

# When Decentralisation becomes Centralisation: An Ethnographic Study about Teachers' Experiences of Participation in Decision-making in a Secondary School in the Pinetown District

Thamsanqa Thulani Bhengu and Yachna Gowpall

*School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

**KEYWORDS** Participation. Participative Management. Participative Decision-making

**ABSTRACT** This paper presents the perspectives of three teachers from Rosemary Secondary School about their experiences of participation in decision-making processes and the extent to which their participation had an effect on teaching and learning in the classroom. The school is located in the Pinetown District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Restructuring and decentralisation of authority from the national levels to local levels has over the past 20 years or so, received increased attention worldwide including South Africa. This was based largely on the belief that where decision-making powers have been decentralised to local levels, better decisions and ownership prevail. However, the narratives from the teachers indicate that while decentralisation of power to school level has become a common feature in South Africa, centralisation tendencies can still be observed in certain schools such as Rosemary Secondary.

## INTRODUCTION

*Things have not changed. It is the oppression that has transferred from the central government to the principals and School Governing Bodies (Teacher from a Rural Secondary School 2003).*

The above extract was taken from a study that was conducted by the two researchers in 2003. That study explored how changes in the South African education policy in terms of leadership, management and school governance had affected teacher participation in decision-making processes at school level. However, research carried out in South Africa (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005; Brown and Duku 2008; Wade-sango 2012; Mncube 2012; Bhengu and Ncwane 2014) has consistently shown that stakeholder participation in decision-making (be it parents, learners or teachers), has enjoyed limited success despite various policy provisions for this. It is now more than 20 years since the dawn of a democratic dispensation in South Africa, yet narratives that echo the sentiments contained

in the extract above persist. It is the persistence of such narratives in schools that motivated the researchers to conduct this study.

This paper presents and discusses the results of a small-scale qualitative research project that was conducted in Rosemary Secondary School (*pseudonym*), in the Pinetown District, in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This ethnographic study was conducted between January and October 2013, and formed a part of a three-year research project which aims to understand how school-based stakeholders are responding to opportunities brought about by democracy-driven policies in South Africa. These opportunities include stakeholder participation in decision-making processes at local level. The study reported here sought to understand the experiences of teachers regarding their participation in decision-making processes at their school. In addition, the researchers sought to understand whether or not teacher participation played any role in influencing teaching and learning in their classrooms. This paper begins by outlining the background and policy context within which leadership and management in schools in South Africa today operate. This is followed by a statement of the problem and a brief description of the conceptual frameworks that underpinned the study. The methodological discussion follows, and thereafter, the results of the study are presented and discussed. Conclusions and recommendations bring the paper to a close.

---

*Address for correspondence:*  
Dr. Thamsanqa Thulani Bhengu  
School of Education,  
University of KwaZulu-Natal,  
Private Bag, X 103, Ashwood 3605,  
Durban, South Africa  
*E-mail:* bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

### Policy Context in South Africa

Participatory decision-making is a phenomenon that is fast-growing not only in South African schools but around the world (Tilbury 2009; Mokoena 2011; Bagiva and Muhammad-Bashir 2014). The overarching assumption seems to be that if decisions are made closer to the client, better decisions will be made and greater satisfaction and commitment among the subordinates will prevail (Cheng and Cheung 2008; Lunenburg 2010). In the context of South Africa, participation of relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes has been cited in various policies and pieces of legislation such as the Constitution of South Africa and South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa 1996a; Republic of South Africa 1996b) as central to the transformation of education in the country (Carl 2005). The new education policy requires principals to work in participative and democratic ways to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective service delivery (Department of Education 1996). Various researchers (Mncube 2009; Ndlovu 2011; Bhengu 2013) assert that the new approach to leadership demands school principals to lead and manage in a consultative and democratic manner. This view is supported by empirical studies conducted elsewhere in the world which consistently indicate that participative decisions-making leads to better decisions and effective strategies for organizational success (Bagiva and Muhammad-Bashir 2014). Scholars such as Nazir et al. (2014) add another dimension to the debate by highlighting knowledge sharing as one of the benefits of participative decision-making processes.

In the past two decades, discourse about teacher participation in decision-making processes has been linked to their job satisfaction (Wadesango 2012). For example, one position that justified a School-Based Management approach, pointed to increased satisfaction levels of teachers, parents and learners, and increases in educators' professionalism (Ndlovu 2011; Wadesango 2012). In a similar study Lai (2014) found that principal leadership was crucial for effective changes to occur in the school context and also that it occurred where teacher participation was promoted. These findings are congruent with Cheng and Cheung's (2008) argument that the involvement of teachers in decision-making is facilitative of better decisions. While this posi-

tion does not mean that a clear link exists between participation and what happens in the classroom, an empirical study conducted by Wadesango (2012) among Zimbabwean teachers has established a link between teacher participation and their morale levels.

### Statement of the Problem

Research (Mokoena 2011) reveals that in some schools, principals do not permit their subordinates' participation in decision-making processes. Despite the benefits highlighted in empirical studies cited in the sections above, some schools do not seem to embrace the notion of participative decision-making at the practical level in the schools. Internationally, there has been an emphasis on decentralisation and devolution of power to lower levels with the intention to empower people to make decisions, particularly about issues that directly affect them (Bhengu 2005; Cheng and Cheung 2008; Wadesango Rembe and Chabaya et al. 2010). However, there has been no agreement among scholars about the motivation and the efficacy of decentralisation of decision-making powers to the schools. Wadesango et al. (2010) for instance, observe that devolving decision-making power to the schools has been used as means of improving management of education, and also to boost the teachers' occupational morale.

### The Concept Participation

According to Ife and Tesoriero (2006), two main view points have characterised the discourse of participation. The first viewpoint perceives participation as *means*, while the second viewpoint sees participation as *end*. Participation is seen as a means when it is used to achieve predetermined goals or objectives, utilising existing resources to achieve the present objectives (Ife and Tesoriero 2006). This view is favoured by government departments because it provides legitimacy to their community participation policy imperative (Mbokazi and Bhengu 2012). The researchers' view is that such form of participation does not seek to involve all people, and neither does it address the issues of voice and life worlds more consciously. The focus here is more on achieving the objectives and not on participation itself, thus participation becomes short-term and passive (Mbokazi

and Bhengu 2012). Participation as an end, attempts to empower people to participate more meaningfully in projects that are meant for bettering their lives, thus participation is long-term, more active and dynamic (Ife and Tesoriero 2006).

### **Participative Decision-Making**

There is no agreement among scholars about what is meant by participative decision-making. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there seems to be broad agreement that participative management entails the involvement of employees in setting goals, resolving problems and making decisions that affect the entire organization (Ho 2010). Furthermore, Somech (2010) adds that participative decision-making clarifies the form in which stakeholders can participate and issues that stakeholders should participate in. While Ho (2010) focuses on participation as an individual activity, the researchers believe that participative management should be conceptualised at both individual and collective levels. Issues of inclusiveness in the decision-making processes have been highlighted by various scholars, such as Lunenburg (2010), Bagiva and Muhammad-Bashir (2014) and Lai (2014), to mention a few. Emphasizing the importance of involving the people in decision-making processes (Lunenburg 2010: 1) characterises decision-making as a “people’s process”. The implication of not including participative decision-making in educational institutions is that teachers become demotivated, as they feel alienated instead of feeling part of the school. This can contribute towards poor human relations between school principals and teachers which may ultimately result in them developing negative attitudes towards the school (Wadesango 2012). It is against this backdrop that greater involvement of individuals is called for in order to improve schools (Lai 2014).

### **Democratic School Governance**

Democratic school governance was deemed relevant for the study, and it was used as a lens to analyse the extent to which teachers, as one of the stakeholders in the school and in governance thereof, participated in it. Democratic school governance is a relatively new concept in South Africa (Brown and Duku 2008) having become prominent when the country became a

democracy in 1994. The promulgation of the Schools Act, created a space for parents, learners and teachers to participate in the democratic governance of their schools (Brown and Duku 2008; Mabovula 2009). This legislation devolved certain powers from the national government to the schools (Chaka 2008). These included the authority to formulate and adopt school policy on a range of issues such as budgeting, code of conduct for learners, language policy, school uniform, school-community relations, and curriculum development programmes (Chaka 2008; Swanepoel 2008; Mncube 2009).

The efficacy of school governance and concomitant concept of local participation is usually based on the assumption that decision-making processes that are made closer to the people affected by those decisions are better (Swanepoel 2008; Wadesango 2012; Bagiva and Muhammad-Bashir 2014; Lai 2014). This calls for a genuine handing over and sharing of power with concomitant responsibility and accountability (Mncube 2009). This is better facilitated where leadership provides an environment where stakeholders feel invited to participate (Bhengu 2013). Principles of effective professional learning and scholarly work of various authors suggest that participative decision-making contributes to conditions that support the attainment of the school’s collective goals.

### **Research Questions**

- ♦ What are the teachers’ experiences of participation in decision-making processes at school?
- ♦ How does teacher participation in decision-making processes affect teaching and learning at a secondary school in the Pinetown District?

### **METHODOLOGY**

This is an ethnographic qualitative study which is located within interpretive research paradigm. Ethnographic inquiry is qualitative, naturalistic (Cohen et al. 2011; Bertram and Christiansen 2014) and is done in a way that the setting within which the research participants work is not disturbed or manipulated or controlled for purposes of conducting research (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). A qualitative study is an inquiry process of understanding a social or

human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of participants, and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell 2012). This approach was deemed relevant because what is being studied is happening in the lived-world of the teachers. It enabled them to describe their lived experiences relating to their participation in decision-making in their schools.

The research site was purposively and conveniently sampled for participation in the study. Purposive sampling entails the researchers' handpicking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristic being sought (Cohen et al. 2011). The school was chosen due to its easy accessibility and also because it was in the Pinetown District. The research project was introduced to the principal and she gave the researchers the opportunity to address the teachers. They in turn, volunteered to participate as the researchers had explained the purpose of the study.

Research participants comprised three teachers, one head of department (HOD) and the school principal in order to ensure a balanced perspective from the school and for purposes of data sources triangulation (Cohen et al. 2011). Semi-structured interviews were used as the data generation method. This method was chosen because it enables participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard the situations from their own point of view (Kvale and Brinkman 2009). Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Audiotaping is always preferable because it provides a permanent record of what was actually said instead of what the interviewer thought was said (Slavin 2007). The recorded data was transcribed and subjected to qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Critical discourse analysis was used to analyse the voices of those participants that wield power in the school such as the principal and the HOD. This was preferred because CDA is concerned mainly with the way language is used in our engagements with the world and our interactions with each other, thereby creating and shaping social, political and cultural formations (Hyland and Paltridge 2011). Throughout the study, ethical considerations were observed. These included seeking and obtaining ethical clearance from the re-

searchers' university and also obtaining permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, the provincial education department. Permission was also obtained from the principal of the participating school, as well as, from individual participants. Other issues such as the principle of beneficence and non-maleficence (Cohen et al. 2011) were also observed. For instance, the school is referred to as Rosemary Secondary School in order to protect the identity of the school and avoid any possible harm.

### **Profiling Rosemary Secondary School**

The results of the study are presented in the form of narratives of teachers, drawn from a case study of one secondary school (Rosemary Secondary). Rosemary Secondary School is one of the schools that are renowned for having successfully implemented various policy changes in response to broader transformation demands. In addition, the researchers also have a friendly relationship with the school principal and her staff.

Rosemary Secondary School is a Quintile 4 school of a learner enrolment of 1300 learners coming from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds. These learners are accommodated in 48 classrooms including specialist rooms. The quintile system is a funding formula used by the Department of Education (DoE) to rank schools in terms of economic conditions of the population around it. This is done to assist the DoE in determining the level of financial support it will provide. The lower the quintile in which the school belongs, the higher the level of funding it will get, and vice versa (Bhengu 2013). The staff complement consists of fifty-five educators, including the School Management Team (SMT) comprising the school principal, two deputy principals, five HODs, as well as, forty-six teachers. In addition, there are three administration staff and three cleaning staff members.

## **RESULTS**

The results are presented under four broad themes, which are discussed below

- (a) Teachers' views about their participation in decision-making processes
- (b) School management's views about teacher participation in decision-making processes

- (c) Nexus between teacher participation and classroom practice
- (d) Issues of decentralisation and centralisation at Rosemary Secondary School.

## DISCUSSION

### (a) Teachers' Views about their Participation in Decision-making Processes at School

The three teachers that participated in this study held a unanimous view that they hardly made any inputs in this regard, nor are their inputs valued by the SMT. When the participating teachers were asked if they participated in decision-making processes in the school, their responses were largely negative. For instance, Paul (not his real name), emphasising the dominant role played by the SMT and the insignificant role played by the teachers in decision-making, retorted:

*Most of the time teachers are just told what to do... When decisions are taken they are done without our knowledge (Paul).*

The sentiments expressed above were shared by Mandy (not her real name), who argued that actually, participation depended on where one stands in the school hierarchy. Her views were that the higher the position one occupies in the school hierarchy, the greater the level of participation and the higher the value ascribed to the input. This is what she had to say:

*One major reason for the situation where people at lower levels in the hierarchy are, from the perspectives of the teachers, is mainly due to the fact that a top-down approach to management was used in the school (Mandy).*

The top-down approach which dominates the discourse in Rosemary Secondary School is also shared by Daisy (another teacher in the school, and not her real name). This is what she had to say:

*In my school the nature of decision-making is a top-down approach. The people involved in decision-making comprise the principal, the two deputies, and Heads of Departments (HODs)... We are in certain instances involved in decisions such as choosing of prefects, that's all (Daisy).*

The above-mentioned teachers expressed what they respectively argued was a generally held view among the teaching staff, namely, that critical issues relating to curriculum content remained the preserve of top management in the

school. These narratives are consistent with a view that the level of participation in school decisions depends on the position that one occupies in the school hierarchy.

The view that teachers are excluded from substantive issues such as engagement with curriculum-related matters came out strongly from the teachers. It can therefore be argued that the school of thought expressed by Wadesango (2012) may be prevailing in Rosemary Secondary. Such a view holds that bureaucracies impose restraints on individuals by refusing to treat them as actors that are capable of self-directing. Notwithstanding these negative sentiments, literature (Ndlovu 2011; Sello 2011; Wadesango 2011; Wadesango and Bagaya 2012) suggests that teachers want to participate, particularly on issues that directly affect them.

### (b) School Management Views about Teacher Participation in Decision-making

The previous section demonstrated that from the teachers' perspectives, teacher participation is minimal, cosmetic and did not carry any value for the school management. While the experiences of the teachers regarding their participation are negative, the SMT disputed this. The HOD for instance, argued that teachers were involved at all levels of management in the school and also in a variety of aspects, including curriculum and extra-mural activities. Mrs. Smith (not her real name and one of the HODs), had this to say:

*They are involved in every level from classroom, to the staffroom to the HODs; deputy principals; the principal's offices and on the sports fields and other extra-curricular and co-curricular arenas. For example, teachers decide on which code of sports they would like to be involved in (Mrs Smith).*

While this view may be laudable, the HOD was quick to highlight the importance of management in making the final decision in the school. She argued that teachers participated like any other stakeholder in the school realise, but also maintained that teachers should realise that there are areas, which are the preserve of management. This is what she said:

*All stakeholders have the right to be included in the decision-making processes. However, certain decisions are the role function of management and should be respected by the teachers.*

The views expressed by the HOD were also shared by the school principal (Mrs Singh, not her real name). She too argued that teachers are legitimate stakeholders in the school and that they should participate in decision-making on matters of interest to them. However, as the HOD had argued, the school principal emphasised the view that there are limits to the teachers' participation, thereby creating boundaries to their participation. Articulating this point, the principal had this to say:

*We must invite them all to participate in decision-making. Having said that, we involve all of these members but we have to understand that there are limits to participation and one of the areas of tension is when people, be it the learners or the teachers in particular, assume that all decisions have to have their stamp of approval before implementation* (Mrs Singh).

The first thing to note is that the principal says 'we invite them to participate'. This raises questions about who wields power in the school and who decides about who should be involved in activities in the school. The words "we have to understand that there are limits to participation" suggest that the school principal and her management team enjoy the powers of creating boundaries regarding when the teachers can or should participate. In addition, these words suggest that as much as the HOD and the school principal maintain that teachers participate in decision-making, such participation, invariably depended on the benevolence of the school management.

### **(c) Nexus Between Teacher Participation and Classroom Practice**

There was no unanimity among the participants regarding the nexus between teacher participation and classroom practice. Some of the participating teachers claimed that there was a direct but complex relationship between their participation in decision-making and their teaching in the classroom. The link was perceived to be direct in so far as it related to the environment within which they worked. The teachers argued that the environment had to be conducive to effective teaching and learning. For instance, when Paul was asked if participation had an effect on the teaching and learning situation, his response was emphatically to the affirmative. This is what he had to say:

*It does affect teaching and learning. When you have a teacher who is happy, a teacher who feels that he is valued, and who feels that they are bringing something to the table so to speak, you have a happy teacher, a productive teacher, a teacher who will attend school regularly and give off his or her best* (Paul).

This extract indicates that when teachers feel that they are acknowledged and recognised as people of value to the school, they become motivated, and when they are motivated they tended to be more productive. This narrative is consistent with views, which argue that participation encourages ownership of decisions, belonging and commitment to the organisation (Wadesango 2012). However, when the same question was posed to Daisy (one of the three teachers that participated in the study), she retorted by saying that "*decision-making doesn't affect learner performance!*" This implies that the presence or absence of participative decision-making may not have anything to do with the learners or how they learn. However, she was very quick to add that if decision-making was inclusive of the teachers, learners would benefit as a result of what teachers would do. Mandy also took a hypothetical position regarding what teacher participation would do to their teaching. This is what she said:

*It will make schools better centres of teaching and learning. Teachers will want to come to school in the morning. Teachers will want to do something if they were consulted about issues.*

The above extract highlights the issue of the environment which promotes or discourages the teaching staff from performing at optimum levels. Commenting on this issue, Daisy explained, "*We will be motivated to establish better methods of teaching and learning.*" The narratives that have been expressed in this study seem to suggest that while there may be no clear and direct relationship between decision-making and learner achievement, there seems to be an agreement among the three teachers that teacher morale and teacher participation in decision-making are closely related. Mandy for instance, shares the view that not only morale and teaching and learning are closely related, but also that teacher morale was very low in their school. On the issue of teacher morale and participation in decision-making, Mandy had this to say:

*Staff morale is low and it has a negative impact on our work output. When teachers are not part of that decision-making, they tend to resist those decisions or implement it but not to the full extent. For example, since teachers were not consulted upon on the policy for late coming for teachers, some teachers come in when the bell rings for the assembly; some do not (Mandy).*

The above extract is congruent with views expressed by a number of scholars. For instance, Somech (2010) found that participatory approaches to decision-making encouraged teachers to engage in more innovative practices and pedagogy. Furthermore, research conducted by scholars such as San Antonio and Gamage (2007) and Nazir et al. (2014) revealed that participative decision-making was positively linked to teacher performance in the classroom. Other scholars such as Cheng and Cheung (2008) and Wade-sango (2011), express a similar view and propose that when teachers actively participate in decision-making processes, their willingness to implement those decisions increases, thereby, promoting educational productivity. This literature again is pointing to the conditions under which the teachers work and how such conditions affect the way they perform their duties.

It is evident that teachers that participated in this study had a low morale in Rosemary Secondary School. The dissatisfaction of some of the teachers was reflected in their work ethic at school. It has been emphasised by motivation theorists that dissatisfied workers do not deliver the goods. This happens because dissatisfied workers are not excited about work (Lai 2014).

#### **(d) Issues of Decentralisation and Centralisation at Rosemary Secondary School**

The crux of this study lies in the interrogation of the interplay between decentralisation and centralisation tendencies at school level. In the context of South Africa, powers to do certain things such as admissions policy, language policy were transferred to the schools through a process of decentralisation of power and authority. However, this may not necessarily mean that such powers are distributed to all stakeholders within the school but may be retained by the school principal. In that instance, centralisation of decision-making power may be at play. The extract presented in the introduction

would make more sense in this scenario. It is noteworthy that the school principal highlights the legal framework for stakeholder participation. In other words, decentralisation has ensured that various stakeholders at school level enjoy some powers to do certain things. However, the school principal's responses seem to suggest that some form of centralisation occurs in her school. Justifying the need for teacher participation in decision-making, the principal emphasised the legal basis for this, and this is what she had to say:

*Concepts such as democracy, distributive leadership, and democratic involvement all have their roots in founding documents such as the South African Constitution Act. It speaks to involvement of stakeholders. Stakeholders need to be grounded on responsible leadership. Educators have their vested interests and so do the unions (Mrs Singh).*

This extract foregrounds the legal framework for teacher participation which also explains their legitimacy. However, the school principal also tends to want to centralise certain powers to herself due to her position in the school. Centralisation at school level seems to dominate. Emphasising the legal provision for teacher participation and centralisation of power, this is what the school principal had to say:

*Teachers are involved in decision-making at school based on the constitutional rights and teacher unions. In other words, participation is on the basis of their legislative power. However, as mentioned earlier, it is the leadership and management of the school that will decide on the level of participation in terms of what is in the best interest of the school.*

The above extract points to a consistent view held by the principal which suggests that as the head of the institution, it is her responsibility to decide when teachers should be involved in what activity. The findings highlight the view that when employees are not satisfied with their working conditions they are more likely to seek better teaching and learning conditions or opt out altogether (Department of Education 2005).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study has established that from the perspective of the teachers, they were not included in decision-making processes, particularly on major issues pertaining to the school operations.

What is emerging is the commonality of views among the three teachers regarding the role of participative decision-making in motivating the staff and thus ultimately contributing to effective teaching and learning in class. What the data has also shown is that the perceived absence of participative decision-making has the potential to negatively affect teaching and learning at the school. The authors need to hasten to say that these findings may not be adding new knowledge about what participative management can do for the teachers. However, the results of this study reinforce the notion that teacher participation in decision-making does have an indirect link with the teaching and learning situation in the classroom. Further, the findings indicate the importance of promoting friendly environments which are conducive to effective teaching and learning.

The results have also shown that while decentralisation of some power to make certain decisions at school level has largely been welcome in South Africa, centralisation tendencies are also emerging in certain schools such as Rosemary Secondary School. A study conducted in rural secondary schools of South Africa almost 10 years ago produced similar results. That study showed that, while some principals were promoting genuine stakeholders' participation in the activities of the school, others felt that decision-making should be restricted to them as principals. Although these conclusions are largely based on the researchers' conversations with the teachers, it appears that, from the teachers' perspectives, management in the school was taking the route of centralisation of power to the management elite. Issues of participation of teachers and distributed leadership seem to still fall outside the radar screen of current school leadership. Issues of democratic governance do not seem to have been embraced by the school management as anticipated.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the conclusions expressed in the above section, the following recommendations are proposed. School principals need to be aware that transformation process, particularly the decentralisation of certain decision-making powers from the central level to the local level was meant to empower only a few. As agents of transformation process at school lev-

el, principals need to acknowledge the fact that issues of transparency, democracy, equity, and stakeholders' participation are meant to benefit all. A situation where teachers feel that what decentralisation achieved was the decentralisation of oppression so that oppression is now closer to them than it was during apartheid, is unhelpful at best and dangerous at worst. One of their duties, as school principals, is to ensure that the environment within the school is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Therefore, it is important that their leadership facilitates and supports the achievement of this goal.

### REFERENCES

- Bagiva ZL, Muhammad-Bashir OY 2014. The impact of participatory decision making in organizational management. *International Journal of Marketing and Technology*, 4(3): 1-17.
- Bertram, C, Christiansen I 2014. *Understanding Research: An Introduction to Reading Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Bhengu TT 2005. *Principals as Professional Leaders: Implications for the Management of Rural Secondary Schools During Transition*. PhD Thesis, Unpublished. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Bhengu TT 2013. School-community integration for school change: A case study of a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. *Education as Change*, 17(1): 63-76.
- Bhengu TT, Ncwane SH 2014. School governance, financial management and learners' classroom needs: Perspectives of primary school teachers. *International Journal of Education Sciences*, 7(3): 463-470.
- Brown B, Duku N 2008. Negotiated identities: Dynamics in parents' participation in school governance in rural Eastern Cape schools and implications for school leadership. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(3): 431-450.
- Carl A 2005. The voice of the teacher in curriculum development: A voice crying in the wilderness. *South African Journal of Education*, 25(4): 223-228.
- Chaka T 2008. *School Governance: Issues in Education Policy Series*. Braamfontein: Centre for Education Policy Development.
- Cheng F, Cheung Y 2008. An outlier multilevel self-management and school performance. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 13(3): 253-290.
- Cohen L, Manion L, Morrison K 2011. *Research Methods in Education*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. London: Routledge.
- Creswell JW 2012. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Department of Education 1996. *Changing Management to Manage Change in Education. Report of the Task Team on Education Management Development*. Pretoria: Department of Education.



- Department of Education 2005. *Teachers for the Future: Meeting Teacher Shortages to Achieve Education For All*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Hammersley M, Atkinson P 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Hyland K, Paltridge B 2011. *Continuum Companion to Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Ho DC 2010. Teacher participation in curriculum and pedagogic decisions: Insight into curriculum leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 38(3): 613-624.
- Ife J, Tesoriero F 2006. *Community Development: Community-based Alternatives in an Age of Globalization*. French Forest: Pearson Education Australia.
- Kvale S, Brinkman S 2009. *Interviews. Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Lai E 2014. Enacting principal leadership: Exploiting situated possibilities to build school capacity for change. *Research Papers in Education*, 30(1): 70-94.
- Lunenburg FC 2010. The decision-making process. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, 27(4): 2-12.
- Mabovula N 2009. Giving voice to the voiceless through deliberative democratic governance. *South African Journal of Education*, 29(2): 219-233.
- Mbokazi SS, Bhengu TT 2012. Critical reflections on rural poverty: Towards re-orienting rural development in KwaZulu-Natal. *Development Diaries*, 1: 28-40.
- Mncube V 2009. The perception of parents of their role in the democratic governance of schools in South Africa: are they on board? *South African Journal of Education*, 28(3): 83-103.
- Mncube V 2012. Stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of learners' involvement in democratic governance in South Africa. *Journal of Sociology, Social Anthropology*, 3(2): 135-143.
- Mokoena S 2011. Participative decision-making: Perceptions of school stakeholders in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 29(2): 119-131.
- Nazir T, Shah HFS, Zaman K 2014. Mediating effect of knowledge sharing between participative decision making, transformational leadership and organisational success. *Journal of Management Info*, 1(1): 1-12.
- Ndlovu BN 2011. *Parental Involvement in Supporting Teaching and Learning: A Case Study of Three Primary Schools in Pinetown District*. MEd Dissertation, Unpublished. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005. *Emerging Voices: A Report on Education in South African Rural Communities*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Republic of South Africa 1996a. *South African Constitution Act, No. 108 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Republic of South Africa 1996b. *South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- San Antonio DM, Gamage DT 2007. Building trust among educational stakeholders through participatory school administration, leadership and management. *British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society*, 21: 15-22.
- Sello M 2011. Participative decision-making: Perceptions of school stakeholders in South Africa. *Journal of Social Science*, 29(2): 119-131.
- Slavin RE 2007. *Educational Research in an Age of Accountability*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Somech A 2010. Participative decision-making in schools. A mediating-moderating analytical framework for understanding school and teacher outcomes. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(2): 171-209.
- Swanepoel S 2008. The perceptions of teacher and school principal of each other disposition towards teacher involvement. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(2): 39-51.
- Tilbury D 2009. Tracking our progress: A global monitoring and evaluation framework for the UN DESD. *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, 3(2): 189-193.
- Wadesango N, Rembe S, Chabaya O 2010. An analysis of the type of teachers that participate in decision-making in schools: A case study of Gweru District Secondary schools in Zimbabwe. *ISEA*, 38(2): 5-20.
- Wadesango N 2011. Groupwork: Myth or reality in school based decision-making? *Groupwork*, 21(1): 59-82.
- Wadesango N 2012. The influence of teacher participation in decision-making on their occupational morale. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 31(3): 361-369.
- Wadesango N, Bagaya A 2012. Management of schools: Teachers' involvement in decision-making processes. *African Journal of Business Management*, 7(17): 1689-1694.