in the process. This view indicates that, in the course of generating ideas, discussing these views, and ultimately reaching a common decision, every person involved must play an equal role (Locke & Schweiger, 1979; Anderson & McDaniel, 1999).

The most frequently studied dimensions of participative decision-making appear to be focused on the content of the decision and on the degree of participation. Because the content of decisions is often underlined by the organisational context, hence, previous studies have used different operational definitions of participation which are influenced by contextual factors. Consequently, these studies have produced different findings (Black & Gregersen, 1997). For instance, some scholars have taken consideration of the motivational effects of participation. This perspective bases its argument on how participation affects performance effectiveness among employees (Lantam et al., 1994). Thus, this view advocates for PDM as a mechanism to motivate employees to be satisfied and increase their level of productivity. This entails that an

involved employee is likely to be content with the organisation, and this in turn fosters the employee to improve their performance. For example, research has been done on the relationship between employee involvement and job satisfaction. This shows that, there is a link between participation and performance effectiveness. A study conducted by Luquire (1973) notes that perceived input from employees, even in the case where it has little real influence, may have a significant positive impact on employee performance. This is likely to motivate the employee to enhance their input by maximising their effort in line with organisational goals. Hence, the extent to which a person likes or dislikes their job is also influenced by how the individual perceives the fairness of the process of participation in decision issues. In this light, employee involvement engenders a sense of satisfaction.

In light of the motivational effects of participation, some scholars argue that involvement in decision-making increases the level of trust between employees and management. Involved employees perceive management as acknowledging them for their contribution to the organisation. In this regard, employees are more open to initiatives within the organisation because they are given the platform to express their opinions (Luquire, 1983; Dickinson, 1978). This ultimately signals a certain level of trust between management and employees. This trust level is indicative of the common interest shared by management and employees, and thus, fosters organisational advancement. For this reason, it is important to avoid offering meaningless participation, as well as, offering participation under false pretence. This can be quickly seen through by employees and may result in distrust between employees and management. For instance, if managers claim to provide a platform for involvement but never let their employees become significantly engaged, then, employees will not be motivated to enhance their

performance. Consequently, employees are demotivated to perform at the best of their ability because they are not recognised for their capability as their input is disregarded. According to Firestone and Pennell (1993), such lack of trust implies that employees perceive their exclusion from decision-making as an indication of management undermining their capacity to make quality decisions.

In light of the above, when employees understand that their opinions are not solicited in decision issues, they are then demotivated to maximise their resources in line with organisational goals. Thus, Wolfson (1998) stipulated that boredom and frustration at work are also outcomes of inadequate involvement in decision-making processes. So in order to promote positive behaviour in the workplace, the process of participative management must engage employees in important issues and, it is essential for involved employees to grasp the importance of these issues. Additionally, these employees must be given the platform to heavily influence the final decision. This implies that contributing by making suggestions is only one part of the process. The second part entails the integration of ideas generated in the discussion; and the third step involves taking the final decision as a collective. The consideration of individual members' perceptions is crucial at all the three stages mentioned above. Dachler and Wilpert (1978) support this view and stipulate that all employees involved in the process must be able to perceive as fair the means by which the selection of ideas to incorporate in the final decision are chosen. For instance, consistently choosing the ideas of certain individuals within the organisation and ignoring the perspectives of others on a regular basis, reflect a poor image of the participative management process. This indicates that the process is not fair. However, scholars ascertain that PDM should be implemented for legitimate reasons (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978; Wilkinson, 1999).



In continuing to argue for a fair process of participation, the rationale for participative decision-making has been an area of interest in research. Scholars have noted that PDM is used for a number of reasons. So, it is important to understand the factors underlining the justification for the implementation of PDM in organisations. According to Black and Gregersen (1997), the rationale for participation in decision-making comprises two philosophical approaches. The first is a democratic perspective that believes employees should have the right to influence decisions affecting them. This view asserts that any organisational issue which involves the interest of employees, must be addressed by taking into account those employees' opinions. Hence, decisions cannot be reached without employees' consent. The second perspective suggests that increased employee involvement leads to increased productivity and profitability.

Therefore, the goal of this perspective is to motivate employees to be happy and feel appreciated within the organisation. Employees in turn, are expected to enhance their performance for the betterment of the organisation. However, this view has been criticised for having a managerial bias. The critique posits that this approach serves the purpose of management and attempts to manipulate employees in the process by initiating practices with the sole motive for increasing profitability (Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall & Jennings, 1988; Jewell, 1998). This indicates that a view of PDM solely based on the quest to maximise productivity and profitability is reductionist. Since, individual values are common concepts in PDM literature, hence, initiatives to motivate employees must be for the benefit of both the employee and the organisation. As stipulated by Luthans (2005), organisations must provide employees with opportunities to develop and thus, promote continuous learning for personal growth. Numerous studies have acknowledged that organisations continuously strive to increase their competitive

advantage in the market and enhance profitability. This is because organisations are created with the aim to make profit. It is worth noting, this research does not argue against this point, but this should be done with dignity for employees. Therefore employee manipulation should be avoided at all costs.

Participative decision-making has also been criticised for being a symbolic action which serves to legitimise organisational decisions (Pfeffer, 1981; De-Gennaro, 1985). This view ascertains that participative decision-making represents something else other than itself. Moreover, the use of initiatives with regard to PDM serves to rationalise decisions and policies that would be contested on surface level. In other words, the rationale for involving employees of an organisation in the process of decision-making is to signify their involvement on a symbolic level. Whereas in actual fact, the intention is not to involve these employees for the purpose of taking into account their opinions, but to use PDM as a subtle method to achieve buy in. A possible outcome of this, is illustrated in the following example. For instance, organisational members may feel compelled to comply with certain propositions even though their inputs are not necessarily taken into consideration. Thus, scholars have proposed for a critical evaluation of the rationale underlining the implementation of PDM, by taking into account employees' role and benefits.

### **2.3. A definition of participative decision-making**

Having discussed participative decision-making in the previous section, it is important to put forth an effective definition of the concept. For the purpose of this research, the definition of

PDM must integrate the rationale for participation and the role of employees in the process. This is because the purpose of participative management also influences how the concept is defined. Research has established PDM as the notion of soliciting employees' ideas in the organisational decision-making process (Hickey & Casner-Lotto, 1998). Moreover, this has been found to be an effective function of management in terms of addressing decision issues in the contemporary workplace. As indicated by scholars, participative management entails influence sharing in decision issues in order to make quality decisions by involving organisational members in the process (Black & Gregersen, 1997; Jewell, 1998). Essentially, the definition of PDM for the present study, is integrated within Somech's theory of teacher participation. This perspective is used as the theoretical framework for this research.

According to Somech's theory of teacher participation, participative decision-making is a multidimensional construct. Hence, any definition of PDM must take into account a number of factors affecting the work context. So in actual fact, discussing a decision issue with educators is only a fraction of the process. More importantly, it is about how the entire process is managed, as well as, the integration of ideas in a coherent manner. This perspective depicts PDM in schools as having two main domains. The first domain addresses decision issues that have an immediate relevance to the teacher's classroom. The second domain involves decisions about the managerial function of the school (Somech, 2002). It is worth noting, this theory is discussed in details in the theoretical framework section. Nonetheless, the point being made is that PDM should be perceived as a complex process. With reference to the school setting, PDM incorporates matters with direct consequences on the classroom, as well as, those concerning

school governance. Hence, the theory expands the focus of educators from the immediate outcomes of their own classrooms to the school governance as a whole.

Somech's theory of teacher participation argues that the role of educators in the participative management system, is to become involved in issues by expressing their views. Multiple factors influence how educators contribute to the process. For instance, individual knowledge of the decision issue, individual experience with regard to the issue, and assumptions regarding the issue, are contributory factors affecting individual understanding of the decision issue in question. Thus, this theory attempts to provide an integrative framework of PDM by drawing on organisational empirical research and adapting relevant findings to the school setting (Somech & Bogler, 2002). It is thus essential to review the literature on school participative management and discuss research findings. The following section explores literature on school participative management.

## **2.4. Teacher involvement**

Worldwide, increased teacher involvement in decision-making is advocated for school improvement (Rice & Schneider, 1994; DiPaola & Hoy, 2005). Furthermore, scholars assert that school improvement will occur when educators are more involved in decision-making in school. The definition of an employee that has been posited in literature on organisations also applies to educators. This is because educators enter into a contract with the educational institution, specifically a school in this case, and is hired to provide services in exchange for compensation. Thus, an educator is a stakeholder in school and is entitled to participate in decision-making. In

other words, educators have interests in the school because they are affected by the school's actions. According to Taylor and Bogotch (1994), when educators are adequately involved in decision-making issues, they are likely to be more committed and supportive of their principal, as well as the school management. Therefore, involvement in decision issues promotes school advancement and effectiveness.

In light of the above, literature reveals that participative management is centred around the concepts of democracy, empowerment and collaboration. Furthermore, a democratic school environment is believed to encourage educators to participate, and this enhances the effectiveness of participative management. In a study conducted by Keedy and Finch (1994), principals who formed collegial relationships with educators and also availed opportunities to engage in decisions, ultimately, empowered educators. Teacher empowerment has been examined in research and collaborative processes have been established as factors that foster empowerment in school. Furthermore, collaboration taps into the concept of democracy and also underpins many processes within a democratic school. Collaboration entails a partnership and hence, school management and educators must work together. Moreover, research argues that participation is an important factor in democratic schools. Thus, school authority is based upon the consent of the staff (Somech, 2002; Bush, 2003). In this light, scholars suggest that imposing decisions on educators is inconsistent with the notion of consent that is supported by PDM principles.

Participative management has also been conceptualised in terms of the types of teacher involvement. Research illuminates the distinction between authority and influence in the decision-making process. According to Conley (1989), authority addresses the issue of making decisions of which the outcome is to provide direction in terms of governing others. Evidently, management plays a significant role in school governance but it will be more beneficial for the school to incorporate the consent of educators. The argument stipulates that the inclusion of educators' input in decision-making enables management to make informed decisions which educators can relate to. Influence on the other hand, simply signifies the recognition of one's role in school. By this, educators feel appreciated and respected for what they can contribute and, this generates a sense of satisfaction. Notably, the reverse is also true, as this leads to dissatisfaction with management for excluding educators' opinions. Ashton and Webb (1986) indicate in their study that teachers expressed dismay and frustration over the disregard of their influence on decision-making.

Scholars postulate that an apparent lack of consultation may be depicted as an indication of management believing that educators are incapable of making quality decisions. Hence, the implications have serious consequences for educators. This is because educators perceive involvement in decision-making as a worthwhile activity which recognises teachers' contribution and accomplishments. Therefore, a lack of consultation is perceived as undermining educators' capacity. Research has documented how this can lead to negative behaviours such as absenteeism, excessive excuses, and unnecessary complaints (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). The emergence of such unproductive behaviours in this case, signifies dissatisfaction with school governance. Dissatisfaction in turn leads to general ineffectiveness, inefficiency, and low

productivity, as stipulated by Keith (1996). For this reason, principals and administrators should not disregard educators' input, but rather, allow them to influence the decision-making process.

A strong emphasis on the participative management approach in schools is required because this will encourage management to meaningfully engage teachers in practices at the school level.

Essentially, a lack of teacher involvement in issues of importance results in increasing low morale. Therefore, scholars argue that teacher involvement in decisions must be influential. This entail that the actual level of involvement must have an influence on decisions taken as a collective. As indicated by Somech (2006), creating the opportunity to participate in the governance of an organisation is a moral imperative. This means, educators have the right to exercise some control over their classrooms as well as, school governance.

Additionally, involvement is also seen as a way to avail learning opportunity and growth (Keith, 1996). Through participation, educators are availed the opportunity to learn from others' ideas and knowledge. This exposure can enhance the thinking of some educators and thus, they can learn how to perceive an issue from different perspectives. Essentially, participation avails the opportunity for one to broaden their perspective. Hence, scholars suggest that a school which advocates participative decision-making can function as an institution that promotes employee development by fostering a climate of learning (Moloi, Grobler & Cravett, 2002). This in turn, stimulates teachers' motivation positively and enhances their performance. However a critique against this view, highlights that promoting employee development is in fact another way to achieve higher productivity and efficiency, and not sought for employees' own sake.

## **2.5. Collaborative school governance**

The 1994 democratic election signified a shift in policy development in South Africa. The current South African Constitution empowers all people to be part of decisions affecting their lives (RSA, 1996c). As indicated by the Department of Education (1996), the provisions of White Papers (document one and two), the South African Schools Act of 1996, and provincial legislation, all point South Africa firmly toward a transformational agenda in which school-based systems of education management is an ideal. Hence, the South African Schools Act of 1996 has devolved the responsibility for school management at the school level. Specifically, central to the process of educational transformation, is the notion of increasing the level of teacher influence, as attested by the South African Schools Act of 1996. Ultimately, the goal of this act is to improve the overall South African education system. This is indicative of the intention to restructure South African educational management in line with Constitutional imperatives for transformation. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996c), every citizen has the right to participate in issues concerning them, and thus, decisions to govern people must be based upon their consent.

The Education Human Resources body ascertains that the school governing body should be structured in the following order: the principal, elected members, parents, educators, non-educators, and learners (Department of Education, 1999b). Therefore, decisions relating to issues such as teaching, classroom management, staff management and school development, must derive from common and agreed principles in school. This assertion indicates that management



and educators must work together in a collaborative environment to be able to make decisions that support the interest of both parties.

The participative management approach is an effort to increase the exchange of perspectives and influence in school. Therefore, a number of propositions have been presented in order to promote and facilitate cooperative governance in public schools. For instance, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, section 41(1)(h) indicates that all stakeholders should work cooperatively in mutual trust by informing, assisting and supporting one another; as well as, consulting on matters of common interest. The collaborative nature of participative management is highlighted in this assertion and therefore, school management and educators must coordinate their actions to reach mutual agreement. Furthermore, section 23(1)(b) and (2)(b) of the South African Schools Act of 1996, attests the inclusion of educators and principals as members of the governing body. Hence, educators and people in managerial positions must work cooperatively in school governance. This entails that educators must be informed and involved in decision issues.

Evidently, teachers as stakeholders in education are entitled to participate in decision-making at the school level. However, in practice this declaration is bound to face a number of challenges. For instance, in some schools, educators are not part of the decision-making body in some schools (Sayed, 1997; Naidoo, 2002). Despite the recommendations of the new legislations, particularly, the South African Schools Act of 1996 as a framework for participative governance, the current study understands that principals and school administrations have not been

adequately prepared for participative management. Consequently, there is a gap between what ought to be and what is currently done in terms of the practical application of participative management.

## **2.6. Cooperative school environment**

As discussed previously, literature emphasises the need for school effectiveness and teacher participation in leadership. School leadership has an impact on educators because this shapes decisions about issues which affect teachers' activities in school. As mentioned in the previous section, the South African Schools Act of 1996, as well as, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, both advocate for changes in school governance. The aim is to transform school management by allowing teachers to play a significant role. Hence, the level of teacher involvement and influence must increase significantly. The emphasis is to be placed on effectiveness of schools and not simply on efficiency. In line with this, increased levels of teacher influence will empower them to strive for the successful realisation of decisions in which they contributed. This in turn, improves school effectiveness.

According to Gultig and Bulter (1999), principals need to rely on the support of their staff for effective management. This ultimately includes educators because the school cannot function effectively as a unit if educators do not make a comprehensive effort to foster school objectives. Hence, scholars ascertain that educators' exclusion in decision-making hinders effective school governance. Consequently, research suggests that management and educators should operate as a team and share responsibilities. People in senior management posts should not impose their will

on educators. Instead they need to engage educators in several school issues and encourage them to engage by becoming involved. In this light, participative management in South African schools needs educators who work toward outcomes without constant supervision from management (Naidoo, 2002), but with consistent involvement in decision-making.

From 1994 to date, issues of participation in policy development surface in two distinct ways (Mosage & Van der Westhuisen, 1997; Singh, 2005). First, much development work is geared toward enhancing the participation of stakeholders. Second, the South African Schools Act of 1996 identifies educators as legitimate stakeholders in education. In light of this, educators are entitled to participate in school decision-making activities. According to the ANC Draft Policy Framework for Education and Training, a participative and collaborative style of management in the educational system is essential for South Africa (Department of Education, 1996). The argument suggests that the autocratic style of management in which educators are largely ignored must be transformed. This transformation entails the adoption of participative school governance which increases the level of influence sharing and the expression of individual perspectives.

Evidently in South Africa, school management faces challenges in promoting transformation of autocratic style of management and adopting democratic values. Some scholars assert that the challenge facing school leadership is the balance between individual and collective decision-making processes. In other words, the challenge entails decisions the school leaders must make on their own, and those that need to be taken collectively. According to Mosage and Van der

Westhuisen (1997), educators are denied participation in management activities. Singh (2005) supports this assertion as well. This illustrates that the attestation of participation in legislation, does not necessarily warrant its transfer to the educational field. In conjunction with this, implementation of participative management has been most challenging in rural schools. This is an outcome of underdevelopment with regard to participative management in the educational sector. A report published by the Nelson Mandela foundation (2005), found that participative management in rural schools is far from being a reality.

Generally, rural areas have been overlooked. This paints an alarming picture because the vast majority of school-going children in South Africa live in rural areas (Christie & Potterson, 1997; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). As previously mentioned, the South African Schools Act of 1996 has devolved responsibility for school development and management at school level. This responsibility also includes the power to promote school development by acquiring and managing funds, as well as, implementing projects. However, rural schools have posed a significant challenge to this attestation as a result of the Ingonyama Trust Act in KwaZulu-Natal specifically. This act gives ownership of community territory to the Zulu King. Consequently, community schools situated on these lands are under the leadership of the King. According to the Department of Education (1996), the notion of participative decision-making in rural schools has been difficult to implement because the King is regarded as the sole decision-maker. This is in line with the Task Team Report of 1996. The report suggests that very little systematic thinking has been done to transform education management in South Africa.

A number of studies undertaken in South Africa in the recent past have focused on school improvement through improved management structures. Consequently, PDM has also been considered as a process that has the potential to facilitate school improvement. According to Mungunda (2003), much of the current educational reform has been focused on teacher participation and empowerment. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Lewis, Naidoo and Weber (2000), certain assumptions on which the government seems to have based its notion of participation are discussed. These assumptions stipulate that participation is an all-inclusive process and thus, decision-making regarding school governance is consensual. In this regard, the inclusion of educators cannot be omitted in the process of participation.

The emergence of school democratic governance in South Africa emanate from the birth of democracy in 1994. According to Tayla (2004), teachers are required to work cooperatively as a team because of the democratic nature of school management. Despite the call for cooperative governance in schools, research has identified persistent obstacles to the acceptance of participative management as an alternative form of school management. As indicated by scholars, some principals are still maintaining the traditional authoritarian method of taking decisions on their own (Christie & Potterson, 1997; Lewis et al., 2000). Ultimately, this excludes the contribution of educators in managerial issues. Furthermore, a number of teachers still perceive school management as the sole prerogative of principals and administrators. In essence, research indicates that the practical aspect of participative management has been less significant in South African schools.

## **2.7. Theoretical framework: Teacher participation theory**

The theory of teacher participation in decision-making used for this study, is a perspective of democratic governance conceptualised by Somech (2002). This approach offers a framework for understanding the implementation of participative management in schools; second, educators' interpretation of the concept; and last, teachers' experiences of PDM related activities. Hence, this perspective brings forth the integration of PDM's impacting factors which are relevant for school management. Furthermore, the framework is significant for the current study because it offers ways of perceiving participative decision-making as a subjective experience. This also entails that the approach understands participative management as a subjective experience. A subjective experience can change over time. Therefore, impacting contextual factors have bearings on the nature of PDM. For instance, the nature of school policies, management's approach to decision-making and processes impacting on educators' actual and desired participation, impact on the nature of involvement.

Participative management in school has evolved from the extensive literature and empirical findings on PDM in organisations. In this light, participative management is relatively new to the literature on school governance. This is because an extensive body of research is funded by organisations and hence, a vast array of studies done on PDM has been conducted for the purpose of organisational improvement. By using the term organisation to explain the previous point, the researcher refers to other institutes in the economic sectors with the exception of the educational field. In Scholars assert that in recent past, research on school participative management began to gain momentum. Hence, scholars started drawing attention to the

application of participative decision-making in schools and how this can enhance effectiveness.

In line with this, Somech (2002) developed a theoretical framework to provide insight into a theory explicating participative management from educators' perspectives. More importantly, studies conducted to generate information for this theory, encompassed the views and experiences of educators. Hence, it is important to note that this theory derives from educators' subjective experiences of participative decision-making.

According to Somech and Bogler (2002), research has identified two main domains of decision-making in schools. First, the technical domain is concerned with decisions directly impacting on the teacher's immediate classroom. Hence, these issues have an immediate relevance to the management of teachers' classrooms. Second, the managerial domain deals with school operations and administration. The managerial domain incorporates decisions regarding the managerial support function of the school as a whole. So there is a distinction between issues emanating in school and it is important for teachers to understand these differences. This is to minimise role confusion among educators. More importantly, this distinction should enable school management together with educators to agree on processes regarding decisions in these domains. The key factor in this statement is to reach a mutual agreement on how to address these issues as a collective, by using the method of participative management. Scholars have supported this view because it is based on cooperative principles.

This perspective supports the notion of democratic values in school. This view ultimately opposes autocratic systems of school governance which have been prevalent for several years.

Scholars assert that school authority flows from stakeholders, including educators. Furthermore, this is based upon their consent. Therefore, school management does not reserve the right to make decisions for educators without consultation. Since, educators are members of the staff, they are entitled to have a role in matters of school governance. Hence, the role of educators in a democratic school is broadening to include participation in decision issues of classrooms and school management.

This theory asserts that participation is an important function of educators in a democratic school. Therefore, educators have the right to be informed about decision issues and also express their views. This includes engaging in school matters by attending meetings, debating issues, becoming involved in issues, and even protesting. In addition to this, the process of participation must be conducted with respect for different points of views. This implies that participation in a democratic school should be tolerant of differences in individual opinions. This theory acknowledges the notion of recognising educators for their knowledge and valuing diversity. In other words, individual differences must be viewed as part of the process because people think and behave in diverse ways. However, each person should be aware of their presence in the process and people must avoid any intentional disregard of a person's contribution.

This theory also looks at how participative management engenders a sense of dedication and loyalty to the school. In this light, the identification with school goals can be strengthened through the process of participation. Dedication and loyalty can be promoted through teacher involvement. This in turn, can improve teachers' commitment to the school. Hence, this implies



that educators who are given a platform to influence the decision-making process by expressing their views, easily relate to decisions taken, and this in turn, strengthens their willingness to maximise their effort for the successful implementation of the decision. According to Somech and Bogler (2002), the notion of teacher influence in decision issues leads to conditions for experiencing success. Success in this case entails the positive outcomes of dedicated, loyal and committed teachers, which include effective teaching and the willingness to take initiatives for the betterment of the school.

Somech (2002) conceptualised participative decision-making as a multidimensional construct consisting of decision issues, degree of involvement, structure, rationale, and participation target. A discussion of these dimensions is subsequently provided.

#### a. Decision domain

This dimension looks at how often teachers are actually involved in decision issues (Somech, 2002). Decision-making is a process that needs to be managed adequately to avoid confusion. Hence, the question of the decision domain comes into play, and this further depicts the complexity of participative management as a process. In other words, the areas of decision issues cannot be the same for every school. Therefore, contextual factors influence the areas of decision issues and shaped them. For this reason, an examination of factors affecting the entire school, as well as, those affecting educators and people in management, must be carefully conducted. This is to shed light on the condition of the school and the nature of factors impacting on the school context. This information is used to determine decision areas that are relevant for the context.

For instance, when the issue of concern is identified, then management and educators debate over the issue, whereby every member becomes involved in the discussion. These people's approach to the issue is shaped by the situation in the school setting. More importantly, individual members' skills, knowledge, experiences and views on the topic area, also affect how they relate to the decision issue.

#### b. Degree of participation

This dimension ranges over four degrees, namely, autocratic decision-making, information sharing, consultative decision-making, and democratic decision-making. The last three dimensions are conducive to participative decision-making. However, the theory cautions against the use of information sharing on its own. This degree of participation, although it facilitates the exchange of ideas, however, the process must not limit itself to this stage. Sharing of information is supported by literature on PDM. However, scholars argue that it is meaningless to exchange perspectives without taking into consideration those ideas in the final decision. This means, all those who contribute in exchanging ideas must also be part of taking the final decision. Moreover, consultative decision-making is closely linked to democratic decision-making, nonetheless, scholars also caution against viewing these two degrees of participation as being the same. The difference lies in their philosophical conceptions with specific reference to the concept of democracy. Consultative decision-making does not necessarily adopt a holistic conception of cooperative governance and influence sharing. In other word, the use of consultative decision-making can be applied in the absence of democratic values as well. Thus, it has limitations. In contrast to democratic decision-making, consultative decision-making does

not necessarily warrant educators the right to exercise influence on all matters concerning the school. Thus, on certain occasions, educators' consent is simply ignored. In this regard, consultation does not take place consistently; management decides when it is appropriate to involve educators. Therefore, the differing factor in relation to these two levels of participation indicates that the democratic perspective encompasses cooperative governance more in-depth and more consistently.

### c. Structure

The structure dimension refers to the extent principals establish formal structures of participative management. This therefore determines whether structured procedures exist at the school site, concerning who participates in decision-making and how participation occurs. This also outlines what decisions are open to discussion. It is important for schools to establish effective structures conducive to PDM. This will set certain standards for the procedure. The end goal is for PDM to be integrated in a coherent framework. As indicated by Somech (2002), it is worth noting that the gap between the items described above, could imply that although 'who' and 'what' are well-defined in most schools, however, how to manage the process is somewhat vague. Therefore, it is important to establish structures which standardise procedures within the PDM system. These will facilitate the school to manage the process of PDM effectively.

#### d. Rationale

This dimension of participative management essentially answers the subsequent question: what is the justification for participative management? It is essential for the motive underlining the practice of PDM to be outlined clearly. This is important because participative decision-making should only be used for legitimate reasons. Further, educators must be able to perceive the process as fair. Thus, PDM should not be implemented to manipulate educators. Research emphasises this point and asserts that offering participation under false pretence is not conducive to PDM. In other words, this is used as a medium to practice the policy on face value and as way of achieving buy in. Participation under false is often underpinned by the assumptions of avoiding resistance from teachers, or for the sole purpose of the school being perceived as practicing PDM on surface level. However, digging beneath the surface can uncover hidden motives which are used to foster management's agenda. Ultimately, management's motives for wishing to exclude teachers in essential decision issues can be revealed. In a study conducted by Somech (2002), the findings indicated that the most frequent reasons for inviting educators to participate were to increase teachers' motivation and commitment, and also to develop teachers' confidence.

#### e. Participation target

This dimension addresses the criteria for selecting participation target. However, this view suggests that the process of participation should not undermine any individual. More importantly, this view acknowledges that people may have different levels of awareness, different levels of experiences, as well as opposing ideas. Hence, the ultimate purpose of PDM is

to integrate individual differences and similarities in order to establish a common ground. For the purpose of this research, the view of inviting educators to participate regardless of their capacity, is supported. Hence, the present study supports the notion of equal opportunity to be selected in the process of decision-making. Further, educators and management should have more or less the same levels of influence just for the purpose of participative decision-making.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

Evidently, research has generated an extensive support for participative decision-making. Worldwide, evidence suggests that participative management has been employed to enhance the effectiveness of organisations. South African literature has recognised participative decision-making as an effective tool to improve organisations, and to also promote cooperative values upon which the democratic South Africa bases its transformation agenda. This is illustrated by the policy framework advocating for collaborative school management and the adoption of democratic principles. Furthermore, literature on school management has established PDM as an effective process that needs to be implemented in South African schools. Essentially, the review of literature reveals that studies have lauded participative decision-making as the best approach in organisational management (Somech, 2010). In light of the above, Somech's theory of teacher participation as the framework for this study, provided a structure to integrate the literature with the findings from the present study. This theory is applicable to the study because it encompasses contextual factors impacting on school management.

## **Chapter Three: Research methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The present chapter discusses the methods used in this research. This study adopts a qualitative research methodology in the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative methodology was best suited for this study because it enabled an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences. These experiences depicted level one educators' perceptions of participative management in a public high school. Hence, generating an in-depth understanding was essential in order to give meaning to their experiences. The research methods presented in this chapter include the research design, sampling method and the composition of the sample, data collection technique, and data analysis.

### **3.2. Research design**

The present study took a qualitative approach from the interpretive paradigm as it is exploring individuals' perceptions. Qualitative research was best suited for this study because it facilitated an in-depth understanding of educators' perceptions and experiences of participative management in school. This is true because qualitative research attempts to understand life experiences from participants' standpoint. In addition, participants' experiences are explored to understand how they interact with their social environment. Through this process, research is able to unravel the meaning of people's experiences in their social context (Ulin, Robinson, Tolley & McNeill, 2002). Since, the present research is an exploration of level one educators' perceptions of participative management, hence, the aim was to understand what these

perceptions meant to educators within their school setting. This facilitates the process of giving meaning to participants' experiences. For the reason, qualitative research was used within the interpretive paradigm. This was useful because the interpretive research paradigm asserts that reality is socially constructed and is fluid. Consequently, what we know is always negotiated within our social setting (Ulin et al., 2002). This qualitative research enabled the researcher to understand experiences of participants in their school environment. Thus the researcher interpreted meanings that were relevant to the school context.

### **3.3. Sample and sampling method**

This research used purposive sampling to guide the selection of participants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling because it does not involve random selection of participants (Morse & Richards, 2002). In purposive sampling, the researcher samples with a purpose in mind. Hence, the researcher would have one or more specific predefined groups for the purpose of the research. Specifically, the aim of this research was to identify level one educators in a public high school who do not occupy any formal role in school management. Hence, only subject teachers who are ranked as level one educators were approached. Another goal of this research was to generate participants' perceptions. With purposive sampling the researcher is likely to get the opinions of the target population because often the researcher acquires permission from participants who agree to voluntarily participate in the study. Gaining consent from participants paved the way to explore their perceptions more in-depth at a later point in the study.

### **3.3.1. Sample description**

The research sample was drawn from a public high school situated in Durban. Specifically, level one educators were targeted. Level one educators are depicted as subject teachers who do not occupy formal roles in management. By and large, the school has about fifty teachers, including twenty level one educators. The sample size consisted of ten participants.

### **3.3.2. Research participants**

The present study was conducted amongst a sample of level one educators in a public high school, situated in Durban. In essence, participants were informed about the study and procedure. Only once they understood the purpose of the study, they were then requested to participate. Inclusion criteria for participants entailed any gender, race group and socio-economic status. Sample selection was determined by the research questions and objectives. More importantly, participation was voluntary.

## **3.4. Data collection technique**

### **3.4.1. Instruments used**

Data collection was in the form of individual interviews. Ten participants were interviewed and in total, twenty interviews took place. Initially ten interviews were conducted. Thereafter, ten follow-up interviews were administered to provide further clarity on data. Hence, each participant was interviewed twice. The researcher made use of an interview schedule outlining areas to be covered (see appendix 1). According to Smith (1995), an individual interview is an



exchange between the interviewer and interviewee. Essentially, these individual interviews were semi-structured. Thus, the interview schedule had standardised open-ended questions. Research indicates that semi-structured interviews offer a flexible approach to gathering data and this was one of the reasons for employing this method. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were appropriate for this study because these allowed interviews to flow in a flexible manner.

### **3.4.2. Access**

To gain entry into the school site, an appointment was scheduled with the school principal and subsequently a meeting took place. The purpose of the research was explained to the principal and permission to conduct the study was granted. The principal then arranged for a meeting with level one educators. In the course of this meeting, the aim of this research was explicated to teachers. Ten educators voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. Upon agreement to participate in the study, dates and time for interviews were assigned for each participant.

### **3.4.3. Study procedure**

This study adhered to procedures set by the Faculty Research Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. After identifying the topic area for the research, a research proposal was submitted together with the application for ethical clearance. Subsequently, the research committee approved the study and granted ethical clearance. This was followed by a visit to the school site and once permission to conduct the study was granted, level one educators were approached. After gaining consent from level one educators to take part in the study, dates and

time for interviews were set with each participant. All interviews were administered within the school setting. Twenty semi-structured interviews were administered to develop a scope of inquiry from educators' perspectives. Each participant was interviewed twice. It is worth noting that educators received a clear description of what the study entailed and what their participation involved. The administration session for each interview lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour. With the permission of participants, all interviews were audio recorded with the aid of a digital recorder. Consent forms and information sheet were distributed before the interviews (see appendix 2), and participation was voluntary.

### **3.5. Data analysis**

Thematic analysis is a process used for analysing qualitative data and was most appropriate for the current study. Thematic analysis is applied across a wide array of qualitative research approaches. In thematic analysis, themes within data can be identified in two distinct ways, namely, inductive and deductive thematic analysis. Inductive thematic analysis is the process by which the researcher observes themes from the data without having had a particular preconception of the themes that would emerge. Hence, inductive thematic analysis starts with the collection of data without having based this process on any theoretical framework. In contrast, deductive thematic analysis starts with a preconception of the theoretical framework and data generated from the research is used to verify ideas postulated by the theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the purpose of this research, an inductive thematic analysis was used to interpret data.

The starting point in inductive thematic analysis is the coding procedure. In the first stage of data analysis, the researcher familiarised herself with the data by repeatedly reading interview transcripts. Even though, the researcher had prior knowledge of the data since she conducted interviews; but by engaging with data at this stage of analysis, the researcher acquired more insight into the information provided by participants. The first step of data analysis involved the transcription of audio recordings into written texts. Afterward, the researcher examined each transcript carefully and noted important information. The actual analysis began with coding of transcripts to develop codes which summarised meaningful actions and events represented in the data. Boyatzis (1998) asserts that codes identify features of data that appear interesting to the researcher, and refer to the most basic element of information that can be accessed meaningfully in line with the research phenomenon.

Each interview transcript was subjected to an iterative line by line open coding process. Initial codes from each transcript were repeatedly compared with those identified in other transcripts. The researcher placed the codes into different themes, and these defined and conceptualised particular actions, activities and events represented in the data. Subsequently, themes were repeatedly compared and contrasted until no further themes were generated. The researcher refined the themes by reviewing them, and critically analysing them to see if each had adequate data to support the argument. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that themes covered what they intended to explicate. Evidently, this analysis involved an iterative process of moving back and forth between conceptualising data, coding and identifying themes. As a final point, the researcher constructed the final form of each theme by using the information (supporting data) related to each theme.

### **3.6. Ethical considerations**

This study adhered to ethical codes set by the Faculty Research Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Informed consent forms were given to fill in (see appendix 2). Consent forms confirmed that participants were asked to take part in the study and they have read information concerning the study; they have understood what is required of them; and they voluntarily agreed to participate. With respect to participants, the researcher was mindful of the possible harm that the study may have potentially caused, if confidential information was disclosed. This may have had the potential to jeopardise educators' relationship with the school. For this reason, the researcher was compelled to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity as documented by the ethical codes. Consequently, informed consent forms were distributed to ensure privacy of personal information and identification. In this regard, unsigned consent forms would affirm an immediate withdrawal of participants from the study.

### **3.7. Validity and reliability of qualitative research design**

Generally, the trustworthiness of qualitative research is often debated. However, it is worth noting that the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way as in quantitative design. Nonetheless, scholars argue that the concepts of reliability and validity can be applied to all research because the goal of finding credible and trustworthy results is central to all research designs (Morse & Richards, 2002). In general, validity concerns the degree to which an account is accurate or truthful. In qualitative research, validity concerns the degree to which findings are judged to have been interpreted in a correct way. For this reason, the present study used the interpretive paradigm because it describes and explains a problem more in-depth. More

importantly, the interpretation of experiences is explored through participants' point of view. Thus to ensure validity, interpretive accounts of level one educators' experiences were understood within their contextual setting. Further, the meanings attached to these experiences, were interpreted in the language of educators. In other words, these were explored from participants' framework of reference. In this light, purposive sampling was used to ensure that the researcher targets the right sample which will be able to reflect experiences studied in this research.

Reliability concerns the ability of different researchers to make the same observations of a given topic area, if and when the observation is conducted using the same method (Smith, 1995). Hence, the procedures used have bearings on the reliability of the study. For this reason, this study used well established standardised procedures in data collection and data analysis. Hence, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, and inductive thematic analysis was the method used to interpret data. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis are well established methods in qualitative study. Even though these procedures allow for a certain degree of flexibility, however, they also follow well-established standards in qualitative research. Further, the standard procedures for semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis have been well documented by scholars.

### **3.8. Limitations of the design**

As opposed to quantitative analysis, the main disadvantage of qualitative approaches is that their findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty. This is

because the findings of the research are not tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or due to chance. A second disadvantage of qualitative design is that research quality is heavily dependent on the individual skills of the researcher and more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases (Morse & Richards, 2002).

### **3.9. Conclusion**

The current chapter provides insight into the methodological approach adopted by this research. A qualitative approach was used to achieve the purpose of this study. The interpretive paradigm enabled the interpretation of educators' experiences within the school context, and the subsequent attached meanings. Non-probability sampling was used, specifically purposive sampling was the method employed to select participants. A description of research participants is presented in this chapter. Further, the discussion on data collection technique encompassed the instruments used and the study procedure. Thematic analysis was the method of data analysis as it allowed for flexibility in the interpretation of data. Ethical considerations are also presented. Further, the reliability and validity of qualitative research design, as well as, the limitations are discussed.

## **Chapter Four: Results and discussion**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The present study investigates how level one educators perceive the notion of participative management, as well as, their experiences of PDM in a public high school. The discussion in this chapter integrates the findings of the study in relation to the research questions and objectives, as well as, the literature review and theoretical framework. Five themes emerged from this study and they are as follow: collective activity; shared influence; expression of individual perspectives; the acknowledgement of educators' input; and the implementation of cooperative governance. Participants' experiences of PDM are used to address the research questions and objectives. Furthermore, these are integrated in Somech's theory of teacher participation. In this regard, literature on PMD is also used to support and oppose the findings of this research, with reference to the South African context.

### **4.2. Theme One: Collective activity**

This theme investigates how level one educators perceive participative decision-making as a collective activity. The term 'collective' indicates the sharing of information. Therefore it entails, cooperating to function effectively as a group. Furthermore, the term 'activity' signifies the actions of people. Actions function as the force to drive the activity forward. Hence, collective activity is an active process whereby individuals become involved in decision-making issues. For this reason, management and educators function as a group because they are individual members

who come together to coordinate their actions for the benefit of the school. The argument entails that educators and management cannot function separately. So if this is prevalent, then it signals that individuals are not working towards common interests cooperatively. However, the purpose of PDM is to foster collaborative and cooperative actions as a group effort. By and large, level one educators depicted a common understanding of PDM as a collective activity:

“...Uuuhhh so it’s a collective decision that involves level one educators, rather than management or the principal alone” (PT-10).

“I would interpret that as meaning eerrr educators and, HODs and, deputies and, the principal, eerr parents, the governing body, and learners, RCL reps and learners in the governing body engage in the decision-making together by each one having a say in the matter” (PT-5).

“My understanding of it, is where you and your colleagues interact with each other, interact with all the eerr educators and then eeerrr” (PT-3).

“It is a work process whereby members make decisions together, they consider each others’ opinions, they can contradict one another or share similar views, but they still work together to find a common accord” (PT-1).

“It is a group effort and so everybody participates and feel appreciated and wanted” (PT-8).

Participants’ perspectives point participative management toward a meaningful group effort which aims to establish mutual interests. Thus, management and educators should work as a team to secure these interests. The establishment of common grounds is imperative for the group



to coordinate their actions, as indicated by scholars. This is because the concept of collectivity in itself underpins a mutual agreement between individuals coming together as a team. Hence, there must be something that connects or holds the group together. In this instance, the fact that level one educators and management all serve the purpose of the school, hence, their membership to the school is a common area which they share. Therefore, there is a connection between them and the school serves the purpose of bringing them together with the aim of achieving the school objectives through their input. However, this does not automatically happen, and hence, there must be a process put in place to facilitate individual members in establishing common interests (Daniels & Bailey, 1999).

Therefore, participative decision-making has been depicted as a tool to engender collective actions by giving educators a platform to cooperate with management and work side by side to exchange ideas. This in turn puts forth the concept of group connectivity in the discussion. Group connectivity is the means by which coordinated actions take place within a group. Thus, connectivity between group members is based upon shared perceptions and agreement (Luthans, 2005). To illustrate this point, the following are statements from two participants:

“The group must coordinate their actions in the process because in the end, we have to agree on a decision” (PT-6).

“It is a group effort and so everybody participates and feel appreciated and wanted. This makes you feel needed and so you see yourself as an important part of the institution” (PT-8).

“So in a nutshell the decisions that we make guide our actions because after we take the decision, we have to implement it” (PT-9).

“Therefore, we need to interact with one another, share our views and negotiate until we reach a group decision” (PT-4).

The strength of the connection between teachers and management influences how they engage in open dialogues regarding matters of classrooms and the school as a whole. Engagement is also a concept emphasising the active role of individual members by becoming involved in the process of decision-making (Bush, 2003). To be engaged on a comprehensive level, teachers and management must define their areas of common interest in line with the school objectives. Although it is essential to acknowledge that management and level one educators occupy different roles in school, however, it is also important to recognise that PDM attempts to minimise the emphasis of hierarchy in the process of participative management. This is not done to undermine people occupying higher positions in management; however, the emphasis is to give everybody an equal chance to express their opinions and perspectives. So for the purpose of taking a collective decision, every individual should be granted the same level of influence in the exchange of ideas and the subsequent elaboration.

Hence, it is essential to explain the purpose of educators and management working together in order to avoid misconceptions of PDM. In actual fact, Somech’s theory of teacher participation supports the notion of respect amongst educators and management. Educators must be respected for their contribution, regardless of the extent and the nature. Likewise, people in managerial

positions must also be respected. Altogether, they must promote a school environment that values human dignity as attested by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

#### **4.3. Theme Two: Shared influence**

This theme provides insight into level one educators' perceptions of the term 'shared influence' with regard to participative management. This concept is thus unpacked to provide a clear understanding. For the purpose of this research, the term 'shared' depicts the act of contributing to a common activity. Hence, it entails exchanging ideas on matters of interest. Further, the term 'influence' signifies the act of having power to affect an action or event. So, influence sharing is the power to affect the decision issue and entails the contribution of more than one individual. In this light, level one educators depicted influence sharing as a group activity that allows individual to affect the actions taken within the group. Therefore, it is about having an effect on the action, and in this instance, the action is the decision issue that needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, shared influence illustrates the involvement of a group of individuals, specifically, educators and management, and the sharing of information. Because of their membership to the school as level one educators, they are entitled to influence decisions, especially decisions that affect them directly. Moreover, Somech's theory of teacher participation postulates that decision-making must not be limited to teachers' immediate classrooms. This implies that level one educators should also be availed the opportunity to influence decisions beyond the immediate relevance of their classrooms (Somech & Bogler, 2002). This indicates that issues of managing

the entire school must incorporate level one educators' input. Participants stated the following in relation to influence sharing:

“So it's actually eerrr you looking at a wide range of views before going down the one path” (PT-2).

“You know the more heads you put together, it's gonna be a better decision... Now what happens is, the success is gonna come because everyone agree to do it” (PT-10).

“But if you gonna come and tell me do that that that, it's not gonna work, that's like a puppet now, they're telling you, you know” (PT-8).

“I'm saying within the decisions that we make, it's only fair that we make the decisions, take them together because if you make a decision and then you tell me to implement, I'm not gonna implement it because you're telling me, I don't agree” (PT-7).

The conception of PDM in school also affects the level of influence sharing. In the present school, participative decision-making has not yet taken its course; hence, PDM is not a familiar term in the school environment. Notably, the awareness around participative management is present; level one educators demonstrated a good understanding of the term as it is closely linked to the concept of democracy. Ultimately, democracy has been a common term in South Africa since 1994. The postulation of people being entitled to influence decision issues affecting their lives as attested by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, is a well-known notion in contemporary South Africa. In this regard, educators stipulate that management has adopted an autocratic system on large scale, even though they are aware of democratic values.

Autocratic management ultimately excludes the involvement of level one educators extensively. This view indicates that authority to influence decision-making is a function of management and does not include the contribution of level one educators' input. For this reason, level one educators insinuated that management has autocratic tendencies:

“In my view, the problem does not lie in educators themselves but in the system, it's still autocratic. We need transformation” (PT-7).

“It is still quite autocratic, we haven't reached the level of democracy yet, eerrr in my opinion not yet” (PT-8).

“Uh management, well as I was telling you, we have an autocratic system in our school” (PT-9).

In light of the above, Somech's theory of teacher participation provides a contesting view to the autocratic system of school governance (Somech, 2002). To argue for this point with reference to the present school, the starting point must be the transformation of the autocratic system. This will promote the adoption of democratic principles and values in school governance. The South African Schools Act of 1996 clearly attests that school management must promote democratic school governance by adopting collaborative and cooperative values. In this light, participative management is a policy imperative in South Africa's educational case and its implementation in school should not be a debatable matter.

In this regard, the current school is not in line with the South African Schools Act of 1996, as it has not yet fulfilled the declaration of the act which is in actual fact the overarching legislation for school governance. Ultimately, this has negative consequences for the practice of influence sharing because the absence of a significant democratic system implies that educators are largely excluded from the exercise of influencing decisions. Evidently, this hampers the implementation of participative decision-making in the school setting because the foundation for participation has not been laid yet. The foundation in this regard is the adoption of democratic school governance with democratic values as the tool to address decision issues.

#### **4.4. Theme Three: The expression of individual perspectives**

This theme explores the perceptions of level one educators in terms of expressing their individual views in decision issues. Right from the start of interviews, level one educators did not hesitate to express their frustration about the lack of involvement in decision-making. This is a contentious issue because educators expressed disappointment with management. They are discontent with management for disregarding their views. The reality in the present school illustrates that level one educators' input is less important for management's consideration. Evidently, this is how level one educators perceive management's actions. Research posits that the expression of teachers' opinions and ideas is an essential function of participative governance. Hence, this issue should not be ignored; nonetheless, this is the reality in the present school.

The advocates of school participative management reiterated the importance of providing a platform for educators to express their views. Therefore, educators are entitled to voice their opinions in issues concerning them directly or issues of school management. Level one educators being members of the school governing body as declared by the South African Schools Act of 1996, ultimately serve the interest of school objectives. This entails that educators have the right to be informed about issues of school management because the interests of the school also becomes the interests of educators. This ensures that educators and the school objectives share common interests, and in the long run, this enhances the effectiveness of the school. This is because all members work toward shared goals. In relation to the expression of individual perspectives, level one educators mentioned the following:

“Uuhhh to be heard in terms of the fact you are the participant and you want your voice to be heard, then you would be participating in it, so it’s actually eerrr you looking at a wide range of views before going down the one path” (PT-2).

“Whereas participation increases the number of views, it allows for debates around issues, it allows for more perspectives to be brought before consensus can be reached” (PT-7).

“It allows me to state my views, it allows me to ask for the rationale behind whatever issue is being decided on etc” (PT-2).

“Don’t expect me to be content when you disregard my input” (PT-1).

Literature postulates that individual teachers must be equally involved in the process of generating ideas. Somech’s theory of teacher participation also supports this assertion. Thus,

participation cannot occur without the expression of teachers' ideas and the subsequent discussion of exchanged views (Rice & Schneider, 1994). Hence, this demonstrates the vital role of exchanging ideas and sharing information in the process of participation. Basically the absence of exchanging ideas is an indication of the need for an effective structure of PDM in school. In this regard, it is argued that the current school lacks a comprehensive decision-making process. More importantly, the structure for participative decision-making is not present. This indicates that the school is deficient in standard procedures for participative management. Ultimately, the school has not established standards conducive to participative management. So, as long as standard procedures for participative management are not in place, it will still pose a challenge to implement PDM in the current school. In conjunction with this, it is therefore essential to establish whether the school has policies and regulations for participation in decision making. In this regard, level one educators indicated the following:

“Hhhmmm not that I’m aware of in terms of policies and such” (PT-6).

“There is no clear cut policy in which level one educators are taking part in” (PT-9).

“The management’s decisions come from the top and you have to close your mouth, eat whatever you have to eat and accept it” (PT-3).

“Eerrr at this point in time I’m not aware of any policy regarding participation of level one educators” (PT-5).

Participants’ perceptions illustrate that most policies and regulations within the school site are clear cut by the school itself. These regulations do not offer a platform for level one educators to



meaningfully engage in decision issues, especially important decisions affecting them. Therefore, level one educators are obliged to abide by these policies regardless of their feelings and opinions. However, research posits that participation is based upon consent. The school therefore, overlooks the fact that level one educators have the right to influence decision issues. More importantly, school management must not impose its policies on educators because the South African Schools Act of 1996 recognises educators as members of the school governing body. As a result, teachers are entitled to participate and influence the decision-making process by expressing their views and these views must be taken into consideration.

#### **4.5. Theme Four: The acknowledgement of educators' input**

The current theme describes the perceptions of acknowledging level one educators' contribution in school. These educators demonstrated that they have achievements and qualifications which they gained through their hard work. Hence, they are capable of achieving successful results. However, management's actions make them feel as if they lack capacity to think effectively and creatively. As perceived by level one educators, the implication is that they do not meet the standards to generate ideas in comparison with people in managerial positions. Hence, the assumption is that level one educators are not recognised for their capacity to make meaningful contribution in decision-making:

“It is to acknowledge my existence in this school and consider my input when making decisions” (PT-8).

“And I would always want to participate in anything and have a desire to learn something right! If I’m allowed to participate I would absolutely be very dedicated and precise in whatever I do. You know what the contrary holds right!” (PT-6).

“I will have much dedication for a decision that I know I contributed to, it gives me a sense of motivation” (PT-2).

“Of course, my involvement will make me feel appreciated. This in turn, will encourage me to be more loyal to the decisions” (PT-1).

Research has indicated that the values of an individual are acknowledged in the literature on PDM. This is because the individual teacher is a human being and every person must be treated with dignity. This is also attested by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. Dignity is concerned with how people feel, think and behave in relation to the values of themselves and others. Hence, it is apparent that these educators want to be treated with respect, and wish to be valued. To argue for this point, Somech’s theory of teacher participation asserts that PDM must be practiced by respecting and valuing each other in the process. Thus, regardless of the differences in individual capabilities to contribute in decision-making, no person should undermine another. Failing to provide recognition for educators is perceived as an area of weakness for management (Taylor & Bogotch, 1994). In this regard, PDM supports the notion of encouraging and appreciating one another. Additionally, Somech’s theory of teacher participation recognises that valued educators strengthen their commitment to school objectives because they are acknowledged for their worth. In this light, the identification with the school goals can be strengthened as well. Therefore, it is essential to engage educators in participative

management as way to increase educators' willingness to dedicate their resources for the benefit of the school (Naidoo, 2002).

Research cautions not to take the above argument lightly because it implicates interpersonal relations. Therefore, this is also an area for development in South African schools (Tyala, 2004). There is an apparent lack of interpersonal skills and this ultimately poses challenges to the implementation and practice of participative management. The same is true for the current school, and thus, it is recommended that the school starts by training management on interpersonal skills and relations in the near future. This is to provide them with knowledge on how to relate to different people, to accept differences and to value them as well. As indicated by scholars, management should learn how to show recognition for employees' effort and achievements (Christie & Potterson, 1997). Such skills are mostly acquired through training because these can be easily taken for granted without the awareness of their consequences. For instance, a negative consequence of educators who are not recognised for their accomplishments is low morale. This in turn adversely impacts on teachers' satisfaction, as indicated by scholars.

The present school highlighted the issue of funding as a major problem affecting the functioning of various processes. The resulting outcomes are poses obstacles in various areas. In this light, most participants labeled the school as a 'disadvantage school.' One participant mentioned:

“We are in a disadvantaged school, learners cannot afford school fees, they cannot pay school fees” (PT-5).

For this reason, it is absurd to suggest that the school allocates funds for training its members on interpersonal skills. This is thus an issue of concern that should be taken into consideration by the Department of Education. The Minister of Education acknowledges the challenges facing schools and vows to alleviate these problems. Although, the issue of interpersonal skills has been identified by scholars as an area of concern which adversely hampers effective relationships in school, however, less has been done to address this issue.

#### **4.6. Theme Five: The implementation of cooperative governance**

This theme provides insight into participants' perceptions with regard to the implementation of participative management in the current school. The need for the implementation of PDM in school, as well as, related challenges, have been documented by scholars nationally and internationally. Hence, the challenges facing schools with regard to the practice of PDM are not unique to the South African context. In this light, level one educators indicated that participative decision-making is not yet in practice in the present school. By and large, collaborative and cooperative school governance is not yet present. Research points participative management toward collaborative school governance (Lewis et al., 2000; Singh, 2005). Underpinning this assertion, is the concept of democratic school management. This view is supported by the South African Schools Act of 1996 and, Somech's theory of teacher participation. Nonetheless, the reality in the current school paints a different picture. For this reason, level one educators recommend the implementation of PDM in school. They discontent with the absence of a comprehensive framework for participative management:

“People don’t have much faith in our opinion, lots of policies are made only by certain individuals, eerrr we don’t have much say in decision-making” (PT-8).

“I feel like if I am not part of the decision-making, that is going to affect the decision that is made by management without consultation and that could affect my teaching adversely” (PT-5).

“But if you make decisions for us, and then those decisions may contradict our feelings, our opinions, and instead of enhancing our jobs, instead it will bring other difficulties” (PT-9).

“It’s a few individuals that make the decision and their opinions seem to matter. So my performance eerr in the school is definitely affected in a negative way” (PT-1).

Research asserts that participative decision-making in South African schools is facing several challenges. Thus, the adoption of participative management poses to be a challenge in school governance (Tyala, 2004). Therefore, this research acknowledges that obstacles to PDM signify the need for training and education in participative management. Scholars also agree that PDM has been less significant in South African schools. Participative decision-making is a complex process and hence, school management should be educated on its principles. This can be a starting point to address these challenges. Educating school leaders will raise awareness of PDM as an alternative form of management and also how to manage this effectively. This awareness must also facilitate the transition of PDM as an alternative form of decision-making. So it is the task of the Department of Education to examine the application of the South African Schools Act of 1996, and therefore, determine the means by which the practical implementation of the legislation will take its course. A possible suggestion will be to provide funding for educating

school leaders on the values of PDM. Further, they should be trained on how to implement and manage the process effectively.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

This chapter presents and discusses the themes that emerged in the process of data analysis. Participants' subjective experiences of PDM were analysed within the theoretical framework of Somech's theory of teacher participation. Furthermore, empirical findings within the literature of participative decision-making were integrated in the discussion. In answering the research questions, themes encompassed the conceptualisations of PDM in organisational literature, South African educational policies, as well as literature on school participative management.

The theme of collective activity explores the perceptions of level one educators in this regard. Further, the importance of collective activity is discussed in this theme. The function of collectivity in enhancing group activity is found to be effective for school management. Essentially, it is recommended that educators and management establish mutual agreement and shared interests for the group to function as a whole. More, the strength of the connection between teachers and management influences how they engage in open dialogues and the exchange of views. For this reason, management and educators are advised to work as a team. In the present school, collective activities are less significant because participative decision-making has not been implemented on a comprehensive framework.

The theme of shared influence depicts how educators perceive the act of contributing to common activities within the process of decision-making. Specifically, common activities entail the exchange of ideas on matters of interest and the subsequent elaboration of the issue as a group. Hence, influence sharing is the power to affect a decision issue. For this reason, level one educators as members of the school governing body are entitled to influence decisions. Furthermore, teacher influence on decision-making must not be limited to teachers' immediate classrooms, and thus this must expand to include school management. However, the present school seems to adopt autocratic tendencies as indicated by participants. Hence, it does not adhere to the attestation of the South African Schools Act of 1996, which advocates for collaborative school governance. In support of this, Somech's theory of participative decision-making recommends democratic principles for school governance (Somech, 2002).

The expression of individual perspectives theme explores the perceptions of level one educators in terms of exchanging views. Level one educators expressed disappointment with management for disregarding their input in important matters. However, scholars assert that educators are entitled to voice their opinions in issues impacting on them. Research stipulates that individual teachers must be equally involved in the process of exchanging views. If this is not in practice, it indicates the absence of meaningful involvement. Therefore, the school must establish standards conducive to participative management. In this light, standard procedures for participative decision-making must be put into place. Participants also indicated that the school lacks policies for PDM in relation to level one educators. Since the South African Schools Act of 1996 recognises educators as members of the school governing body; educators are thus entitled to participate and influence decision-making.

The theme of acknowledging educators' input illustrates educators' need to be recognised in school. The opposite implies that these educators are incapable of thinking effectively. Level one educators claimed that they are made to feel as if they lack the capacity to think creatively. Thus, they are discontent with management in this regard. In line with this, research indicates that educators must be recognised for their accomplishment and their capabilities. Hence, it is apparent that these educators want to be valued. This point is also highlighted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. Therefore, it is essential to engage educators in participative management as this will be an acknowledgement of their presence in school. Research argues for this matter by taking into account the role of interpersonal relations. For this reason, the Department of Education must provide means for training school staff on interpersonal skills because a number of public schools do not have funds for training their staff.

The implementation of cooperative governance theme highlights the challenges facing South African schools with regard to PDM. However, it is worth noting that these challenges are not unique to South Africa's educational case. In this light, the present school has not yet implemented participative management on a comprehensive framework. For this reason, level one educators recommend the implementation of cooperative governance. Since, participative management is a complex process, thus, school management should be educated on the principles of PDM and also how the management of this process.



## **Chapter Five: Summary and conclusion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The present chapter provides insight into the concluding summary of this research. The summary presents an overview of this study. Furthermore, the contribution of this study is discussed, as well as, suggestions for future research.

### **5.2. Summary**

The present study was an attempt to explore level one educators' perceptions of participative decision-making in a public high school. Hence, the study attempted to understand the experiences of these educators with regard to PDM and the attached meanings. In addition, this study was integrated in the interpretive paradigm by using qualitative research design. Thus, semi-structured interviews were administered on participants and data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Five themes emerged from the data and these were integrated within Somech's theory of teacher participation. Further, literature on participative decision-making, as well as, South African policies for participative management, were also integrated in the discussion of the themes.

Generally, the findings of this research emphasise the importance of participative management in school governance. First, collective activity as a way of approaching a decision issues was found

to be effective. This fosters the establishment of shared interests for the group (educators and management) to function cooperatively. Second, the study established influence sharing as the power to affect decision issues. In this light, level one educators are entitled to influence decisions. This is because the South African Schools Act of 1996 declares educators as members of the school governing body.

Third, the notion of exchanging individual perspectives as part of the decision-making process was supported by level one educators. These educators expressed dismay in relation to management's disregard of their input in important matters. In this regard, standard procedures for participative management must then be established because these are lacking at present. Additionally, these can facilitate the creation of an effective structure for PDM in school.

Fourth, the acknowledgement of teachers' contribution was expressed as a need by educators. Hence, they want the school to recognise their capabilities to contribute in decision issues. This will acknowledge their presence. In line with this, they wish to be respected and valued by management. This taps into the concept of dignity which is highlighted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Fifth, the implementation of cooperative governance in the present school is recommended by educators. This therefore, indicates that the current school does not practice collaborative governance on a comprehensive level.

With reference to the South African context, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the South African Schools Act of 1996, and relevant legislation, advocate for participative governance in school management. Nonetheless, research posits that school management faces challenges in promoting democratic principles in South African schools (Naidoo, 2002; Tyala, 2004). However it is worth noting, these challenges are experienced worldwide. In line with this, the vision of collaborative governance is still bleak in the current school because participative management has not yet taken its course. Nevertheless, this can change in the near future if the present school undergoes transformation to adopt democratic school governance.

### **5.3. Contribution made by this study**

The present study offers insight into level one educators' perceptions and experiences of participative decision-making in a public high school. Level one educators have a good understanding of the rationale for implementing participative management in school. In conjunction with this, they wish to be engaged in decision-making by contributing with their views. Further, educators advocate for the implementation of participative management in school. Even though, participative management is not yet a reality in this school, however, the findings of this research showed that PDM is an effective function for school governance. Essentially, this research has also revealed that participation in decision-making is not occurring in school governance as attested by the South African Schools Act of 1996. Further, level one educators' contribution in decision-making is less comprehensive in the current school.

#### **5.4. Suggestions for future research**

The review of literature on school participative management revealed that few theories supporting PDM have been developed at present. In actual fact, the small number of theories relating to school participating management that have been documented, indicate that little research has been done in this area. In line with this, the current research explicates the importance of implementing participative decision-making in school governance. As, this is an under researched area, therefore, the need for more studies exploring PDM is remarkably apparent. In conjunction with this, scholars should develop more theoretical frameworks for PMD into which new studies on participative management can be integrated. Furthermore, researchers should increase the number of studies done on PDM by assuming a significant interest in this topic area. Evidence suggests that little work has been done to explore participative decision-making in Schools.

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## **Appendices**

### **1. Appendix One: Interview schedule**

1. What is participative decision-making?

-How does participation have benefits?

-What are the benefits?

-How important is participation to you?

2. What are the policies for participation in decision issues?

-(if yes) What do these policies entail?

-How are these policies enforced on a regular basis?

-What attempts are made to facilitate participative decision-making in the school?

-Why are these attempts effective/ or why are these attempts ineffective?

-Why are the current policies and regulations efficient/ Or why are they inefficient?

-What can be done to improve the process of participation in decision-making in the school?

3. Do educators participate in decision-making processes?

-How do they participate?

-What does it involve?

-What is the extent to which educators participate?

4. What are the gaps educators experience in participative decision-making?

-What are the challenges they face?

-How these challenges affecting educators' perception of participative decision-making?

-What can be done to improve these difficulties?

-What other suggestions educators have?

## **2. Appendix Two: Informed consent form**

Dear Sir/ Madam

Research topic: Teachers' perceptions of participative decision-making in a public high school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

I (Myra Tambwe/ 207511527) am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus. I am conducting a research study on Teachers' perceptions of participation in decision-making. This study is being done to increase knowledge of how educators perceive participative decision-making. This study forms part of my masters' year curriculum for Industrial Psychology and will assist me to achieve my degree. I am therefore asking you to please participate in this research study.

This study comprises of individual interviews and standardised open-ended questions. Interview schedules are developed by the researcher and determined by the research questions. There will be one interview for each participant and if necessary a follow-up interview will be conducted. Following the information sheet, a consent form will be given to fill in. Then the initial interview will be conducted in a quiet room. Interviews will be recorded on a digital voice recorder with the permission of participants. The administration session will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour. The amount of people taking part in this study is ten level one educators.

There are no risks involved in participation of the study. Identities of participants will not be required, therefore anonymity is guaranteed. This research will be stored in the school of psychology. Participants will be given appropriate information on the study while involved in the research project. Participation is voluntary and the refusal to participate will involve no penalty. The findings of this study can be obtained by contacting the researcher.

The terms and conditions to participation of the study are in the subsequent table.

I confirm that I have been asked to participate in the research study: Teachers' perceptions of participative decision-making in a public high school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal
I confirm that the researcher has informed me about the study.
I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the study.
I have been informed that there are no risks with regard to my participation in the study.
I have been given the opportunity to ask any question that I may have in terms of my participation in the study.
I acknowledge that my participation in the research is voluntary and I have been given the right to quit at any time.
I agree that I will answer the questions honestly.
I agree my anonymity is guaranteed in the research.
I confirm that I have read the information for the study above and I understood what is required of me in the study.
I know I can use the contact details provided by the researcher if I have a query regarding my participation in the study.
I agree that the interview will be recorded
The data will be stored in the department of psychology for five years and will be destroyed afterward
Contact details: Myra Tambwe (Researcher): <a href="mailto:207511527@ukzn.ac.za">207511527@ukzn.ac.za</a> (031)2081902
Shaida Bobat (Supervisor): <a href="mailto:Bobats@ukzn.ac.za">Bobats@ukzn.ac.za</a> (031)2602648

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

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