

PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING IN SCHOOLS:
A STUDY OF TWO SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG

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ABSTRACT

South African principals face very high accountability pressures from a nation-wide school evaluation system and the reporting of school outcomes to the district in response to performance measurement requirements. The South African literature suggests that schools which embrace more a collegial culture are able to disperse both leadership and accountability across the teaching staff. Participatory practices build teachers commitment and a climate of trust. In schools where hierarchical, autocratic cultures exist, associated with a managerial style of leadership, principals do not engage in participatory practices and suffer the accountability pressures alone, struggling to extend decision making within the school management team, and excluding the general teaching staff beyond the senior managers from decision-making. One can infer that for these schools, building instructional capacity, which requires collective trust and participatory practices, is very difficult. The practice of participative decision-making by teachers strengthens commitment to their work and allows them to develop accountability as professionals. It builds teacher capacity. It also democratises their workplace, the school. This is consistent with the intentions inherent in the restructuring of the South African school system to promote the democratic value of participation.

Keywords

Participative decision-making; Trust; Instructional capacity; Accountability

DECLARATION

I, Simone Meintjes, hereby declare that the work contained in this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted exclusively to the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Simone Nicola Meintjes

Signed on this _____ day of _____ in the year 2018

STATEMENT BY THE SUPERVISOR

I, Dr Sipiwe. E. Mthiyane, as the candidate's Supervisor, agree/do not agree to the submission of this dissertation.

Supervisor's signature

Date

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this study to the Lord God Almighty, with humility and gratitude.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DoE	-	Department of Education
GDE	-	Gauteng Education Department
HoD	-	Head of Department
IEB	-	Independent Examinations Board
SGB	-	School Governing Body
SMT	-	School Management Team

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The practice of participative decision-making in schools is believed to increase school effectiveness (Somech, 2010). Participative decision-making also encourages teachers to work harder and increase their level of commitment (Singh & Manser, 2002; Grant, Gardener, Kajee, Moodley, and Somaroo, 2010; Sarafidou & Chatziionidis, 2013) as it raises teacher morale and job satisfaction. Likewise, it is believed to lower teacher absenteeism (Somech, 2010; Singh & Manser, 2002). Participative decision-making is associated with increased innovation and collaboration as teachers and participative managers share and combine knowledge to introduce new ideas or processes (Somech, 2010; Tscannen-Moran, 2001).

The practice of participative decision-making is also justified by democratic principles (Bush, 2007; Duke, 2005; Smylie, Lazarus & Brownlee-Conyers, 1996). The practice of participative decision-making has been a subject of research for 30 years (Somech, 2002; Duke, 2005; Mokoena, 2011; Sarafidou & Chatziionidis, 2013). Scholars have promoted the movement from authoritarian, bureaucratic school management under directive leadership to collegial, dispersed management based on participative leadership (Somech, 2010; Bush, 2007; Mokoena, 2011; Singh, Manser & Mestry, 2007).

In South Africa, the capacity for democratic governance and participation within schools has been provided by the South African Schools' Act No. 84 of 1996 which replaced centralised authority with school governing bodies and decentralised school based management (Hoadley & Christie, 2009). The South African Schools Act (1996) set out to “advance the democratic transformation of society” (Act No.84 of 1996). The Department of Education (1998, p.11) envisages that the school leadership (i.e. the principal, teachers and parents) will “transform the previously top-down autocratic decision-making hierarchy to a more horizontal, participatory style of leadership” (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005, p. 279).

The practice of participatory decision-making by teachers is associated with a democratic or participatory style of leadership (Bush, 2007; Somech, 2010; Duke, 2005), with concepts of distributed leadership (Spillane and Sherer, 2004) and teacher leadership (Grant *et al*, 2010) and with a collegial school culture (Hargreaves, 1995, Bush, 2007; Singh, Manser & Mestry, 2007). However, whilst participatory decision-making by teachers was notable study themes circa 1995, more recent studies focus on distributed leadership and teacher leadership. Participatory decision-making is a neglected theme in South African research and requires re-invigorating. Only Mokoena (2011) has undertaken a South African study focused on participative decision-making by all school stakeholders, which refers to the professionalising aspect that teachers felt when teachers are included in decision-making. This study focuses on

exploring the understandings and practices of teachers, and their principals in participatory decision – making in two Foundation Phase schools in Gauteng. The two schools differ in their institutional habit, the one school is a Gauteng Department of Education school and the other is an Independent Education Board faith-based school. Both schools are top-performing schools, both are very strictly run, and both schools espouse to enjoy a degree of collegiality.

1.2. Problem statement

Having worked in two state schools and a private school, I have experienced that teachers have very limited “voice” in the decision-making of the school other than their own classrooms. Authoritarian, hierarchical staff relations are the norm. The possibility of teachers participating in school decision making is supported by the South African School’s Act of 1996, which envisages a “more shared and participatory approach to the practice of leadership and management in schools” (Grant, *et al*, 2010, p. 401). The transition from the apartheid state to the democratic dispensation saw the introduction of democratically elected school governing bodies in 1996 (Adams & Waghid, 2005). In this nation-wide school reform of school-based management, South Africa has followed a pattern of school evolution similar to that which has transformed the management of schools in Australia and New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom and parts of America (Botha, 2006). Studies of the reformed school management examine the nature and extent of participative decision-making by parental voice (Adams & Waghid, 2005); by student voice (Mabovula, 2009; Mncube, 2008); and teacher voice (Grant *et al*, 2010; van Wyk, 2004). However, Grant *et al* (2010) found that beyond issues of student discipline, there was very little participation by teachers in school decision-making. Grant *et al* (2010) found that school management teams inhibited the practice of participative decision-making by teachers. Of the 1055 post level one teachers surveyed in 81 schools across KwaZulu Natal, 45,3% of the teachers expressed that their school management team “seldom or never valued their opinion” (Grant *et al*, 2010, p. 415). The school management teams cited accountability pressures as the main reason for withholding decision-making. Likewise, Swanepoel (2008) found that teachers wished for more involvement in decision-making outside the classroom.

The introduction of standards-based accountability in 2000 by means of the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation inserted a nation-wide school evaluation system which has increased the accountability pressure upon individual schools and their principals, senior managers and teachers to align with performance standards and improve school effectiveness (Taylor, 2009). Where a school fails to align sufficiently with performance standards targets, the evaluation system can be as feared as the loathed apartheid “inspection system” (Jansen, 2004, p.60).

South African scholars described schools which adopt a participative style of leadership as sites of increased school effectiveness and “transformation”, where teachers work harder, with more commitment and an increased sense of responsibility (Singh & Manser, 2002; Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). However, the authoritarian, hierarchical leadership of the formal school remains within the present school system, (Bush, 2007) with limited participation by teachers (Grant, *et al*, 2010).

This study seeks to explore the understandings, practices and experiences of participatory decision-making in two schools in Gauteng, and how these practices help the school cope with accountability pressures, and promote democratic participation in schools.

1.3 Rationale for the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the nature and occurrence of participatory decision-making by teachers, and to extend an enquiry into those aspects of schooling which promote or hinder it. The intention of this rationale is to provide a threefold motivation for the study, being personal, what I bring to the study as an architect, before I entered the teaching profession; being professional, what I have encountered as a teacher with regards to participation in three different schools; and theoretical, a rationale which is drawn from the theory of participative decision-making by teachers.

At the personal level, I have come to the teaching profession with a prior training as an architect, and have been trained to lead a team by means of completely inclusive participation of a professional team. My work experience included 3 years as a project manager for the property development department of an insurance house. There I learnt that running a project on time, within budget, requires collective focus, high levels of accountability and trust between the professional team and the contractors and sub-contractors. Accountability pressures on myself were also substantial, as on one project, a small warehouse, I had to negotiate a “go-slow” by the contractor, resulting in the project overrunning its budget and deadline, and I had to account for a R1,4 million loss, and face an extremely angry tenant. On another project, a site-clearing operation of a large tract of mining land, I realised that the seller of the land, who was employing the contractor to clear the site, was illegally dumping contaminated waste material down mine-shafts, at the discretion of a professional environmental consultant in his employ. My own boss was dismissive of my concerns, and I had to phone the national head of the property development department in Cape Town, and he understood the risk to the water systems of Johannesburg and immediately put a stop to the illegal dumping of contaminated waste. The anger that came my way at the next site-meeting was not inconsiderable, and it was pointed out to me that many people have just disappeared down mine shafts. However, as an architect, I am committed an open professional stance based on reasonableness, courtesy, impartiality and honesty, which values participation of all team members.

At the professional level, I have found the educational environment to be characterised by a lack of reasonableness, a lack of openness and transparency by the management structures, and the ongoing deprofessionalisation I have experienced, where I have been rebuked as a child, charged as a criminal, and harassed by opportunistic, troublesome parents has left me vexed and ponderous. Of my critical colleagues, those who have experienced participatory practices, in schools where collegiality flourishes, believe in the practice that it validates them as professionals and enhances their sense of commitment. Other critical colleagues, whom have no experience of participatory practices, disparage them as impractical. Yet others are quietly resigned to the role of “just teachers”. Worse still, teachers whom suffer a lack of professional voice and professional validation express themselves in behaviour which shows their disaffect, and this can manifest as extreme disregard or cruelty towards other

colleagues, or little children in their care. My observation of school culture in three different schools is that the educational environment lacks high levels of participatory practices and trust, and is socialised as an opaque, and often unreasonable, hierarchical and bureaucratic environment.

The theoretical rationale for the study is positioned as an “ethical” or democratic argument (Duke, 2005, p.6). Participatory decision-making is a central tenet of democratic culture (Mncube, 2007). South Africa’s rule by an apartheid government ended with the first democratic election in April 1994, and a constitutional democracy began. However, the habits of a constitutional democracy such as participation, representation, tolerance, deliberation and discussion are habits which have to be relearnt by each successive generation (Mncube, 2007). It is an incumbent challenge for each generation of a democratic society that the habits of democracy are inculcated in the youth (Schoeman, 2006; Mncube, 2007). This argument highlights the interdependency of education and society, that a democratic system of education is necessary for the development of a democratic society (Mncube, 2007). I believe that democratic practices of dialogue and participation within the staffroom are a necessary precursor of democratic classroom practices.

1.4. Significance of the study

The significance of the study is established by the degree to which the study contributes to the furthering of knowledge of a topic or phenomenon, or whether it improves practice or motivates policy with regard to the phenomenon (Basil, 2010).

The generally accepted outcomes of participative decision-making by teachers are increased job satisfaction, teachers’ increased commitment and responsibility and enhanced accountability (Smylie, Lazarus & Brownlee-Conyers, 1996; Somech, 2010; Singh & Lokotsch, 2005; Singh & Manser, 2002; Singh, Manser & Mesrty, 2007); however, research relating enhanced school outcomes is inconsistent (Smylie et al, 1996; Somech, 2010). Elmore (2000) suggests that whilst participative decision-making does improve teachers’ job satisfaction and sense of commitment, without a clear focus on instructional issues, teachers’ skill and practice does not improve. Furthermore, Elmore (2000) suggests that collegial relations with the principal, ongoing professional development of teachers and participatory practices involving teachers do not effect an improvement in teachers’ sense of efficacy without a direct focus on instructional problems.

South African researchers suggest that there are problems of trust and accountability experienced by school principals and managers which prevent leadership dispersal and inhibit participative decision - making by teachers (Grant et al, 2010; van der Mesch & Tyala, 2008). Other researchers suggest that participation by teachers in decision-making in a collegial climate can build trust relationships and a strong sense of accountability (Singh & Manser, 2002; Singh & Lokotsch, 2005; Singh, Manser & Mestry, 2007; Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2009).

South African studies do not examine participative decision-making by teachers as a formal study construct. Mokoena (2011) discusses participative decision-making by all school

stakeholders (principals, educators, non-teaching staff, parents and learners). Mokoena (2011) found that including teachers in participative decision-making improved teachers sense of professionalism. South African studies refer to participative decision-making as an embedded aspect of teacher leadership, collegiality and teamwork within the school management team (Grant et al, 2010; Bush, 2007; Singh, Manser & Mestry, 2007; Singh & Lokotsch, 2005; Singh & Manser, 2002; Hoadley et al, 2009).

This study is an instrumental collective case-study of two top-performing Foundation Phase schools of differing institutional habit (public and private) hence the accountability pressures which they are subject to, and the manner in which they deal with accountability pressures, may be very different. The research utilises the theoretical multi-dimensional construct of participative management by Somech (2002), to structure a cross-case comparison which allows the practices of decision-making in the two schools to be extruded, and allows some discernment of the relationships of trust and accountability. An emerging theme of the ethos of instructional continuity which sustains capacity and focus on the instructional core is apparent. It is my intention to explore and describe what two top-performing schools, (their principals and teachers) do with regard to participatory practices and accountability pressures, what are their internal dynamics, how do they thrive?

1.5 Critical research questions

First: What is the nature and extent of participative decision-making by teachers?

Second: What is the understanding and practice by the two school principals of participative decision-making?

Third: How do accountability pressures affect the principal and teachers and thereafter the practice of participative decision-making?

1.6 Clarification of key concepts

1.6.1. Participative decision-making

“Participative decision-making refers to the practice of principals and teachers jointly making decisions that traditionally would have been made by the principal alone” (Duke, 2005, p.1).

Participative decision-making is not a clearly defined construct, (Duke, 2005; Somech, 2010). Somech (2010) describes the defining aspects of participation which characterise participative decision-making by teachers as a structural intervention which management must construct to allow staff to deliberate over, and make decisions about key issues which are important to them. Significant to this definition of participative decision-making, the teaching staff is directly involved as individuals, not only via representation, and they invigorate and make decisions, they are not merely adjuncts whom advise management.

1.6.2. Democratic schools

Democratic schools are built by ongoing direct efforts by educators to create opportunities to experience the habits of democracy such as participation and representation. The democratic process is two-fold, first being the organisation of the school along democratic lines, and

secondly the curriculum is invested with opportunities to experience democratic habits (Apple & Bean, 2007). Many dedicated, professional educators are deeply committed to the belief that within a democratic society, schools have a moral duty to impart the habits of a democratic way of life (Apple & Bean, 2007).

Democratic schools have consistent characteristics which include: a curriculum which debates social issues, with an emphasis on critical thinking; and participation by teachers, students and management in key decisions about the school as an organisation (Apple & Bean, 2007).

Note: this study includes a faith-based school, and the philosophical stance of the faith-based school world-wide is an outlook which promotes inclusion, which encourages and values the contribution of individuals, and generally encourages democratic principles (Flynn & Mok, 2002, cited in De Nobile, 2007).

1.6.3 Collegiality

A climate of collegiality is established when teachers participate fully in shared decision-making and collaborate to find solutions to problems. When a climate of collegiality is established, teachers share the vision and values of the school, and take responsibility to act upon decisions and policy directives (Singh, Manser & Mestry, 2007).

1.6.4 Teacher voice

The evocation of teacher voice can be described by a continuum of expression within a school, from merely a voting voice, then an advisory voice, thereafter a delegated voice, and then manifest fully as a dialogical voice (Allen, 2004, cited in Davies, 2007). Allen's continuum relates manifesting teacher voice to teacher efficacy and transformation of teacher practice. The least expressive voice, when participation simply requires teachers to express themselves by voting, requires the least responsibility and risk from teachers, and likewise has no impact on teachers' efficacy. Similarly, the manifestation of the advisory voice has little transformational effect. The delegated voice of teachers is heard with some aspect of leadership dispersal and is conducive to a positive collegial climate. The dialogical voice is heard when all teachers participate openly without fear of risk, and this type of participation transforms teacher efficacy, and is associated with strong collegiality based on trust and listening (Allen, 2004, cited in Davies, 2007).

1.6.5 Accountability pressure

This is the pressure on an individual school (especially the principal and senior managers) to align with the standards-based performance measurements and thereafter is expressed as directives to the school to improve the quality of instruction and effectiveness (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015).

1.6.6 Collective trust

Collective trust is an accumulation of trust in a school which is acquired from open practices which include collaboration and cooperation by teachers (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Adams, 2013). High levels of collective trust indicate a "cohesive instructional core" (Adams, 2013, p. 370).

1.6.7 Instructional capacity

The instructional capacity of a school is the ability of a school to socialise and normalise the processes to promote teacher efficacy, collective responsibility and an ongoing cooperative focus on improved school outcomes (Adams, 2013).

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study is a small-scale instrumental collective case study of two Foundation Phase schools. The duration of the study is 12 months. The basic, qualitative study is structured in a linear format typical of scientific enquiry based upon evidence (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The critical questions were investigated empirically; in scientific research, empirical means “guided by evidence obtained from systematic research methods rather than by opinions or authorities” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p.17). The critical question, i.e. ‘what is the nature and extent of participative decision-making by teachers?’ is posed to fill a gap in the knowledge available in South African research about the nature and extent of teachers participation in decision-making, and how school principals effect and structure this practice in schools. The study methodology is a basic qualitative study, however the themes of trust and accountability are derived deductively from the theoretical framework and literature review, and inhere in the data generation instruments, which is consistent with an instrumental case study (Stake, 2003). The data analysis and interpretation of the study is structured as a cross-case comparison using a multi-dimensional construct of participative management derived from a theoretical framework of Decision Theory which has been developed over the past 30 years by researchers studying participative decision-making. The interpretation of data reveals the themes of accountability and trust and maintains a theoretical justification for participation based on democratic values. The study is contextually specific, which disallows replication and generalisation of the findings. The goal of the study is to explore and reveal the participative decision-making of teachers in two top-performing Foundation Phase schools of dissimilar institutional orientation, one school being publicly funded and accountable to the Gauteng Department of Education, and the other privately funded and accountable to a discreet Board of Governors. The findings confirm the literature that participatory practices which are open and cooperative lead to high levels of trust and a strong instructional core (Adams, 2013), which allows the school successful resilience to external accountability pressures exerted by standards-based performance measurements (Taylor, 2009). It is intended that the research be critiqued by peers and may be rewritten for journal publication (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

1.8 Outline of the study

The outline of the study provides five chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic of research, providing reasons for the popularity and practice of participative decision-making. The critical research questions are presented, together with a rationale which is based on a personal and professional justification for participatory practices, and thereafter a theoretically based democratic or ethical promotion of participation. The qualitative but deductive research methodology is described, followed by a description of the ethical considerations. Chapter Two provides the literature review and the theoretical framework of Decision Theory, accountability and trust. Chapter Three outlines the research paradigm and

research design. The interpretivist/constructivist research paradigm supports an instrumental, collective case study design.

An instrumental case study is used to focus on a theme or phenomenon, (Stake, 2003; Creswell, 2012). In this research, the phenomenon to be explored is participative decision-making by teachers. An instrumental case study may allow for a theory to be confirmed (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). A case study of two schools is referred to as a collective case study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2003).

The qualitative but deductive research methodology is described. The sample is explained and the data generation methods, being an interview schedule and a questionnaire are described. The format and procedure of data analysis for a cross-case comparison are described. Issues pertaining to trustworthiness, specifically the concept of relevance are described together with ethical considerations. Thereafter the limitations of the study are described. Chapter Four presents evidence from the data as analysed in response to the multi-dimensional construct of participative management by Somech (2002). The interpretation searches deductively for the themes of accountability and trust derived from the literature review. Chapter Five provides the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.9 Conclusion

The introduction relates participative decision-making to outcomes such as increased school effectiveness, increased teacher morale and job satisfaction. The problem statement highlights the lack of participative decision-making by South African teachers due to accountability pressures, and a tradition of formal, authoritarian leadership and management. The significance of the study is to understand and illumine the practices of teachers in two schools in Gauteng, not replication or generalisation; the absence of South African research on the topic is described. The critical research questions focus the research upon the understanding and practice of participative decision-making by teachers and illicit the instrumental, collective case study research design. The key concepts defined are described, commencing with participative decision-making and democratic schooling. The demarcation of the study adheres to guiding principles for scientific evidence-based enquiry as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2014). The outline of the study describes the organising format of five successive chapters. This summary leads onto the literature review and theoretical framework which commences in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the introduction and rationale for the study. In this chapter, literature that foregrounds and supports the study is critically reviewed together with the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. The aim is to review the available and relevant literature and highlight findings from various local and international studies. This chapter commences with a clarification of the roles of leadership and management, followed by a brief description of the leadership concepts which are embedded with participatory practices. The South African educational leadership landscape is described, with reference to the rise of both participatory practices and accountability pressures, followed by a review of South African studies which reveal aspects of the presence or lack of participative decision-making by teachers, and the effects of collegiality upon school culture, teacher commitment, and teacher accountability. Theoretical frameworks for participative decision-making by teachers which motivate practice and research are presented and discussed. This is then related to capacity building, which allows a school to respond positively to external accountability pressures. The chapter concludes with a conclusion to tie up loose ends of my literature discussion.

2.2 Body of the Literature Review

2.2.1 Leadership and Management

Firstly, leadership is the practice of motivating or influencing others, (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Bush, 2011; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). Christie and Lingard (2001) define leadership as existing within and without institutions, at different levels within institutions and embedded in various events. Leadership is not wedded to formal positions, whereas management and headship, being structural positions, exist as seats of those responsible and accountable for the academic outcomes of the school (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Bush, 2011). Bush (2011) attributes a fluid, diffusive quality to leadership which can permeate teams, but which can locate with anyone in a school.

In headship or the position of school principal resides the formal authority and task of the defining and achieving the goals of the school (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010; Kamper, 2008; Swanepoel, 2008); and likewise it is the head of school who puts in place the systems and processes which structure the daily rhythms of the school (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Swanepoel, 2008).

Bush (2011) links leadership to values and management to purposes, leaders must act from a clear set of professional values; management should be focused upon achieving the purpose

or target of the school. Leadership is associated with innovation and change, and management with the ongoing maintenance of the running of the school (Bush, 2011).

Furthermore, Bush (2011) suggests that held within the concept of leadership is the component of vision. Bush (2011) cautions that whilst the concept of a visionary leader is popular, in practice it is problematic; there is a tension between the capacity of a school leader to enact vision and the centralising tendencies of western governments on education.

2.2.2 Leadership practices embedded with participatory practices.

Participative decision-making is linked conceptually to democratic or participative leadership (Bush, 2007), to the collegial school type or culture (Bush, 2007; Hargreaves, 1995; Singh & Lokotsch; Singh & Manser, 2002), to distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000; Spillane, 2009), to teacher leadership (Grant, *et al*, 2010; Stegall & Linton, 2012), and professional learning communities (Stoll, Bolam, Macmahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006; Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite & Wilcox, 2015). The concept of leadership as something which stretches and disperses across people and function underpins these practices, and participatory decision-making is an inherent dimension of these practices.

Democratic or participative leadership prioritises the decision-making process of a group. Bush (2007) cites Leithwood's (1999) three-fold basis for this model of leadership, that: school outcomes are enhanced by participation; that a democratic rationale justifies participation; and that school-based management allows stakeholders to participate and express leadership. Bush (2007) cites Sergiovanni (1984), who suggests that participative leadership has the effect of enriching staff relationships and also reduces the pressures on school principals as leadership and responsibilities are shared.

The collegial school type is characterised by the principal encouraging all teachers to engage in discussion and decision making (Hargreaves, 1995; Singh, Manser, & Mestry, 2007). Collegial schools enjoy a high level of trust as teachers engage in collaborative teamwork and focus on a shared vision (Singh *et al*, 2007). Hargreaves (1995) describes the flattening of the traditional hierarchical roles of Head of Department or year heads, instead managers become "rotational academic and pastoral co-ordinators" (1995, p.35).

The non-hierarchical distribution of leadership is conceptually referred to as distributed leadership and Spillane and Sherer (2004) note that researchers invoke the same meaning from "shared leadership, democratic leadership and distributed leadership" (2004, p. 2). They theorise that distributed leadership is a practice whereby leadership is stretched between leaders and followers, and followers co-produce leadership as they interact with leaders. There are three ways in which leadership may be stretched: "collaborated distribution" sees a leader's practice inform and model another leader's practice; "collective distribution" whereby leaders work on their own yet interdependently towards a common goal; and "co-ordinated distribution" where leadership tasks are performed in sequence interdependently (Spillane & Sherer, 2004, p. 14).

Teacher leadership expresses the practice of cultivating leadership in teachers by extending decision-making powers to them (Grant, *et al*, 2010). Literature suggests that where teachers participate in decision-making, their productivity and commitment to the institution rises; their job satisfaction grows likewise (Grant, *et al*, 2010). Within a democratic distributed leadership, teacher leadership becomes a tool to cultivate a democratic school culture (Grant, *et al*, 2010). Within the classroom, the practice of teacher leadership focuses on the ongoing development of reflection and expertise by the teacher, and thereafter the ability to mentor others (Grant, *et al*, 2010). However, beyond the classroom, participatory practices require the support of the principal and management. “For teachers to become effective leaders, administrators must create the appropriate environment. This includes providing opportunities for teachers to make appropriate instructional decisions for the school, processes of building trust and rapport, opportunities to collaborate with peers in order to build shared capacity, and occasions to make decisions regarding resource allocations and school processes” (Stegall & Linton, 2012, p. 62).

Professional learning communities have grown from the practice of teachers collectively reflecting upon their practice, and collaborating to strengthen the instructional core of the school, and thus enhance school outcomes (Stoll, *et al*, 2006). Teacher autonomy is reduced and teachers focus on shared objectives which spread a sense of shared responsibility (Stoll, *et al*, 2006). A core concept of a professional learning community is notion of a community of learners, a teaching staff which engages in collective learning through participation and interdependence (Stoll, *et al*, 2006).

The leadership practices described above are initiated and sustained by the school principal and senior managers or leaders. The role of the principal in sustaining participatory practices is evoked in the acknowledgement as the “key player” or “leader of leaders” (Leech & Fulton, 2008, p.634); (Singh & Manser, 2002; Grant *et al*, 2010, p.404). The context of school leadership and management in South Africa provides unique challenges to school leaders who wish to engage in practices of participative decision-making.

2.2.3 The changing landscape of school leadership and participation in South Africa

Changes in school management and leadership have occurred across the western world with the spread of neo-liberal assumptions and their preference for managerialism (Christie & Lingard, 2001). These changes have been taken up in South Africa in tandem with political restructuring of schooling with the advent of democracy, post 1994. The 1980’s through 90’s saw the development of a culture of school effectiveness for which schools had to demonstrate that they were efficient and accountable (Christie & Lingard, 2001). The political thrust driving education is a culture of “performativity” rather than a democratic agenda of equity (Christie & Lingard, 2001, p.12). This culture of performativity has been described as a culture of regulation and control. In the global context, this culture of performativity is associated with an undermining of, or deprofessionalisation of the school system (Christie & Lingard, 2001). At the same time, discourses promoting participatory practice, and leadership dispersal across flatter management hierarchies have led to school reform and efforts to develop teacher professionalism (Somech, 2010; Christie & Lingard, 2001; Grant, *et al*, 2010); this is a movement towards equity, and democracy.

School leadership in South Africa is formed by the global field of educational discourses, together with a second vernacular field of post-apartheid educational policy, aimed at restoring democracy, participation, equity and justice (Christie 2010). The South African Schools's Act No 84 of 1996 envisaged the transformation of society and schooling, along democratic principles of shared leadership (Grant *et al*, 2010). The centralised form of school management was replaced with school governing bodies (SGB) and school based management, (Christie, 2010). Thereafter, the Department of Education, (1998, p.11) anticipates that the collective leadership of principal, teachers and parents will develop a flattened management structure compatible with a participatory style of leadership. (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). However, more recently, policy envisages that within the school, decision-making occurs within the School Management Team (SMT), led by the principal. This is as envisaged by the Draft Policy Framework: Education Leadership and Management Development (undated), (Van der Mesch & Tyala, 2008). So in all public schools, it is anticipated that participatory practices extend to the school management team, and accountability pressures also reside there.

The movement internationally and locally to school-based management (SBM) was a means of devolving authority to the individual school in context, however this devolution of decision-making is opposed by strong central interventions by the state. In South Africa, the devolved areas of decision-making are: the management of the school finances, the selection and retention of staff; and the plan and actions to develop the school and its infrastructure (Christie, 2010). The centralising actions of the state are the development of a national curriculum in line with strategic goals for state education; together with monitoring and mandatory formats for reporting school outcomes to align the schools with standards-based performance measurements and accountability (Christie, 2010). The introduction of standards-based accountability in 2000, called the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation, was a nation-wide school evaluation system. This evaluation system increased the accountability pressure on individual schools and their principals and senior managers. Schools had to demonstrate that they were aligned with performance standards (Taylor, 2009). So school heads experience a bi-polar tension of increased autonomy together with greater accountability (Christie, 2010, Jansen, 2004).

School governing bodies (SGB's) came about in 1996 with the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996. Neither the principal, nor a teacher can be elected as the chairperson of the school governing body, only a parent who is not employed at a public school may serve as chairperson; however the principal serves on the school governing body (Maile, 2002). Other members of the school governing body include elected parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and in secondary schools, students (Christie, 2010). SGB's have far-reaching powers, as juristic entities (Christie, 2010); they must ensure that the school's academic performance is satisfactory. (Maile, 2002). The powers of the SGB include determining the admission policy to the school, the language of teaching and learning, the fees structure, the subject choice offered, the mission statement, and the code of conduct (Christie, 2010). So the principal must engage with and account to the school governing body, and thereafter the Department (Maile, 2002). The principal must negotiate a twofold system of authority as head of the school management team, and as a member, but not leader, of the school governing body (Christie, 2010). My experience of two state schools is that principals use an open,

participatory style of communication with the school governing body, i.e. with parents, and an autocratic style of communication with teachers. Hence I experienced two realities, the school governing body assumes a democratic culture, and the staffroom and phase meetings are run along managerial lines, whereby managers give instructions, and teachers can maybe express their voice, but they have limited influence upon decision-making.

Leading a school in South Africa is complex, a principal must negotiate a raft of regulations pertaining to governance by the school governing body, labour relations when dealing with staff, and performance management of teacher effectiveness, the abolition of corporal punishment, all which address reform of South African schooling (Christie, 2010; Hoadley, et al, 2008, Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). The huge disparity of means between schools allows that the daily work of principals varies greatly in different settings (Christie, 2010; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). A principal's work can include such diverse aspects as fundraising and marketing, to integrating information technology, to dealing with parents as clients (Christie & Lingard, 2001). The most important role of the principal is enabling teaching and learning, and the principal's key responsibility is accounting for the outcomes of the school (Christie & Lingard, 2001). In response to South African school reform to site-based management, and school governance, the principal is the key person to realign boundaries and relationships between tasks and authority (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Botha, 2006). However, the school system lost instructional capacity - schools suffered an exodus of qualified teachers as a result of a state initiative to rationalize teachers according to an index of need and redeploy teachers to needy schools (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). Furthermore, due to apartheid, many of the remaining teachers are not suitably trained and qualified (Swanepoel, 2008). To develop and professionalise teachers, and to develop the participatory practices of reflection and collaboration within the school, is also part of the leadership role of the principal (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010; Grant, *et al*, 2010). Principals simply cannot accomplish everything by themselves; they have to delegate tasks, and the responsibility for leadership, to their staff (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Spillane, 2009; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010; Grant, et al, 2010). However, the principal remains ultimately responsible for accountability (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Maile, 2002).

The current discourses in leadership, and the vernacular changes in South African policy, have resulted in formidable changes to the nature of school principals work (Christie & Lingard, 2010, Swanepoel, 2008). Despite the emphasis on democratic participation envisaged by both policy and leadership discourses, one can infer that the complexity of the school leadership and governance together with the accountability pressures exerted upon principals, may explain why school leaders retain a managerial style of leadership within a formal school culture, rather than adopting a participative style of leadership within a collegial setting (Bush, 2007). Bush (2007) sees the participative model of leadership as ideally suited to the democratic intentions of the state for South African schools. Whilst participative leadership and a collegial school culture may be an ideal for South African schools, managerial leadership associated with the formal school type is typical of South African, European and North American schools (Bush, 2007). The formal school leadership is characterised by authoritarian hierarchy and management commonly found within a

centralised, bureaucratic system, i.e. typical of the apartheid state and remaining within the present school system as a residual legacy (Bush, 2007; Grant, *et al*, 2010).

Oduro and Macbeath (2003) found that Ghanaian “headteachers” faced a similarly complex task to lead a Ghanaian urban or rural school (2003, p. 447). Many headteachers complained of their workload because they had to combine fulltime classroom teaching with a leadership role which included supervision of teachers work, and many disparate tasks such as supervision of building projects, supervision of school gardens and cleaning the school campus, supervision of food vendors and their food quality and hygiene, receiving casual visitors and district officials, and collecting and managing school fees (Oduro & Macbeath, 2003). Just as a culture of performativity permeates South African and western schools, so too for Ghanaian heads, the culture of performativity renders them very vulnerable to accountability pressures from both the state and from parents who demand good academic results (Oduro & Macbeath, 2003).

2.2.4 South African studies which include aspects of participative decision-making by teachers

South African studies do not examine participative decision-making by teachers as a formal study construct. Mokoena (2011) examines participative decision-making through the lens of all stakeholders in the school, including teachers, and found that the benefits of a culture of collegiality were a greater sense of professionalism amongst teachers. Swanepoel (2008) examined teacher involvement in school reform, and found that teachers’ wished for greater involvement in decision-making. Other studies describing related themes such as teacher leadership, collegiality, and teamwork within the school management team do incorporate aspects of participatory practice by teachers, and its relationship to accountability.

To examine teachers’ experiences of teacher leadership, Grant, *et al*, (2010) surveyed 1055 teachers across diverse school settings in KwaZulu-Natal. Their findings showed that teachers were leaders in their own classrooms, but apart from some collegial leadership pertaining to extra-mural activities, teachers hardly participated in school decision-making (Grant *et al*, 2010). The various poverty-related contexts of the schools were a key factor contributing to the limited extent of teacher leadership (Grant, *et al*, 2010). 75% of the schools included in the study were under-resourced schools in poor areas. They had been disadvantaged by the history of apartheid which serviced huge inequalities in school facilities (Grant, *et al*, 2010). Despite national educational policies which promote democratic management practices, the legacy of apartheid bureaucracy was a patriarchal management hierarchy within schools (2010). The schools studied did have site-based management and school governing bodies, however, in practice leadership was not extended beyond the SMT, and decision-making was extended only within the SMT (Grant, *et al*, 2010). The “SMT members did not distribute leadership but instead autocratically controlled the leadership practice” (Grant, *et al*, 2010, p. 415). Grant *et al* (2010) attributes this closure of decision-making within the school management team as a direct result of accountability pressures. Christie (2001) describes the pressures put on school leadership by the culture of performativity which permeates site-managed schools, whereby accountability measures ascertain a school’s performance. As a result of these accountability pressures within the

KwaZulu-Natal schools, the SMT's were distrustful of teachers and unable to share leadership, and therefore constituted a barrier to teacher leadership (Grant, *et al*, 2010). Grant, *et al* cites Macbeath (2005), "who warns of the risk of building a culture of trust in the face of accountability pressures" (Grant, *et al*, 2010, p. 415). and accountability.

This study clearly reflects that participative decision-making is constrained within the school management team, and school managers are affected by distrust of teachers. A similar theme emerges from a qualitative study in Grahamstown by van der Mescht and Tyala (2008), which explores school principal's perceptions of team work by the school management team in ten secondary schools. Whilst a commitment to participative management within the confines of the school management team emerged as a key theme, this study revealed that even within the school management team, participatory practices were affected by the need to trust in the face of doubt, that principals experienced a tension between holding on to power and decision-making as an act of mistrust, and the need to extend leadership and trust team members in decision-making and accountability (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008). So a tension emerges of two conflicting forces; the "ability to trust team members and the sense of accountability" which are affected further by issues of competence, and efficiency (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008, p.9). Competence can be understood as team members' professional capacity and efficiency is the driver of quick decision-making, a pressure experienced by the principal, to make decisions without properly consulting and listening to team members (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008). In four of these schools, post-level one teachers who had developed professional capacity and maturity were included in the school management team, however, members of the school management teams were typically teachers in promotion posts (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008). Participation by the rest of the teaching staff in decision-making does not appear to be a consideration; instead, the members of the school management team would convey to the rest of the staff that a decision made by the management team was the most appropriate decision (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008). These two studies both locate participative decision-making within the confines of the school management team in schools; that it does not extend to the teaching staff, as a result of issues of trust and accountability.

In contrast to this lack of participation and mistrust, a theme of collegiality emerges from qualitative research study into the effects of transformational leadership on teachers in two South African primary schools, conducted by Singh and Lokotsch (2005). Transformational leadership was linked conceptually to a more democratic, collegial style of leadership. Transformational leadership was used to transform the vertical, autocratic decision-making hierarchy to a flatter, more inclusive participatory style of leadership (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). These scholars (2005) reflect cautiously that participatory decision-making can be tedious and cite Gibbons (1995) caution that participators can lack "...specific skills like mutual trust, sharing, accountability and these have to be developed" (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005, p. 279). Whilst one school did not achieve the status of transformational leadership, both schools aspired to a collegial model which endowed the following characteristics: the principal had an open approach to participation which allowed staff to participate equally in a secure, yet relaxed manner. There was a commitment to participation underpinned by a

democratic value system which extended participation and responsibility to all, not just senior managers (Singh & Lokotsch , 2005).

However, on analysis, one school had transformed, that is, showing extension of leadership horizontally and a flattening of the decision-making hierarchy (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). The other school, whilst aspiring to collegiality, continued to use the traditional bureaucratic roles of management where decision making remained within the formal management hierarchy (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). The management which had transformed embraced a culture of participation whereby they negotiated and extended participatory decision-making amongst the staff (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). The teachers of the school lead by transformational leadership were more committed and put in more effort than the school without the transformational culture (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). A collegial atmosphere permeated the staff whereby they trusted each other and functioned cohesively as a team. These researchers cite Whitaker (1993) that “the transformational leader makes a fundamental power shift from power of authority vested in position, to power vested in the people” (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005, p. 282).

Clearly this model of transformational leadership is conceptually associated with a participatory or democratic style of leadership and the collegial school culture, and the leadership act of transformation is one from an authoritarian, hierarchical school culture to a participatory, collegial culture. The outcome of the inclusion of teachers in participatory practice was that the teachers worked with increased levels of commitment. This outcome is consistent with international literature (Somech,2010; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013). Furthermore the staff relations were permeated with trust, which contrasts with the theme of mistrust evident in the research by Grant *et al* (2010) and van der Mescht and Tyala (2008).

Another case study again provides insight into the enhancements brought to teachers and their school by a culture of collegiality.

In a three-year long case study at a single historically disadvantaged South African school, Singh and Manser (2002) observed the introduction of a culture of collegiality which brought about participative decision-making by all members of staff. This culture of collegiality lead to shared vision and values amongst staff. Teachers were both empowered and placed in positions of accountability. Teachers were motivated to work harder and as a result the matric pass rate increased significantly. Furthermore, both teacher and learner absenteeism declined as the commitment level of teachers and learners increased (Singh & Manser, 2002). From this research, one can infer that in a collegial culture, trust and accountability are a reciprocal endeavour. The authors cite Sergiovanni’s (1991) description of collegiality: “...teachers and principals share common values, common goals, accountability and a sense of trust built on a foundation of congeniality” (Singh & Manser, 2002, p. 62). Furthermore, the research relates school and teacher outcomes which are typical of the international literature describing participative decision-making by teachers, being increased teacher commitment and attendance, teacher empowerment and improved student outcomes.

A quantitative study undertaken in South Africa by Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin and Ward (2009) shows a similar relationship between good staff relationships, teacher collaboration and improved school results. The researchers examined management practices across 142 schools in the Eastern and Western Cape to gain an understanding of how school management focused on instruction could lead to improved academic outcomes (Hoadley, *et al*, 2009). The key findings showed the importance of support by parents together with focus within the management of the school upon instruction in achieving improved student results (Hoadley, *et al*, 2009). The researchers indicate that meaningful focus upon instruction does require some aspect of leadership dispersal and collaboration between teachers (Hoadley, *et al*, 2009). However, leadership dispersal across schools was not a significant factor associated with school improvement. The researchers suggest that leadership dispersal was to some extent implicit because most principals delegated responsibility for curriculum coverage to senior managers which implies leadership dispersal to the SMT (Hoadley, *et al*, 2009). Good relations between management and staff were associated with improved results: “specifically, positive relations between teachers and managers, and collaborative relations between teachers, were positively associated with better results” (Hoadley, *et al*, 2009, p. 9).

The preference by South African teachers and senior managers to work in a collegial environment, led by a democratic leader, was a finding of a quantitative study conducted in the Eastern Cape by Singh, Manser and Mestry, (2007). Questionnaires were sent to 475 educators in primary and secondary schools, including heads of departments and deputy principals. The research related the development of a collegial environment in a school to a principal’s emotional intelligence as a leader, and this was further related to teachers’ job satisfaction and motivation. Educators expressed a preference for leaders who speak clearly and lucidly, who practice self-control, who are flexible and resourceful, who practice shared leadership, and who are positive about the future. (Singh *et al*, 2007). Educators expressed a desire for greater professionalism and collaboration with they perceived would lead to greater job satisfaction; the research showed a firm link between collegiality and job satisfaction amongst educators (Singh *et al*, 2007). A collegial environment was deemed to be functional and successful when the following attributes were established: leadership and decision-making are shared, vision and core values are shared, teachers are both empowered and accountable (Singh *et al*, 2007). As leadership is extended to teachers, so is accountability. “Accountability is shared and educators are happy to be held accountable for leadership roles that they have chosen” (Singh *et al*, 2007, p.552). In a functional collegial environment, participatory practices include the school governing body, parents, learners and the school staff (Singh *et al*, 2007). This research suggests that by extending decision-making practices to teachers (which involves trust by the principal), accountability was also extended to teachers (implying trust in the principal). This is supported by international research which relates the level of collaboration in a school with the level of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

The South African research reviewed so far suggests that there are problems of trust and accountability (experienced by principals towards senior managers, and by senior managers towards teachers), which prevent leadership dispersal and participatory practices extending beyond the confines of the school management team. The research suggests that the

establishment of collegial staff relationships within a school, which include collaboration and participation in decision-making by teachers, can result in a reciprocal relationship of trust and accountability which permeates the school and supports leadership dispersal to teachers. The research suggests that the establishment of a collegial school environment is associated with improved school and teacher outcomes, such as greater commitment by teachers and improved school results. The themes of trust and accountability will be addressed as part of the Theoretical Framework which follows shortly.

Consistent within the South African research described above is the theoretical rationale for participation as a practice of democracy. The international literature describes several theoretical positions, as follows.

2.2.5 Theoretical positions for participative decision-making

Duke (2005) defines four theoretical positions for research promoting participation by teachers in the decision-making in their schools. They are: “democratic, socialist, human growth and development, and productivity and efficiency” (2005, p. 6).

The democratic position promoting participative decision-making is described as an ethical position (Duke, 2005). This argument centres on the belief that each person has the right to determine some direction and control within their work life (Duke, 2005). Within schools, teacher participation can enhance the professionalism of the teachers and democratise schools (Duke, 2005). Moreover, a system of democratically oriented education is believed to mould children to become adults whom can sustain and participate in a democracy and uphold democratic values (Duke, 2005).

The socialist position which promotes worker participation in decision-making is based on the theory of Marx (1867). Workers must participate in and in due course control the production process to prevent the commodification and alienation of labour (Duke, 2005).

The argument for participation in decision-making based on human growth and development emphasises that employees are motivated when their influence and responsibility are grown (Duke, 2005). The workplace is a space for professional growth and development as employees participate in decision-making (Duke, 2005).

The fourth and most common argument for participation in decision-making is to promote the productivity of and efficiency within an organisation (Duke, 2005). In education this position is popular; as teacher participation is believed to improve the insight that management has of classroom problems, and therefore allow effective educational decisions to improve instruction (Duke, 2005). This argument promotes the trend towards flatter management structures as more effective than the authoritarian bureaucratic structure of traditional schools (Duke, 2005).

Whilst researchers can provide clear rationales for teacher participation in decision-making, Duke (2005) maintains that teacher participation is neither clearly defined nor conceptualised. However, researchers recognise that participative decision-making is a multi-dimensional construct (Duke, 2005; Rice & Schneider, 1994; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994; Sarafidou &

Chatziioannidis, 2013). In an attempt to define the dimensions of participative decision-making by teachers' researchers have contributed to a collective body of work comprising "Decision Theory".

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

The preceding sections discussed the related literature on school leadership and participative decision-making in schools. The purpose of this section is to deal with theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, namely decision theory and democratic schooling theory and thereafter theory describing trust and accountability.

2.3.1 Decision Theory

Scholars have developed theory relating to participative decision-making which explores various dimensions. Scholars have not established consensus on which dimensions relating to teacher participation in decision-making are most important (Duke, 2005). Somech (2010) contends that the relevance of research into participative decision-making is in its relations to its outcomes (2010). Rice and Schneider (1994) outlined formative aspects of earlier research which they named Decision Theory.

The first model of decision-making cited is Lipman's (1974) conception of three dimensions of the decision-making process: "decision stages – how a decision is made, decision content – what a decision deals with; and decision involvement – who participates in making a decision" (Rice & Schneider, 1994, p.44).

A further conceptualisation of the content of a decision is based upon Barnard's (1938) model of "the zone of indifference", an area of decision content in which employees have no interest (Rice & Schneider, 1994, p.44). Researchers extended this concept of the zone of indifference to teachers, suggesting that principals assess teachers' level of "interest" and level of "expertise", to ascertain whether or not a decision occurred within teachers' zone of indifference. When a principal involves teachers in decisions occurring outside their zone of indifference, participation in decision-making is more effective (Rice & Schneider, 1994, p.44). This highlights a key aspect of principals' work: "effective involvement of teachers in school decision making requires that principals determine which issues are located in teachers' zones of indifference and which are not" (Rice & Schneider, 1994, p.44).

The concept of the domain of a decision indicates involvement by teachers in either "technical" issues (involving teachers' work) or "managerial" issues (school wide administration). Research indicates that teachers prefer to be involved in technical issues rather than managerial aspects (Rice & Schneider, 1994). Likewise, Somech (2002) found that principals chose to involve teachers in the technical aspects of their work rather than managerial aspects. The definition of each domain was expanded by Somech (2006). The technical domain includes all aspects dealing with "...students and instruction (e.g. instructional policies, classroom discipline policies, resolving learning problems)" and the managerial domain "...which deals with school operation and administration (e.g. setting school goals, hiring staff, allocating budget, evaluating teachers)" (2006, p. 751).

A further aspect of decision theory considers the extent to which teachers participate in decisions in their schools and relates this to their perceived level of job satisfaction. This model was developed by Alutto and Belasco (1972, 1973) cited by Rice & Schneider (1994). They considered the discrepancy between actual and desired participation by using a typology of three conditions of decision-making: deprivation, equilibrium, and saturation. Alutto and Belasco found that teachers who experienced decision deprivation across important issues experienced low levels of job satisfaction. Teachers experienced decision deprivation in relation to their perception of an administrator who exercised “high decisional control” (Alutto & Belasco, 1972, p.122), cited in Duke (2005).

Further work by Mohrman, Cooke and Mohrman (1978) cited in Rice & Schneider (1994) examined the involvement of teachers in participative decision-making in the technical and managerial domains. Their findings reported that teachers experienced “...a higher level of actual and desired involvement in the technical domain than in the managerial domain” (Rice & Schneider, 1994, p.44). Following research by Schneider (1984) cited in Rice and Schneider (1994) showed a contrasting level of decision deprivation, that in response to the managerial domain, teachers experienced a low level of actual involvement, but their desired level of involvement was high. Teachers expressed desire to be involved in “...the administrative and organisational structure of the school, determining procedures to be used for teacher evaluation, selecting departmental chairpersons or team leaders, evaluating subject departments or teams, hiring new faculty members, setting and revising school goals, and establishing school wide policies” (Rice & Schneider, 1994, p.44).

During the late 1980’s, various studies attempted to conceptualise participative decision-making by teachers, resulting in a focus on the “content of the decision” and on the “degree of participation” as key dimensions (Duke, 2005, p.11). Rice and Schneider (1994), cited by Duke (2005), contend that “content and frequency of participation are the most important dimensions to consider” (2005, p. 11).

A multi-dimensional conceptualisation of participative decision-making as practiced by principals (rather than teachers) was evolved by Somech (2002), based on the work of earlier studies. Somech (2002) describes this practice as “participative management”, and links it with participative leadership (2002, p.343). Somech (2002) describes the principals’ role in developing participation by teachers as “...crucial, requiring a major shift in leadership strategy. Leaders must be willing to let go of traditional authority roles, not only allowing teachers to have a greater voice but helping them, providing support and establishing an environment of trust” (2002, p. 343).

Somech (2002) provided five dimensions of participative management. These were: decision domain; degree of participation; structure; rationale, and participation target (Somech, 2002, p.341). The intention of Somech’s work was to define a clear conception of participative management by principals and how (why, how, when and with whom) participative decision-making was used by principals. Somech crafted a Likert-type survey based on her five dimensions of participative decision-making. She identified various items in each dimension

by means of focus groups and interviews with principals. The survey was completed by 99 primary school principals in Israel.

The dimension of 'decision domain' was consistent with Decision Theory described above, consisting of a technical and managerial domain.

The dimension 'degree of participation' ("from seldom to always") was extended to examine the extent of participation practiced by the principal, on a continuum conceptualised as "autocratic decision-making, information sharing, consultative decision making, and democratic decision making" (Somech, 2002, p.345).

The dimension of 'structure' reflected prior research which examined the effect of formally structured participation as opposed to informal participation, suggesting that the extent of formal structures related to the extent of involvement in decision-making: "...when teacher's participation was confined to informal channels, their role tended to be limited to giving advice" (Somech, 2002, p.346).

The dimension of 'rationale', relates a principal's theoretical or philosophical basis for participation. Somech (2002) broadly classified the motives for participative management as being either a humanistic/democratic rationale which allows that people have the right to participate, or as a pragmatic/human relations rationale which motivates that participation is a means to achieve improved school outcomes.

The dimension of 'participation target' examines the nature of the "dyadic relationship" between a principal and a teacher (Somech, 2002, p.347). Previous research cited, Yukl and Fu, (1999), found that teachers' "competence, job level, goal congruence, and time together with the principal determined the level of participation" (Somech, 2002, p.348).

Somech's findings showed that principals in Israel used consultative decision-making in preference to democratic decision-making (Somech, 2002) and that none of the principals were of a democratic philosophy. Furthermore, principals commonly used formal positions to determine who participates in decision-making, and in which decisions they participate (Somech, 2002). For the dimension of decision domain, Somech (2002) found that principals involved teachers in decision-making when it related to technical aspects of work, i.e. teaching and learning, rather than managerial aspects of work. For the dimension of participation target, Somech (2002) found that principals accorded decision-making in relation to a teacher's motivation and interpersonal skills rather than expertise. This research extends the dimensions of participative decision-making, albeit as practiced by principals. However, it does not empirically relate the construct to other variables such as teachers' job satisfaction or improved school outcomes.

A very recent quantitative study by Sarafidou and Chatziioanidis (2013) is clearly based upon Decision Theory as formalised by Rice and Schneider (1984), however the dimension of 'content of decision' (i.e. technical or managerial domain) has been split into three domains. The researchers examined teachers' actual and desired involvement in three revised domains of decision-making, being 'student issues', 'managerial issues' and 'teacher issues'. These

were related to the variables 'school climate', 'self-efficacy' and 'job satisfaction'. Questionnaires were sent to 143 primary school teachers in various locations in Greece. The findings showed a similar pattern to the studies reviewed thus far, especially teachers' desire to participate more in managerial decisions.

Teachers reported quite a high level of actual participation in decisions concerning students' issues, followed by a lower level of participation in teacher' issues, but a low level of actual participation in managerial decisions. When the discrepancy between actual and desired participation was examined, the researchers found that teachers experienced decision deprivation across all three domains, but particularly for managerial issues. A perception of "better" leadership (shared leadership) and a school climate of collegiality were associated by teachers with less decision deprivation in the management domain and higher participation in teacher issues (Sarafidou & Chatziioanidis, 2013, p. 170). Participation in teacher issues related strongly to self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Whilst these findings appear to corroborate to findings from earlier studies, (especially with regard to teachers' decision deprivation in the managerial domain), the fact that the dimension of 'decision domain' was split from two domains into three and aspects of each domain redistributed, means that these findings do not necessarily corroborate earlier findings.

For Schneider (1884), the managerial domain for which teachers suffered decision deprivation comprised of: "the administrative and organisational structure of the school, determining procedures to be used for teacher evaluation, selecting departmental chairpersons or team leaders, evaluating subject departments or teams, hiring new faculty members, setting and revising school goals, and establishing schoolwide policies" (Rice & Schneider, 1994, p.44).

For Sarafidou and Chatziioanidis (2013), the managerial domain comprises: "financial management, school maintenance, facilities, equipment and teaching materials, the assignment of students to classes, and relations with the local community" (2013, p. 172). There is no overlap in activities expressed in the comparison of these two accounts of the managerial domain, so one has to infer that school systems differ by country, (the Greek system is highly centralised, the American system is decentralised), and that what is actually expressed is that there are always managerial activities in schools from which teachers are excluded and for which they desire to be included.

This is a clear example of the lack of consensus by researchers as to what comprises the dimensions of the construct of participative decision-making by teachers (Duke, 2005). "While the theoretical models and findings overlap and appear to be consistent, the research is still presented as a series of competing models, rather than as a synthesis or in integrative terms" (Bauer & Bogotch, 2006, p. 470).

In spite of the lack of consensus over the construct of participate decision-making by teachers, Somech (2010) suggests that the value of research into participative decision-making by teachers is in relation to its outcomes, and that it is "criterion-related" (2010,

p.178). The next section will describe the various teacher and school outcomes relating to participative decision-making by teachers. Thereafter a key component of theory, namely democratic schooling theory will be described. Following this, the dimensions relevant to this South African research, of trust, and accountability pressures, which emerged from the review of South African literature, are presented theoretically, as a continuation of the Theoretical Framework which guides the research.

2.3.2 The outcomes of participatory decision-making by teachers.

Teacher participation in decision-making is believed to improve the quality of decision-making, as teachers and principals engage in discussion (Smylie *et al*, 1996; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Participation by teachers in decision-making is thought to afford management with insight into key problem areas arising in the classroom (Somech, 2010). Participation in decision making is a process which allows clarification of information and synthesis of cooperative ideas; this information is believed to enhance decisions made about instruction and curriculum (Somech, 2010). It is also believed that engaging teachers in participatory decision-making is developmental or professionalising for teachers (Smylie *et al*, 1996, Somech, 2010).

When teachers are involved in decision-making, their sense of autonomy is strengthened, this reinforces their sense of professionalism which is empowering (Somech, 2010). This empowerment of teachers "...is considered fundamental for enhancing their morale and motivation, increasing levels of job satisfaction and promoting a sense of responsibility and commitment to organisational effectiveness and improvement" (Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013, p.171).

Increasing levels of teacher participation and teacher efficacy can be expressed by a continuum of the manifestation of teacher voice in a school, commencing with the weakest voice, a voting voice, increasing to an advisory voice, becoming more assured as a delegated voice, and then fully empowered as a dialogical voice (Allen, 2004, cited in Davies, 2007). According to Allen's (2004) continuum, the weakest voice manifests when teachers merely participate by voting, and teachers' sense of responsibility and commitment is least motivated; the advisory voice also has little stimulation on teacher efficacy. However, the delegated voice is associated with the extension of leadership and the establishment of a collegial climate, and is effective in raising teacher efficacy. The expression of the dialogical voice anticipates that teachers participate in decision-making confidently, without fear of consequence, and such secure, collegial participation is associated with a transformation of teacher efficacy which is underpinned by trust and listening (Allen, 2004, cited in Davies, 2007).

Furthermore, participative decision-making by teachers is a practice associated with democratising schools (Smylie *et al*, 1996, Mokoena, 2011, Grant *et al*, 2010; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013); and the theory conceptualising democratic schooling attributed to scholars Apple and Beane (2007) is described hereafter. Research relating participative decision-making to teacher outcomes such as teachers' job satisfaction, teachers' commitment or responsibility, and teachers' accountability, is consistent and "generally

acknowledged” by researchers (Smylie *et al*, 1996, p. 181). However research relating to school outcomes is inconsistent (Smylie *et al*, 1996; Somech, 2010). For instance, some researchers find a relationship between participatory practices and enhanced student performance, but others studies find no correlation (Smylie *et al*, 1996). In general, the literature suggests that schools with participatory practices which are democratic and include collaboration by teachers, that focus on the curriculum and aspects of teaching and learning, effect change positively in terms of classroom performance (Smylie *et al*, 1996; Bauer & Bogotch, 2006; Stegall & Linton, 2012).

Reasons suggested for the inconclusive evidence relating participative decision-making to school outcomes include: firstly the implementation of participatory practices in schools are very varied in respect to what they focus on, how they are structurally maintained and their decision-making processes; and secondly, participatory initiatives may be very well conceived, but if they are not carefully implemented over a considerable amount of time, with support from the school management and the district, then they may not succeed (Smylie *et al*, 1996; Somech, 2010).

Furthermore, participative decision-making is a complex endeavour which takes time to develop; which requires change in interpersonal relationships, and which alters the dispersal of influence and the extent of authority. Negotiating these changes may require district guidance and may require professional development (Smylie *et al*, 1996). The process of participation can cause frustration and stress, as it takes longer to make a decision (Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Conner, 2015). It can also increase teachers’ workload (Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013; Mokoena, 2011).

The outcomes of participatory decision-making by teachers which recur as lie- motifs in this research are enhanced teacher commitment and accountability. These outcomes are widely viewed as consistent outcomes. Arising from the South African literature is the theme of a lack of trust, which is related to accountability pressure. The discussion of trust and accountability provide forthcoming theoretical components of the Theoretical Framework, however they are presented after a brief summary of democratic schooling theory (Apple & Beane, 2007) which is relevant to the research.

2.3.3 Democratic schooling theory

Democractic school theory has been formalised by the scholars Apple and Beane (2007) but rests on a century-long tradition of democratic school reform, which arose from the seminal work of John Dewey, whom wrote extensively, but specifically his work “Democracy and Education (1916), (Apple & Beane, 2007). These authors caution that the concept of democracy in society has several meanings, and furthermore, within schools themselves, the concept of democratic schooling acquires various hues. Moreover, the possibility of democracy is organically inherent in each situation, yet this requires ongoing renewed and critical enquiry and response (Apple & Beane, 2007). Within American society democracy confers governance by an elected party, whereby all the adult citizens of the country had equal opportunity to vote, and thus express their majority consent to the government (Apple & Beane, 2007). Subscribed in the concept of democracy is the “democratic way of life”

which is a value-laden mode of living which pursues justice and dignity for all, and resists inequities such as racism, poverty, and prejudice based on gender, and socioeconomic class (Apple & Beane, 2007). This democratic way of life allows access to information rather than censorship, concern for the welfare, dignity and rights of others; the use of critical thinking to collectively resolve problems facing communities; and the use of social institutions (like schools) to maintain the democratic mode of living (Apple & Beane, 2007).

Dewey (1916), cited by Apple & Beane (2007) promoted the sensible belief that the democratic way of life is learnt (and thus maintained) through experience, and that young people should be cultivated in democratic values at school, and not simply acquire experience of democracy post education. However, many people believe the converse, that democracy is not workable in schools, or that democracy is a form of governance which is available to adults, not children (Apple & Beane, 2007).

In the same way that South African state school system is described in newspapers and journals (Mncube & Harber, 2010) as being in a state of crisis, so too the American public school system is also described as a failure, and the American public are increasingly using market-driven alternatives such as vouchers for for-profit public schools (Apple & Beane, 2007). However, just as South African scholars can describe the characteristics of “resilient” schools which succeed in spite of their impoverished circumstances through the dedication of the principal and teaching staff (Christie & Lingard, 2001, p. 8), so too, Apple and Bean (2007) describe a rich tradition of American public schools which work powerfully and dynamically to enrich the lives of children and the communities in which they live.

Democratic schools are not random, but deliberate, they involve a determined two-fold approach, one involving the creation of structures to sustain a democratic school culture, and the other is to enrich the curriculum with democratic experiences for children (Apple & Beane, 2007). (Of particular relevance to this research is the development of a democratic school culture within the staffroom). With regard to democratic processes within a democratic school, all stakeholders, including young people, and their parents are involved in governance concerns and school policy (Apple & Beane, 2007). Within the classroom, teachers engage collaboratively with youngsters to arrive at a sincere response to the concerns of both teachers and students, and the classroom culture favours a cooperative spirit towards learning rather than a competitive, individualistic approach (Apple & Beane, 2007). Young people are encouraged to extend themselves into the greater community by helping others, and educators are committed to democratic concerns both within and without the school (Apple & Bean, 2007). The curriculum includes learning conjoined to current social and environmental issues, and educators have to ensure that both the overt official curriculum, and an inherent curriculum of democratic values and experiences is provided (Apple and Beane, 2007).

These authors voice a key concern with regard to the movement world-wide to site-based management that whilst it reverses some aspect of the central control of the state, it localizes the struggle for resources to the school, and localises accountability to the school for a national policy and curriculum, together with standardised tests, which is centralised and distant from the school; this echoes the sentiments of South African scholars Christie and

Lingard (2001) cited earlier who referred to the complexity of principals' work as they negotiate the tension of the "simultaneous centralisation-decentralisation terrain" (2001, p.14).

Democratic schools typically arise from a bottom-up impetus, say a group of teachers, who drive change, rather than from the principal (Apple & Beane, 2007). This is in stark contrast to most South African and international literature reviewed above describing school reform, which ascribes democratic initiatives, structures and processes to the principal. However it does relate to the outcome of enhanced teacher commitment which is related to high levels of participation, thus one can infer that a democratically oriented school culture within the staffroom is essentially collegial, and allows for teachers to initiate and drive change. The ongoing discussion will show that enhanced teacher commitment as a result of participatory practices, is related to a culture of trust and wide-spread accountability in a school. This is central to the concept of capacity building which allows a school to respond successfully to external accountability pressures.

2.3.4 Trust

Emerging from the South African literature was a need to develop a culture of trust amongst school staff. The literature suggests that principals found it difficult to trust their senior managers, and senior managers in turn found it difficult to trust teachers, and this culture of mistrust was related to accountability pressures exerted upon the principal and school management team by the district authorities in relation to school performance. However, the literature also suggests that when teachers are included in participatory decision-making, a culture of collegiality was established, which dispelled mistrust and established a culture of trust, and as a corollary, responsibility and accountability were dispersed across the teaching staff.

International and South African researchers concur that a culture of trust emanates from a collegial school culture based on participatory practices (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Demir, 2015; Conner, 2015; Hallam *et al*, 2015; Naiker & Mestry, 2013). If a principal does not trust a teacher's commitment to the goals of the school, then the principal will not extend decision-making authority to teachers (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). However it is the role of the principal to inspire commitment to the goals of the school, and by using participatory practices, it is possible to share the values and goals of the school (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Harris and Chapman, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). When a principal trusts the sincerity of a teacher's commitment and capability, the principal can extend "not just token participation but genuine decision-making authority to teachers" (Tschannen-Moran, 2001, p.308). Collaborative practices and participation in decision-making by teachers can promote the level of commitment in teachers, and thereby establish them as trust-worthy (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Hallam, *et al*, 2015; Conner, 2015). When principals extend influence over school decisions, they promote teacher leadership and professionalism which promotes trust (Hallam *et al*, 2015).

Likewise, in a school where there is an absence of participatory practices, staff interpersonal relationships are poorer, and teachers are affected by a culture of distrust; whereby teachers seek to protect themselves from the school leadership and withdraw from the education process (Hallam et al, 2015).

For a person to be considered as trustworthy, they need to demonstrate the personal attributes of “benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness” (Tschannen-Moran, 2001, p. 310; Adams, 2013). The attribute of authenticity in a person engenders trust. When a person accepts responsibility for their deeds and maintains an adherence to truthfulness instead of distorting the truth in order shift blame to others, this behaviour demonstrates authenticity (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). When a principal’s behaviour is perceived as authentic, this engenders trust in the principal, and likewise, when a teacher is perceived as having established authentic behaviour, this establishes trust by colleagues (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Authentic collaboration by teachers is based on commitment, building trust and collegial relationships (Conner, 2015).

When trust is established and accumulates in a school, it becomes a very real strength, a form of social capital, referred to in the literature as “collective trust” (Tschannen-Moran, 2001, p.315). Adams (2013) cites a definition of collective trust by Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) as follows: “Collective trust is ...a stable group property rooted in the shared perceptions and affect about the trustworthiness of another group or individual” (2011, p. 22). Adams (2013) suggests that trust emanates from processes which are “open, collaborative and cooperative” and high levels of trust in a school indicate a “cohesive instructional core” (2013, p.370). Adams (2013) suggests that the presence of collective trust in a school is a gauge of its instructional capacity. Instructional capacity can be defined as “...the resources within schools that enhance teaching effectiveness and social processes that facilitate knowledge creation and professional learning” (Adams, 2013, p.369). Instructional capacity is built when responsibility is shared, staff relations are cooperative and focus on continuous improvement (Adams, 2013). This establishes a relationship between participatory practices, trust and capacity building.

The next criterion related to participative decision-making by teachers to be discussed is the experience of accountability pressures by school principals. The discussion shows that accountability pressures are related to capacity building, and capacity building is related to participative decision-making by teachers.

2.3.5 Accountability

A theme emerging from the South African literature was the inhibiting effect of accountability pressures on school principals and senior managers. When a principal accounts for his or her school’s performance, that performance is used as a measure of compliance by the school with national policy (Jansen, 2004). The pinning of high accountability pressures upon principals by district officials, who assess the schools performance, is associated with a reluctance or inhibition experienced to extend decision-making to senior managers and thereafter to teachers. This is associated with a managerial style of leadership within a hierarchical, authoritarian school structure (Naicker & Mestry, 2013; Grant *et al*, 2010).

Accountability or “...giving account involves reporting and explaining or justifying the occurrence of education activities” (Maile, 2002, p.326).

Accountability implies control of power by enforcement, monitoring and answerability (Maile, 2002). Answerability in practice is a report reflecting school outcomes, or a discussion, which is subject to an evaluation process which assesses how well the school is doing (Maile, 2002). Monitoring involves “defining duties and responsibilities of participating structures for decision-making, policy formation and evaluation” (Maile, 2002, p.328). Enforcement of accountability measures entails an obligation to act lawfully and express due diligence to aspects of good governance (Maile, 2002).

European scholars define accountability pressure as: “pressure on individual schools and their representatives to act in conformity with the standards of an accountability system and to take action to improve school quality and effectiveness” (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015, p.37). This pressure on school leaders is exerted by a national school inspection system, which is used to enforce school improvement (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015).

South Africa introduced standards-based accountability in 2000 (Taylor, 2009; Jansen 2004). The concept of standards based accountability is two-fold, including an aspect of “pressure (accountability)” and “support (capacity building)” (Taylor, 2009, p.342). A second narrower concept of standards-based accountability is associated simply with “accounting and testing” (Taylor, 2009, p.342). Both conceptions of standards-based accountability were introduced in South Africa in 2000. The narrow conception of standards-based accountability is evident in the public display of matric results. The Department of Education established a National Monitoring Forum to lead improvement in the pass rate of the Grade 12 learners, the Senior Certificate results (Taylor, 2009). The matric results were published in the national newspapers and schools with low pass rates were subject to public disgrace (Taylor, 2009; Jansen, 2004). The broader conception of standards-based accountability was introduced as the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation, which introduced a nation- wide school evaluation system. Jansen (2004) cites an excerpt from the policy:

This national policy on whole-school evaluation introduces an effective monitoring and evaluation process that is vital to the improvement of quality and standards of performance in schools... The findings must be used to re-orientate efforts towards improving the quality and standards of individual and collective performance (Department of Education, 2000, p.7)

The policy focuses on both the performance of the school and the performance of the teachers (Jansen, 2004). The evaluation of each school follows a process, whereby a school must first provide an account of its own performance, an act of ‘self-evaluation’; then the school is visited by a district supervisor who performs a ‘pre-evaluation survey’ which results in a school profile, describing the functionality of the school (Jansen, 2004, p.58). The supervisor examines the self-evaluation report and various school records. Thereafter the school is assessed by several supervisors across three days, this being a period of ‘external evaluation’ during which nine key areas of evaluation are assessed and an evaluation report is formalised

with recommendations for school improvement (Jansen, 2004, p.58). The school must then draw up an improvement plan which outline how the recommendations will be achieved, involving the support of the district. This is the 'post-evaluation process' (Jansen, 2004, p.58).

Jansen (2004) describes a tension introduced by the evaluation system, between the autonomy of the school and control exerted by the state. The school has autonomy to prepare its own self-evaluation report, and the school can draft its own improvement plan. However, during the period of external evaluation by district supervisors, the principal is expected to participate to the extent of providing interpretation and clarification, but thereafter the principal is excluded from the decision-making by supervisors, which determines the school's rating (Jansen, 2004).

The accountability pressures experienced by South African school principals are intended to result in processes to align the school with the learning standards. The development of teachers, or capacity building, allows the school to achieve the learning standards (Taylor, 2009). But in cases where a school does not achieve its improvement targets, then the school evaluation process is dreaded and distrusted by educators who perceive it as similar in punitive intention as the hated apartheid inspection system (Jansen, 2004).

Taylor (2009) cites Elmore's (2003) argument that the resilience of a school to face external accountability measures is in direct proportion to its internal accountability system.. Internal accountability can be thought of as "the degree of coherence in the school around norms, values, expectations, and processes for getting work done" (Elmore, 2008, p.43) cited in Taylor (2009). A school with a strong internal accountability system can cope with the pressure of standards-based accountability; a school with a weak internal accountability system will fail to achieve alignment with the learning standards (Taylor, 2009). Elmore (2008) cited in Taylor (2009) believes that the internal accountability of a school can be strengthened by capacity building. Processes to build instructional capacity include leadership dispersal to a wide group of teachers, and developing teacher capacity with a focus on teaching and learning (Taylor, 2009).

Altrichter and Kemethofer (2015) surveyed 2300 principals across 7 European countries to explore the effect of accountability pressures upon principals from inspection systems; and thereafter the relationship to school improvement. The research conceptualised "improvement in capacity building" as comprising three variables, "improvement in teacher participation in decision making"; "improvement in teacher cooperation", and "improvement in transformational leadership" (2015, p.43). This model of capacity building clearly shows the role of the principal to extend participative decision-making to teachers, and the importance of a climate of collegiality.

2.4. Conclusion

The literature reviewed suggests that the practice of participatory decision-making by teachers is associated with participative or democratic leadership, with leadership dispersal in schools and the professional development of teachers. It enhances teachers' commitment and

makes them more trustworthy. It is also an aspect of the democratic culture of collegiality and collaboration in schools and evokes the emanation of collective trust. Further, the literature also suggests that collective trust and the process of participative decision making by teachers are related to capacity building in schools.

The literature suggests that capacity building strengthens the internal accountability of a school which in turn allows the school more resilience to face external accountability pressures.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined the related literature and theoretical framework that underpins the phenomenon under investigation, i.e. the nature and occurrence of participatory decision-making in two Gauteng schools. Consequently, this chapter commences with a brief discussion of the paradigmatic disposition of the study; the perspective of the interpretivist/constructivist epistemology which supports the qualitative instrumental, collective case study design presented in this research. The qualitative research methodology is discussed, together with the methods and instruments used for data generation. Thereafter the sampling strategy and the criteria used to determine the sample are described. The manner in which data will be analysed is described, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness and factors contributing as possible limitations to the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a coherent framework of philosophical beliefs which underpin research; this framework of beliefs is adhered to by a group of researchers who are committed to the paradigm (Basit, 2010). This philosophical framework includes an ontological stance, i.e. a perspective about the nature of reality; and an epistemological stance, i.e. a perspective about the nature of knowledge (Merriam, 2009; Basit, 2010). Scott and Usher (1996) argue that if the ontological and epistemological assumptions of educational research are not examined, then the research is merely a technology. An examination of the ontological stance and epistemological stance of the research is necessary to establish the researcher's "positionality" and thereafter to determine the appropriate research methodology (Basit, 2010, p. 7). The two major contrasting educational research paradigms are positivism and interpretivism (Basit, 2010; Merriam, 2009). The positivist paradigm assumes that reality can be observed and measured; and that knowledge is objective, and the researcher will pursue methods associated with the natural sciences (Basit, 2010). Within the positivist paradigm, knowledge is typically found by statistically analysing data generated from a large random sample, for which the findings can be generalised (Basit, 2010). The interpretivist paradigm assumes that there are multiple realities or views of an event (Merriam, 2009). The interpretivist research paradigm seeks to interpret the viewpoint of the research participants, hence knowledge is subjective and personal (Basit, 2010). Interpretive researchers focus on a small number of participants, and seek depth and complexity in their analysis of a social phenomenon, and their purpose is not to generalise their findings (Basit, 2010). The positivist research paradigm is associated with quantitative methodology and the interpretive paradigm is associated with qualitative research methodology (Basit, 2010). A research paradigm which has emerged by researchers critical

of positivism is post-positivism; and research paradigms which have emerged from interpretivism are critical theory, poststructuralism and postmodernism (Merriam, 2009); pragmatism, phenomenology, social constructionism, and constructivism (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). The qualitative research paradigms are closely related and have underlying assumptions which are compatible (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). Merriam (2009) identifies four characteristics which are common to qualitative research: firstly, that the research seeks to understand how people make sense of their experiences; secondly, the researcher is the main instrument for data generation in qualitative research; thirdly, that the research is an inductive rather than a deductive process, whereby the researcher generates data to build theory, rather than testing a theory as would be the case in quantitative research; and fourth, qualitative research conveys a rich description about the phenomenon of the study (Merriam, 2009).

Some researchers such as Merriam (2009), and Guba and Lincoln (2005) consider all qualitative research to be interpretive. Both Merriam (2009) and Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) note that the terms interpretivism and constructivism are often used as synonyms by educational researchers.

The interpretive/constructivist paradigm is considered appropriate to this qualitative research. This paradigm confers that reality is a social construction formed as individuals interact with each other, and each individual carries within them their own personal, subjective interpretation of an event or phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). The role of the researcher is to understand the meaning a phenomenon has for the participants in a study (Merriam, 2009). Meaning is not something objective to be found, it is constructed by people as they interact with and interpret their world (Merriam, 2009). Thus for this study, the researcher sought to understand how the participants interpret their experiences of participative decision-making; how decision-making is structured into their lives at school; and what their experiences of participative decision-making mean to them (Merriam, 2009).

3.3. Research Methodology

The educational literature broadly identifies three approaches to methodology, being quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research approaches (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Creswell, 2012). The research methodology appropriate to this research is the qualitative approach, and it is described to support an instrumental collective case study. An instrumental case study is used to focus on a theme or phenomenon, (Stake, 2003; Creswell, 2012). In this research, the phenomenon to be explored is participative decision-making by teachers. An instrumental case study may allow for a theory to be confirmed (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). A case study of two schools is referred to as a collective case study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2003).

Qualitative research has as its purpose an exploration or understanding of a phenomenon. The variables relating to the research problem typically are not known (Creswell, 2012).. This research follows the qualitative approach; the phenomenon studied is the practice of

participative decision-making by teachers in the two researched schools. However, for this instrumental collective case study, the key themes of trust and accountability are known, and this allows the researcher to permeate the study with the concerns of researchers and theorists, and to guide the exploration of the central phenomenon (Stake, 2003).

In qualitative research, the literature review is necessary to provide a rationale for the research problem, however it is not as substantial as the literature review of a quantitative study (Creswell, 2012). In qualitative research, the purpose statement and research questions are stated broadly, with the intention to seek understanding of the phenomenon studied, as practiced and perceived by the participants; unlike quantitative methodology, wherein the research questions are specific and focused on a few variables (Creswell, 2012). In this qualitative research, the literature review did provide key themes of trust and accountability, which are reflected in the design of the data generation instruments; this is consistent with the methodology for an instrumental collective case study (Stake, 2003).

In qualitative research, data is generated from a small sample of purposefully chosen participants, and their views and behaviour are recorded on forms called protocols, for example an interview or observation protocol. Audio recordings are transcribed to form a text database (Creswell, 2012).. In this research, a questionnaire instrument was prepared, however it was used to compare the responses of a small group of teachers in two purposefully chosen schools, and not across a large random sample. The concerns of researchers to address Decision Theory was expressed in the questionnaire in a closed question format, also, the themes of trust and accountability which emerged from the Literature Review were addressed in the questionnaire, but not as measureable variables with narrow, specific response formats, but more broadly in a sequence of open-ended questions. The use of a prepared instrument such as a questionnaire to draw out key themes of the research is typical of the methods of an instrumental case study (Stake, 2003). The semi-structured interview protocol also reflected key themes, as did the focus group interview protocol.

In qualitative research, the text database is analysed by categorising the text into segments of meaning. The data analysis identifies themes and patterns between themes. The findings may be presented thematically, or as a complex description (Creswell, 2012). For an instrumental collective case study, it is likely that coding schemes are developed prior to data generation, in response to key themes derived from theory (Stake, 2003). As it happens, the researcher herein analysed the data generated in relation to the multi-dimensional construct of participative management (Somech, 2002), derived from Decision Theory, and interpreted the findings with regard to themes from the literature review.

The researcher reflects upon the findings in relation to previous research, or more broadly, or personally, in relation to biases (Creswell, 2012). The methodology of an instrumental case study allows the researcher to guide the work with the concerns of researchers and theorists, and to draw out how these concerns are depicted in the case; hence the use of already developed instruments and coding schemes developed prior to data generation (Stake, 2003).

3.4 Research Design

A research design is a plan of action for the research to generate empirical data which will be used to answer the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Yin 2012). The research design needs to be carefully selected to correspond to the research question (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Yin 2012). This is necessary to ensure that the research findings are credible (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Yin, 2012). The research design specifies the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation; different designs allow for varied interpretations of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). There are many types of research designs, the four main categories are quantitative designs, qualitative designs, mixed method designs, and analytic designs (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Quantitative research designs include experimental research, and non-experimental research such as correlational research and survey research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Qualitative research designs include ethnographic research, phenomenological research, case studies, grounded theory studies and critical studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014); evaluation studies, narrative studies, collaborative approaches, and pragmatic qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012).

Merriam (2009) suggests that all qualitative research is interpretive, and furthermore that a great deal of research is done which is of a “basic” or “generic” nature (2009, p.22), which does not conform to the types of research designs, each with a unique dimension, named above. The purpose of a basic qualitative study is to develop an understanding of the meaning of a phenomenon for the people involved in it; to understand how they make sense of their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Similarly, Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) describe “basic” or “generic” research as “non-categorical” pragmatic qualitative research (2012, p.178); that it is extensive in use but not generally acknowledged as such (2012). They note carefully that the pragmatic qualitative research approach is compatible with, but not synonymous with the philosophical paradigm of pragmatism; that the pragmatic approach aims to provide a practical and sensible approach to research, yielding not a “thick description”, such as in ethnography, but a description of a phenomenon, of the perspective of the people involved, as interpreted by the researcher (Savin-Baden & Powell Major, 2012, p. 171). There is not a well- established research design for pragmatic research; researchers of basic or pragmatic qualitative research often “cast” or overlay the study with a more well-known and clearly described research design, such as ethnography or grounded theory (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012, p. 174).

The research design of this basic, interpretive case study was cast within the qualitative research procedure of ethnographic collective case study, as this research design provided a clear design framework for this pragmatically sampled case study. Case study as a typology is not codified, case study designs do not follow a clear blueprint (Yin, 2012). This basic, interpretive case study research did not yield the thick descriptions typical of an ethnographic study. A case study blended with ethnography would require extensive fieldwork across a long period of time and the generation of detailed evidence and observations (Yin, 2012). Since the time frame for this study was 10 months, I did not achieve extensive fieldwork. However, a case study does not have to provide a thick description nor detailed observations;

and it does not depend on ethnography or observation (Yin, 2012). Nevertheless, several aspects of the research design of an ethnographic study seemed to be compatible with the focus of this basic, interpretive case study, and as a novice researcher, I thought it is sensible to follow, where practical and relevant, a clearly established design framework. Therefore, I have paid close adherence to the characteristics of an ethnographic study as outlined below, as a guide this study, and I have endeavoured to explain those aspects of the design which do not adhere to the characteristics of an ethnographic case study.

Ethnographic studies follow a “cultural theme” that is promoted in society (Creswell, 2012, p. 468). This cultural theme becomes the central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2014). For this research, participatory practices are the cultural theme promoted as integral to a democratic society. The central phenomenon of the study is the practice of participative decision-making by teachers. Ethnographic designs are used to interpret the shared culture of a group at a site (Creswell, 2012). In ethnography a “culture-sharing group” is two or more people who meet regularly, who share patterns of behaviour, thinking and speaking (Creswell, 2012, p.470). A shared pattern is interaction which is established as a norm in a group (Creswell, 2012). An ethnographer may discern shared patterns which range across a typology from ideal (what should happen), to actual (what did happen), to anticipated (what could happen) (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the theoretical framework provided two comparable continuum’s, one which examines the extent of participation extended to teachers by the school principal (Somech, 2002) and a second continuum, which describes the manifestation of teacher voice (Allen, 2004, cited in Davies, 2007). The questionnaire instrument also distinguishes between actual and desired participation in decision-making by teachers, across various decision domains. Ethnographers typically discern these shared patterns through fieldwork, by frequent visits to the site, and thereby, slowly learning the cultural norms of the group (Creswell, 2012), however I analysed the data generated from the interviews and questionnaires in terms of the multi-dimensional construct of participative management by Somech, (2002) and the shared patterns of behaviour, thinking and speaking of the two teacher groups were clearly evident.

An ethnographer uses a wide variety of data generating methods, including qualitative methods such as conversations, observations, interviews, and audio-visual recordings, and a few quantitative methods such as surveys, questionnaires and tests (Creswell, 2012). The time limitations for this study and the fact that that the researcher was at work in a school herself while the culture-sharing groups interact in their meetings resulted in the pragmatic choice of a questionnaire for the teacher group at each school, as a useful data generating tool, which was used in conjunction with a focus group interview with teachers, at each school, and a semi-structured interview with each principal. This mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence is typical of a case study; the absence of observation is permissible in a case study; and a case study can be performed in a short period of time (Yin, 2012).

Ethnographers distinguish between three types of data, being emic data, etic data and negotiation data (Creswell, 2012). Emic data emerges from the participants; etic data refers to the researcher’s interpretations of the participants’ perspectives; and negotiation data emerges

as the researcher and gatekeeper interact and agree upon ways in which the research will unfold within the site, and ensure respect for the site (Creswell, 2012).

An ethnographic study follows a process of describing the site, analysing the data for themes which describe the culture-sharing group, and interpreting the meaning of what was found (Creswell, 2014). In ethnography, a description is a vivid, rich, complex depiction of the culture-sharing group; sometimes a description moves the reader from a broad setting and then moves in to a more close-up, vivid depiction (Creswell, 2012). The process of analysing the data for themes consists of segmenting the text and coding it to form a set of themes. Analysing the themes suggests the patterns of speech, thoughts and behaviour of the culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2012). It can be difficult to develop a concise set of themes to substantiate the patterns (Creswell, 2012).

The thick description and analysis of shared patterns of behaviour are followed by interpretation which is reflective and subjective (Creswell, 2012). The researcher may infer, reflect and conclude upon findings with regard to the description and the thematic analysis (Creswell, 2012). The researcher may return to the cultural theme or make suggestions for future enquiry; the researcher may describe problematic aspects encountered which limit the reliability of the research (Creswell, 2012).

In an ethnographic study the researcher describes the context of the site and the culture-sharing group as the backdrop of the descriptive, thematic and interpretive analysis. The context may relate many aspects which situate the culture sharing group socially, economically and geographically (Creswell, 2012).

A key aspect of ethnographic research is the capacity of the researcher to write reflexively and to acknowledge her position in the study in a manner which is courteous and respectful of the participants and sites (Creswell, 2012).

A case study is a type of ethnography which is used to focus on a specific activity or process of a group; rather than the shared patterns of behaviour of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2012). A case study is a detailed analysis of a bounded system (Stake, 2003; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). A bounded system is an activity, or event, or process involving people which is singled out for study (Creswell, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014); thus the research has a narrow focus (Savin-Baden & Howell Major). An instrumental case study is used to focus on a theme or phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 2003). In this research, the phenomenon to be explored is the practice of participative decision-making on school-wide issues by teachers. This narrow focus on a phenomenon gives a case study the characteristic of being “particularistic” (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012, p. 154; Merriam, 2009, p. 43). The case and its context are secondary to the interest in the central phenomenon (Stake, 2003). An instrumental case study may allow for a theory to be confirmed (Savin-Baden & Howell Major), or a generalisation to be reworked (Stake, 2003). Yin (2012) suggests that it is useful for novice researchers to have a theoretical perspective to guide the selection of the case, to generate data and to analyse data. In this case, Democratic Schooling Theory guided the selection of

two collegial schools, and aspects of Decision Theory and themes from the literature review were used to generate and analyse the data. A case study of two schools is referred to as a collective case study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2003). A collective case study is used to show similarities or to show contrasting results, which have been predicted (Yin, 2012). By choosing two sites, the validity of the findings may be enhanced (Merriam, 2009; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012, Yin, 2012). For this research, two schools were purposefully selected as being very similar as types of schools, both are well-resourced, top-performing Junior Primary schools, hence the schools can be considered comparably similar. However, they differ in their institutional habit, one is a private institution and one is a public institution. Thus the external accountability pressures that they face were dissimilar, and this was only slightly evident in the internal climate of the two schools, and their participatory practices. The comparison of these two schools confirms the aspirations of researchers of collegiality, with regard to trust and accountability pressures. Comparison and comparative description focus attention on a few attributes which can be compared, which is the opposite of thick description, with a focus on the particular (Stake, 2003). A research design which envisages comparison replaces the particularity of the case with the comparison as the focus of the study (Stake, 2003). An approach to a collective case study which is based on comparison of similar results or predictably dissimilar results is using a “replication logic” rather than “sampling logic” (Yin, 2012). Sampling logic is used to investigate the prevalence or frequency of a phenomenon (which is not compatible with a case study); replication logic is used when comparison of two cases reflects a theoretical concern (Yin, 2012). The replication approach to an instrumental, collective case study is described by Yin (2012), and begins with the development of theory; this then guides the case selection, and design of data collection protocols and instruments. The report format, discussed later in this chapter under data analysis, uses a typology suitable for comparison, whereby cross-case interpretation and discussion form most of the report, and aspects of the individual cases are referred to throughout the text, as evidence (Yin, 2014).

3.5 Research Sampling

A study by a first-time researcher of participative decision-making by teachers cannot include the entire teacher population, i.e. all the teachers in South Africa, because such a study would be vast, and require enormous resources of time, manpower and funding. Therefore, a subset of the entire population needed to be chosen, and this subset is called the sample (Bosit, 2010). Educational researchers choose between two dominant sampling strategies, being probability sampling and non-probability sampling, and within these two strategies, there are various different sampling methods (Bosit, 2010, McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Probability sampling is used when a researcher intends to generalise from a large sample to a population. The researcher has the same ease of access to each participant, and each participant has the same chance of being chosen to be part of the sample (Bosit, 2010). This type of sampling is used by researchers undertaking quantitative research, for instance, when the focus of the research is to test a theory about a population (Creswell, 2012). Non-probability sampling is used when a researcher is undertaking an interpretive qualitative study (Bosit, 2010). Some members of the population (in this instance, the teacher group) will

be definitely excluded from the sample, and other members of the population will be deliberately included. The researcher chooses a particular subset of the population to comprise the sample for the study (Basit, 2010). This approach is typically used for a small-scale study such as a case study, or an ethnography, or action research (Basit, 2010). The findings of the study cannot be generalised to the wider population as the small sample is only representative of itself (Basit, 2010). There are different methods of non-probability sampling which include: convenience or opportunity sampling; purposive sampling; quota sampling; dimensional sampling; snowball sampling (Basit,2010); maximal variation sampling; extreme case sampling; typical sampling; theory or concept sampling; homogenous sampling; and critical sampling (Creswell,2012).

For a qualitative case study, the sample selection occurs at two levels, firstly the bounded system, the collective case, must be selected, and then the sample within the case must be selected (Merriam, 2009). Criteria are needed for both levels of sampling (Merriam, 2009).

The criteria to select the collective case were three fold: firstly, I wanted to gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of participative decision-making in two well-functioning schools, which achieved a high standard of academic results. A high level of academic performance does not necessarily indicate a culture of participation, but it may indicate a high level of teacher commitment and internal accountability. (However, there are many well run schools which achieve a high academic standard which are traditional, hierarchical and autocratic).

Secondly, I wanted to gain access to schools where the Foundation Phase teachers have a voice, where they are not marginalised. This researcher is a Foundation Phase teacher, and her experience in three different schools is that Foundation Phase teachers are subservient, and despite teachers being very committed, with many years of experience, they are seldom given the opportunity to venture an opinion.

Thirdly, I wanted to compare, if possible, the nature and effect of the external accountability pressure exerted from the two different school systems, public and private, upon the internal culture of participation in decision-making in the schools.

After ruminating at length during the preparation of the research proposal, comparing this school with that in my mind's eye, I purposefully approached two high performing Foundation Phase schools, one which is a public institution, and one which is a private institution. In the one school I had a friend who provided both insight into the culture of the school, and who sought permission tentatively on my behalf from the headmistress. From my friend's description I gleaned that the school was "information rich", that the phenomenon which I would like to study of participative decision-making by Foundation Phase teachers was a well-established part of the school culture (Creswell, 2012, p. 206; Merriam, 2009). In the second school, I had some idea of the school culture because my daughter attended the senior school. However, she had not attended the Foundation Phase school which is on a separate campus. I inferred (from interaction with the senior school) that the Foundation Phase school was information rich, and so I simply approached the headmistress via email,

and secured an informal consent to undertake research at the school. These two schools comprise the collective case, the bounded system, which is the sample. When sites are similar in nature, Creswell (2012) describes this as “homogenous sampling” (2012, p. 208).

The second level of sampling within the schools was a purposeful, pragmatic response to generating data via different methods in a short time frame. All the Foundation Phase teachers were asked to comprise the sample for a questionnaire; the principal in each school was selected purposefully for a key-informant semi-structured interview, because the literature suggests that participatory practices depend upon the skill and commitment of the principal; and for the focus group interviews with teachers, I asked the principal to request a group of volunteer teachers to attend the interview, I was so aware of the teachers’ heavy schedule, that I did not venture any requirements, I was simply grateful for whomever was selected or volunteered. Thus, the sampling is purposeful at the level of the case, and purposefully pragmatic at the level of the teaching population. In Chapter Two, it was suggested theoretically that participation, trust and capacity building are related; and that participation, capacity building and accountability are related. The two sites have suggested that this theory is useful and valid. As such, the collective case is an example of “theory or concept sampling” (Creswell, 2012, p.208).

Both schools returned seven questionnaires, and at both schools, the focus group comprised four teachers.

Table 1: Summary of the Sample.

School	Type of School	Participants
The Glade Foundation Phase School	Co-ed GDE school	Retired Principal: interview Acting Principal: interview Four teachers: focus group interview Five teachers: questionnaire Two HoDs: questionnaire
The Valley Foundation Phase school	All-girls faith-based IEB school	Principal: interview Five teachers: focus group interview Seven teachers: questionnaire

3. 5.1 Description of the Glade Foundation Phase School.

The Glade Foundation Phase School (not its real name) is a co-educational former Model-C school offering academic subjects and learner support. It is attended by a racially mixed group of learners. The school is situated in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The school is well resourced through historical advantage and the payment of fees. There are three classes per grade from Grade 0 to Grade 3 (two academic classes per grade and one academic support class per grade). The teacher pupil ratio is 1:28 in the academic classes and 1:12 in the learner support classes. There are 17 members of teaching staff. Learners in the school are ethnically diverse coming from European, Muslim, Hindu and various black language

African households. The local community comprises middle and working class families. The grounds and infrastructure are reasonably well maintained. 20% of learners qualify for fee exemption. Most parents can afford the fees of R2100 per month. This is a top performing GDE school, which enrolls 320-360 learners per year. The teaching staff is predominantly white and all the teachers are Naptosa teacher union members.

3.5.2 Description of the Valley Foundation Phase School.

The Valley Foundation Phase School (not its real name) is a girls-only faith-based private school offering academic subjects and inclusive education. It is attended by a racially mixed group of learners. The school is situated in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The school is well resourced through the payment of fees and a development levy. There are two classes per grade from Grade 00 to Grade 3. There are 14 classrooms, including classes for computers, art, a library and music. The teacher pupil ratio is 1:24. There are 16 members of teaching staff. Learners in the school are ethnically diverse as the religious ethos welcomes all faiths. Learners come from European, African, Muslim and Hindu households. The local community comprises upper middle class families. The grounds and infrastructure are very well maintained. Parents contribute a monthly fee of approximately R5200 per month for ten months. This is a top performing IEB school which enrolls 230 learners per annum. The teaching staff is predominantly white; none are affiliated with a union.

3. 6 Data generation methods

The purpose of qualitative data generation is to gain a detailed and complex understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). For this purpose, a variety of types of data are generated; Creswell (2012) categorises the most popular qualitative data as: observations, interviews and questionnaires, documents and audio-visual materials (2012, p.212). The data generated for this study was stored in a case study data base which separately stored the data generated from the researcher's report (Yin, 2012).

For this study, it was proposed to use a questionnaire to gather data from teaching staff; a semi-structured interview with the principals of the two schools; a non-participant observation of a staff meeting at each school; and document analysis of the minutes of staff meetings. However, the School Governing Body of the Gauteng Department of Education school expressed reservations with regard to the observation of a staff meeting and analysis of staff meeting minutes, citing privacy and confidentiality concerns. So, in consultation with the principals and teaching staff of both schools, an audio-taped focus group interview with five teachers at each school replaced the observation of a staff meeting and document analysis of minutes. Please note that the consent forms were sent out and signed by the participants of both schools to allow an observation of a staff meeting, and document analysis, and that is how they are presented in the appendix.

3.6.1 The in-depth semi-structured interview, for three school principals

The in-depth semi-structured interview is essentially a "guided conversation" (Yin, 2012, p. 110). By using open ended questions which follow a line of enquiry derived from theory (Yin, 2012), the interview allowed the principals who were selected as key informants to

express their experiences and understandings of participative decision-making as a practice in their schools. The in-depth interview provided insight into implicit understandings which cannot be observed, or which would not be revealed without very long periods of observation (Creswell, 2012).

A semi-structured interview using open-ended questions which gently probed aspects such as leadership style, interpersonal relationships, trust, responsibility, and accountability pressures, was prepared for the purpose of interviewing the principal of each school. The decision to interview the principal of each school derived from the Literature Review, which confirmed the crucial and pivotal role of the principal in establishing and sustaining a school culture of participatory decision-making (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Grant *et al*, 2010; Blase & Blase, 1999).

During the focus group interview with the teachers from the GDE school, they recommended that I interview the retired principal, who had approved the research in 2015. She retired in December 2015. I had already interviewed the acting principal, and was very pleased with the data generated, nevertheless, I did as the teachers suggested, and so for the GDE school, I interviewed both a retired principal and an acting principal. Therefore, overall, I conducted three interviews and generated data from three principals.

The interview strategy combined aspects of the “key informant interview” with the “career and life history interview” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p.381). The principals interviewed were key informants as a result of their unique status and knowledge. The principals were also probed about the school culture that they had each developed across their tenure as principal, thus the interviews had some aspect of a career and life history interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

A key concern of mine was to enthuse the interviews with an attitude of care and empathy, by gently conversing, and avoiding any suggestion of interrogation. I hoped that this established a relationship of trust (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

In this collective case study, the interview responses of each principal were triangulated with the data gathered from the teacher focus group interviews and the teacher questionnaires for each case, thereafter the responses were compared as part of the cross-case comparison.

Since the questionnaire was highly structured and focused, in approaching my interviewees, I instinctively allowed more latitude, to give the data generation process some “breathing space” and generate a different type of response. I gave the interviewees the interview protocol to peruse, and invited them to “dive-in” wherever they felt most comfortable. Hence the interviewees read the interview protocol in its entirety at commencement, and chose their own starting point. They responded spontaneously and generously, providing earnest, thoughtful, honest accounts, and during the course of the interviews, we would return to the interview protocol as a prompt, to check what we had dealt with, and what we hadn’t. (As a novice researcher, I hadn’t foreseen and internalised the requirement to present the data question by question for each case). On reading the interview transcripts I was delighted with them. However when I re-read them in the light of my supervisors strong direction to present

the data question by question, I was mortified. The interviewees had spontaneously paraphrased and conflated the questions for themselves, and some answers are embedded or threaded through others so that the precise, sequenced order of the interview protocol was lost - because I did not impose it. The data generated was rich and relevant, however I could not confer a precise question format and wording upon the data, lest I rendered it as less authentic. Therefore I analysed and presented the data structurally using the multi-dimensional construct of participative management (Somech, 2002), comparing the two sites dimension by dimension, and providing evidence from each case to support the discussion.

3.6.2 Focus group interview for several teachers

A focus group interview is used to explore and gain a better understanding of the shared perception of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). A focus group interview comprises a group of four to six participants who are either similarly like-minded about the phenomenon, or at least cooperate well with each other (Creswell, 2012). The researcher asks a few broad questions and engages responses from all the participants in the group (Creswell, 2012). Case study research may use focus groups as a technique which enhances or confirms the validity and credibility of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Focus groups are useful when the time frame for research is limited (Creswell, 2012). The data elicited can be very vibrant as a result of the interaction amongst members in the group who respond to each other's perceptions and views (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

For the focus group interview, I used the open-ended questions at the back of the questionnaire as an interview protocol, and invited the focus groups to peruse the questions and comment on an aspect most pertinent to them. So the data generated was very rich, and relevant, however, it is not ordered systematically by a sequenced list of questions. The interview with the IEB focus group of teachers became saturated before the hour was up, the teachers evinced complete satisfaction with the level of decision-making in their school, and I ended the interview early as no new data was forthcoming. The interview with the GDE focus group went over the hour, and the teachers were very thoughtful and earnest about the need for participation, and they had many insights to give.

3.6.3 The questionnaire for teacher and HODs

For quantitative research, the questionnaire is the most popular means of generating information from participants because it is economical, tests the same questions for each participant and is reliably anonymous (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). However, this research assumes a qualitative approach. Creswell (2012) includes the questionnaire within a variety of qualitative data generation types, suggesting a format of both closed ended and open ended questions. The usefulness of this type of data collection is that the closed ended questions derive data which supports theory described in the Literature Review; the open ended questions draw out reasons for the closed ended responses, and allow broad responses beyond the scope of the narrow closed ended questions (Creswell, 2012). A limitation of this type of data generation is that the researcher has many varied responses to work through, both

short and long, and furthermore, the responses may not provide the database of complex detail which is characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). To overcome this limitation, a key-informant interview with each principal and a focus group interview with teachers at each school was included in the research design.

The justification for using a questionnaire is supported by the Decision Theory described in the Theoretical Framework. Previous researchers attempting to define the dimensions of participative decision-making by teachers have developed theory based upon research utilising questionnaires. The Theoretical Framework provided the key dimensions of participative decision-making as the “content of the decision” and the “degree of participation” (Duke, 2005, p.11). Furthermore, it is typical of this theory to describe a discrepancy measure which differentiates between actual participation in decision-making and desired participation in decision-making.

The questionnaire was prepared for the generation of data from the teaching staff at the two schools which includes 46 items examining participative decision-making within seven categories of decision content. The categories of the questionnaire were derived from Ferrara (1994) cited by Leech and Fulton (2008), the Shared Educational Decisions Survey-Revised and included: planning, policy development, curriculum and instruction, student achievement, pupil personnel services, staff development and budget management (2008, p.630). The instrument used a 4 point Likert scale which described the degree of actual participation from never to always. A corresponding discrepancy measure tested the level of desired participation, using a 3 point Likert scale which ranged from too little participation to too much. The questionnaire concluded with 17 open-ended questions which were intended to draw out relationships between participation and the themes of accountability and trust which emerged in the Literature Review. The questionnaire was initially presented to peer MED students who considered it too long. However, the test for internal consistency requires “at least three questions (preferably five or more) that measure the trait” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p.198). The questionnaire was modified after the first draft of the Literature Review was completed. Thereafter, a critical teacher friend who was formerly a HoD of Foundation Phase performed the pre-test. She carefully reviewed the questionnaire, and found that by answering all the closed ended questions, she had worked through the variety of decision domains which occur in schools, and she had processed her own discrepancy level between her actual and desired decision-making. She said that this was useful as she able to answer the open ended questions accurately, with insight into her own participation, as a result of the prior processing of the closed ended questions.

Each school only returned seven questionnaires, and only two or three participants in each school gave the open-ended questions a thorough response. However, these responses were useful, because they brought a different voice to those present in the focus group interviews.

3.6.4 Reflex records

Reflex records were written up after each visit to a site, to draft a synthesis of the visit, and to reflect upon and suggest interpretations of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). A case study is a type of ethnographic research, and characteristic of this type of research is the

stance of the researcher as aware of both her role and her perspective in the research (Creswell, 2012). In writing up reflex records, the researcher identifies her viewpoint and acknowledges it as only one of many possible interpretations, and hence it is not privileged as a voice of authority (Creswell, 2012). As such, I was aware of the necessity to be respectful of the participants and their site (Creswell, 2012). Whilst writing the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter Five, I was painfully aware that I was writing recommendations about participatory practices, which are generally put in place by the principal in each school, and yet I have no experience of work as a principal, and I have no idea of how awful it must be to face external accountability pressures. As such, I am not entitled to an opinion.

3.7 Data analysis

The complexity of the task of qualitative data analysis, presentation and discussion can be attributed to the fact that a considerable amount of data needs to be conveyed in a credible and relevant manner, whilst at the same time, there is no standardised process to govern the analysis, interpretation and presentation of data (Newton Suter, 2006). Whilst McMillan & Schumacher (2014) concur that there is no definitive procedure for data analysis, nevertheless, the process of qualitative data analysis is “a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest” (2014, p.395). This systematic process is generally assumed to be inductive, whereby the researcher searches the data for meaningful segments or codes, which leads on to categories and then patterns from which themes emerge (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This inductive approach would be appropriate for an intrinsic case study, where the aim of the study would be to understand the case for the sake of its own particularities (Stake, 2003). In contrast to the methods of an intrinsic case study which results in thick description, (for which one can infer inductive coding is used), for an instrumental collective case study, which this research is, the intention of the researcher is to present the themes arising from literature and theory which are evident in the case (Stake, 2003). Hence data analysis for an instrumental case study may use “preconceived coding schemes” (Stake, 2003, p.141). The data may also be considered to be “pre-coded” because it was generated by pre-structured instruments (Stake, 2003, p.150), which in this research conferred upon the data themes of concern, from the Literature Review, such as the relationship between trust and accountability as aspects of participatory culture in school staff rooms and meetings.

For this instrumental collective case study, I did not actually code the data. Instead, I searched the data of both cases for comparable evidence of the dimensions of participative management, which are drawn from Decision Theory developed by Somech, (2002), such as the ‘the extent of participation practised by the leader’ and then I interpreted that comparable evidence using the various themes which arose in the literature review such as trust, accountability and instructional capacity. I worked iteratively between Chapter Four and Chapter Two, reading the data, reading the literature review and theoretical framework, returning to the data again. This approach (to not use codes) is supported by Savin Baden & Howell Major (2013) whom suggest that many researchers who undertake qualitative research do not use codes at all.

Stake (2003) suggests that the stance of the constructivist researcher as reflective confers upon the researcher the responsibility to ponder upon and deliberate over both the data and the contemporary theoretical concerns, and to extrude meanings which reflect the local context, i.e. “local meanings”; and thereafter “foreshadowed meanings” and the “readers’ consequential meanings” (2003, p.150). Creswell (2013), cites Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) in his approach to case study analysis and presentation, and of note for this study is Stakes (1995) premise for “direct interpretation” whereby instead of seeking multiple instances of data from which to direct a theme, the researcher “looks at a single instance and draws meaning from it... it is the process of pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways” (Creswell, 2013, p.199). In this study, each of the five interviews comprises single instances, for I do not have multiple observations of either the school principals or of the teachers. Thereafter, Creswell (2013) refers to Yin’s (2009) cross-case analysis, described hereafter, referencing a more recent text by Yin (2014).

For a collective case study, which Yin (2014) calls a multiple-case study, three typologies of reporting are commonly used. The first type of collective case report renders the individual cases separately and then proceeds to a cross-case discussion (Yin, 2014). A second frequently used typology is organised for the purpose of comparison, whereby the cross-case interpretation and discussion form most of the report, and aspects of the individual cases are referred to throughout the text, as evidence (Yin, 2014). A third type of report uses a “question-and-answer” format which tabulates the questions used to generate data, and the corresponding answers which were elicited from the individual cases (Yin, 2014, p. 185). The report format does away with the conventional descriptive narrative, however its strength lies in the ease and access by a reader for the purpose of cross-case analysis (Yin, 2014). This is the format preferred by my supervisor in recent discussion (18 August 2016), for the presentation of the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data.

The typology used for the presentation and discussion of data for this case study research report will be organised by the comparison of themes, whereby the cross-case discussion forms most of the report, consistent with the second type of report attributed to Yin (2012) above. This is consistent with the approach for an instrumental collective case study whereby the literature review provides the key themes by which to code and sort the data (Stake, 2003).

3.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Contemporary researchers have provided a variety of conceptual approaches to define the quality of qualitative research, which attempt to reach beyond the long-standing concepts of reliability and validity which are derived from quantitative research; many researchers contest that the concepts of reliability and validity are congruent with qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012; Merriam, 2006). The contemporary core concepts to define quality in qualitative research include truth value, trustworthiness, authenticity, goodness, relevance, rigour and plausibility (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012, p. 470). Savin-Baden and Howell-Major suggest that a researcher should select a core concept which is compatible with her philosophical view and research design to frame her understanding and efforts to establish the quality of her research. The concept of trustworthiness is linked to

the researchers Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited by Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012), who suggest that trustworthiness is a concept which aligns with a critical rational philosophical stance, “which holds with the position that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know in our research for ‘objectivity’.”(2012, p. 470). The concept of relevance seeks to locate the research within its context; furthermore it aligns with the constructivist philosophical view which conceives that realities are constructed locally (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). The concept of relevance may be the most appropriate core concept for this research as it supports the choice of an ethnographic case study, which is located within its context. However, the predominance of the core concept of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba) to establish quality in qualitative research is extensive, cited by Merriam (2006), Opie (2004), and Basit (2010), and cited by Crewell (2012) as a term comparable to credibility.

Scholars differ in their understanding of what quality is, and how to assess it; some see it as a production of documented evaluation intended to convince a reader, and others as a process of verification, of checking to achieve certainty (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). The standards of excellence for criteria to evaluate trustworthiness in the documentation of a qualitative research report are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability; these criteria were established by Lincoln and Guba (1995), cited by Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012); Green, Camille and Elmore (2006); Merriam (2006); Opie (2004); Basit (2010). Credibility intends that the research findings are convincing and impart a sense of the participants’ reality (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). Transferability intends that the results may be applicable in similar contexts (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). Dependability is demonstrated by a sense of reasonableness with regard to the methods used and to any changes made during the research (Green et al, 2006). Confirmability is demonstrated when the phenomenon under study, the analysis of data and the findings are logically related (Green et al, 2006). However Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) warn of the obscuring nature of theoretical criteria, and suggest that it is more important to the research and to the reader that the researcher clearly documents how the research was actually performed. Opie (2004) in his guide for first time researchers lists the actions necessary to give a clear account of the research to establish credibility: explain the data-generating procedures; present the data transparently; report data which does not fit; acknowledge biases; clearly express how claims are supported by evidence; distinguish clearly between emic and etic data; distinguish clearly between description and interpretation; use a diary to track events; use strategies such as triangulation (discussed below) to achieve quality (2004, p.72).

Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) cite Creswell (1998) as an example of a researcher who defines quality in terms of a process of verification. Creswell (2012) seeks to establish validity in qualitative research, and views this as a process of ensuring the accuracy and credibility of the findings and interpretations. Three reliable strategies used by researchers to validate qualitative research are: triangulation, member checking and auditing (Creswell, 2012, p.259). Triangulation allows data from different methods of collection to corroborate key themes and descriptions in the research. The overall accuracy of the information is enhanced by the use of different sources of information (Creswell, 2012, Yin, 2012, Stake,

2003). Both Stake (2003) and Yin (2012) consider triangulation to be the essential strategy to establish validity for case study research. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) point out that whilst triangulation is assumed to make the research credible, that it may result in selecting or tidying up of data into neat themes and disregarding data which do not fit. To guard against cleaning the data, Merriam (2009) suggests that a researcher seeks out contradictions in the data, to demonstrate integrity. Member checking involves the researcher having her findings checked for accuracy by the participants in the study. Participants check whether the descriptions, themes and findings of the report are a fair representation (Creswell, 2012). Basit (2010) views member checking as unnecessary, that it does not ensure validity, and that useful data can be lost if participants request data to be removed; likewise Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) suggest that participants may not agree with an interpretation because they have not read the literature pertaining to a study, and thus seeking their validation may undermine the findings. An external audit may be conducted by a person outside the project, who evaluates and writes a review of the research, either during or upon completion of the report (Creswell, 2012). Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012), caution that an outsider may not have the close understanding of the data and may negatively affect the findings. The strategies to ensure relevance for this research included triangulation of the data collection methods to confirm the findings; member checking by the principals of the two schools; and very careful supervision by my supervisor. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) describe an audit trail as an exhausting process which describes the whole research project, which is tricky to do well, so I attempted a simpler, clear descriptive account of the methods and procedures and changes made during the study, (Merriam, 2009) to achieve relevance. A limitation of the study is that I did not stay in the field for a long period, however, both focus group interviews showed some degree of saturation, indicating sufficient engagement in data collection (Merriam, 2009). Whilst I attempted to maintain a stance of self-reflection, and afford the descriptive writing of the study with an awareness of this stance, I did not craft a formal positionality statement in the research text, as Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) caution that they can add little, or even detract from the research, which undermines relevance.

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3.9. Ethics in research

“Ethics has to do with the application of moral principles to prevent harming others, to promote the good, to be respectful and to be fair” (Sieber, 1993, p. 14) cited in Opie (2004). Or more personally put, ethics are moral choices that direct our behaviour (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). The trustworthiness of an educational research study, is underpinned by the ethical behaviour of the researcher (Merriam, 2009). Educational research is guided by a clear code of ethical conduct; at the same time ethics in educational research has a situational aspect, whereby a researcher makes choices during the study according to her own values and sensitive awareness (Merriam, 2009).

The ethical principles which guide educational research include: “full disclosure; voluntary participation; informed consent; absence of coercion, confidentiality, and no risk or harm to participants” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 137).

Full disclosure entails being transparent with the participants of the study about the purpose and methods of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Voluntary participation means that the participants are not coerced in any way to participate in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Informed consent means that participants are aware of any risks related to the research, that they can withdraw from the study if they wish (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The principle of no harm or risk to participants intends the prevention of physical or mental distress to participants, including negative aspects such as embarrassment or strain on friendships or relationships (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). All these ethical principles are constituents of the value of respect; participants in a study are people with busy lives and many responsibilities, and they need to be treated with the utmost respect (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012).

The design of a qualitative research study has a threefold ethical requirement: that it needs to move research or theory forward, that the researcher can demonstrate sound procedures and methods; and that the researcher can demonstrate adequate knowledge of literature and methodology to undertake the work (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). Furthermore the researcher needs to present the research clearly and honestly so that it can be evaluated fairly (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012)

The ethical considerations for this research proposal were several:

Firstly, I applied for ethics clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand, and this was granted. Secondly, permission to conduct research at a Gauteng Department of Education school is required by the Gauteng Department of Education, and this has been granted. Thirdly permission in writing to conduct research at both school sites is required in writing and this has been complied with. Fourth, the ethical considerations include voluntary participation by teachers and principals based on full disclosure of the purpose of the research and informed consent by all participants, and this has been complied with in writing (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Thereafter, privacy will be ensured by maintaining that all data generation is anonymous and confidential, and that the data is appropriately stored at the University of the Witwatersrand for safe-keeping (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). In the writing of the report, I strove to write clearly and honestly, aware of the necessity to respect the participants, and yet provide illumination with credibility to the reader.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Limitations in educational research stem from an evolutionary process whereby multiple disciplines (such as sociology and anthropology and economics) have introduced a diverse array of research approaches (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The various contributing disciplines direct their research on different aspects of the educational system. As a result, research can be contradictory, and progress in educational research is often tied to advances made in research in the underlying formative disciplines (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Research studies may be designed to address the same problem, yet result in opposing findings, as a result of differences in the design, procedures and instrumentation of the studies (Newton Suter, 2006). The education system is a complex and layered interaction between

government, educational institutions, communities, and individual learners. This complexity introduces many variables for the researcher to contend with (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Moreover, the diversity of ethnic affiliations and the disparities in socio-economic contexts limits the extent to which research findings can be generalised (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Educational research is developed in relation to professional educators and requires their cooperation. Some studies require a short period of interaction with a site, and other studies may extend over long periods in many schools, requiring their ongoing collaboration (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

This research was constrained by time; that it is to be completed between February 2016 and February 2017. To gather a significant amount of data quickly and consistently for a collective case study, a questionnaire was formulated, with a concluding sequence of open-ended questions to draw out information relating to themes. It was intended that this would form the basis of the data base and that to provide complexity to the data, an observation of a staff meeting and a semi-structured interview with the two school principals would take place. However, the acting principal of the GDE school did not want an observation of a staff meeting, and she did not want to hand over staff meeting minutes as documentary evidence of participation by teachers in the study. She cited concerns by the SGB of privacy and confidentiality. So in consultation with both gatekeepers, the observation was replaced with a focus group interview with teachers. Furthermore, very few questionnaires were returned (seven for each school), and even fewer were carefully completed. Therefore, in consultation with my supervisor, the interviews became the primary data source and the questionnaire a secondary data source. A concern for this researcher was the deft handling of different data collection methods; I was extremely nervous in my first interview and only slightly less nervous with each subsequent interview. The focus group interviews were only just audible with headphones, and were unclear in patches, especially when teachers spoke together at once, or laughed when someone was speaking. Also the sparse response to my questionnaire was a concern, and I reflected that perhaps it was not interesting and varied enough in layout. Likewise, a requirement of constructivist case study research is the reflexive stance of the researcher (Stake, 2003); this was an ongoing challenge to maintain, as I have not undertaken an honours degree in education, and I am aware that I have strong opinions about the need for participation by teachers, and furthermore I have no experience of the complexity of being a principal.

3.11 Conclusion

The chapter commenced with a brief discussion of the interpretivist/constructivist research paradigm, which interprets the social construction of reality by participants. This research paradigm is appropriate to the qualitative research procedure of instrumental collective case study which focuses on a phenomenon, the practice of participative decision-making by teachers at two school sites. The purposeful research sampling addressed criteria at two levels, criteria for the selection of the cases, the two schools, and criteria for selecting the participants. The data generation methods utilise a variety of sources of evidence for the purpose of gaining a detailed understanding of a phenomenon, and the three methods presented are a questionnaire with closed ended and open ended questions, a semi-structured

interview with a key informant, and a focus group interview with teachers. The data analysis uses a format of cross-case comparison whereby the structure of the analysis derives from Somech's (2002) multi-dimensional construct of participative management. Strategies for the purpose of establishing quality, trustworthiness and relevance, such as triangulation, were discussed. The ethical principles which guide research such as voluntary participation and informed consent were discussed. The necessary permissions required to proceed with the study were listed and complied with. The limitations pertaining to educational research in general were briefly discussed, together with the concerns for this research. This chapter thus prepares the reader for the presentation of the data and discussion of themes which follows in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter proceeds from the previous chapter with the understanding that this is an instrumental collective case study to be presented in a report format appropriate to a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2014). The multi-dimensional construct of participative management (Somech, 2002) is used to structure the cross-case analysis. The themes of trust and accountability inform the interpretation. Within the chapter, a new theme arose, the ethos of continuity of instructional practice, which emerges as an institutional response to the loss of instructional capacity in the public education system. A second new theme arises, the adherence to a code of virtue, by the IEB faith-based school, in contrast to the adherence to a democratic agenda, within the secular GDE school. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the findings.

4. 2. Data presentation and discussion

The five dimensions of the construct of participative management are: the extent of participation; the domain of a decision; the structure of decision-making; the rationale of decision-making; and the participation target of decision-making (Somech, 2002).). Each of these five dimensions will serve sequentially as a structural device by which to organise the cross-case comparison. When laying out the evidence, I have not used only the most representative quotation, I have sometimes presented a chunk of conversation, to vividly impart some of the earnest, thoughtful interview conversations. The conversations were analysed and interpreted as aspects of the dimensions of participative decision-making, and thereafter, were interpreted for their embedded aspects of the themes of trust, accountability and instructional capacity.

The evidence which I will present first is drawn from the last data collected, the interview with the retired principal of the GDE school, Mrs Andrews (not her real name). This data was particularly rich and insightful, as the retired principal had been in her post from 1997 until December 2015. The suggestion to interview the retired principal emerged from the focus group interview with the GDE teachers. They knew that I had interviewed the acting principal, Mrs van Zyl (not her real name), and I was very happy with that interview, nevertheless, they felt that I should interview their retired principal.

Three principals were interviewed: a retired principal (Mrs Andrews), and an acting principal (Mrs van Zyl), from the GDE school, and a principal of the IEB school, Mrs Alfred (not her real name). All three principals were very courteous, gracious and earnest. The two working principals were both very aware of enormous pressures upon their teachers, and scheduled the research around the needs and availability of their teachers, which I respected and appreciated. The five interviews yielded over 100 typed pages of transcription, and the transcriptions were refined by repeatedly listening to unclear patches in the text, and

completed by 12 August 2016. In consultation with my supervisor on 10 August 2016, the interviews assumed the position of primary data and the questionnaires became a secondary source of data. We decided that descriptive statistics were not necessary or appropriate for so few questionnaires, especially since for the IEB school, only two of the seven questionnaires were carefully completed; five were partially completed. The questionnaires would be used to triangulate evidence generated by the interviews. The interviews of the focus teacher groups were only just audible, and it is very difficult to accurately attribute the individual voices on the teacher group voice recordings.

4.2.1 The principal as leader of leaders and the extent of participation

The first dimension of participative management which I searched the data for was evidence of the extent of participation in decision-making that the principal allowed teachers (Somech 2002). Participation extended by the principal is located upon a continuum from autocratic decision-making, information sharing, consultative decision-making, and democratic decision-making (Somech, 2002). I also looked at how the principals' leadership style had commenced and evolved; how authority and decision-making were established early on in their tenures, and how decision-making developed.

4.2.1.1 The Retired GDE Principal as leader of leaders and the extent of participation

The retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, had been at The Glade Junior Primary School (not its real name) for 22 years. She was appointed as Head of Department at the school in 1993 and she became principal in 1997. After 18 years, she retired in December 2015. (She remembered approving the research, in September 2015). She had clear views which she expressed gently, yet with conviction. As a preamble, she sketched some of the changes which occurred at the time of her appointment as principal. She said that the reason she became principal arose from the offer by the state in 1997 for teaching professionals to accept a retrenchment package and leave state employment, which the then principal at the time accepted. The retired GDE principal said that this retrenchment strategy, together with the closure of the teaching colleges, had undermined the education system, and had added to the complexity of principals' work, she had to constantly be on guard to maintain the ethos of instructional continuity in the school.

The retired GDE principal remembered that extending decision-making to her teaching staff did not come easily, but she knew instinctively straight away not to be completely authoritarian, and to allow her staff to discuss with her the decisions she had taken:

... in the beginning when I was a new Principal I think I was quite nervous, so I used to make all the decisions and then say 'do you think this is okay?'

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE school).

Whilst the retired GDE principal was keen to hear the views of her staff, she also knew that there would be times when she would make decisions alone and that her staff would simply have to trust her to lead them, and they trusted her, because she involved them.

going to make some decisions together..., but there will be times where I will be authoritarian and just make a decision because it has to be made, and ther....because I involved them (teachers) from the beginning, ... and when I became Principal I said 'look, I don't know anything about this job yet, so we're going to discover this together and I'm going to ask your advice and we're e will be times when I can't share things with you, but you have to trust me'

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE school).

The retired GDE principal also learnt across time that whilst she could include her staff to some degree in decision-making, i.e. encourage teachers to express their 'voice', that ultimate responsibility resided with herself, and that she alone was accountable:

*...but I learnt eventually that you can put all your ideas out there and everyone can have a say, but at the end, **you** have to make the decision.*

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE school).

The evidence above suggests that the GDE principal initially made all decisions herself and simply asked her staff to comment; i.e. on Somech's (2002) continuum of the extent of participation, this retired GDE principal began her principalship somewhere between autocratic decision-making and information sharing. Her reference to nervousness also indicates her position of sole accountability. Thereafter she extended participative decision-making to her teachers as a form of information sharing, and to a limited degree, as consultative decision-making. However, she clearly remained the key decision-maker, and she reserved the right to be authoritarian and make decisions without any further consultation. The fact that she noted with emphasis (after many years as principal) that whilst her staff can have some input, and feel that they are involved in decision-making, **she** has to make the decision, clearly emphasises her position of sole accountability for decision's taken by the school.

4.2.1.2 The IEB Principal as leader of leaders and the extent of participation

Now I would like to consider how the IEB principal's role as leader of leaders commenced and evolved and the extent of participation in decision-making which she practices. Just as the retired principal of the GDE School came from the ranks within the school, the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred (not her real name) of The Valley Junior Primary School (not its real name) had been the Art teacher at the school before she became the principal two and a half years ago. However, she did not proceed from a formal management position such as head of department as the retired GDE principal did, as this IEB junior primary school does not use the conventional management positions. There is herself as principal, and the teachers, a flat management structure. The IEB principal proceeded cautiously for the first six months, making minor changes, before she showed the teaching staff that some decisions were not available for deliberation or consultation, some decisions were hers alone and were

something for her teaching staff to be informed of. She experienced some resistance to her leadership from the older teachers who felt that they knew better how to lead. Mrs Alfred said:

When I started two and a half years ago I had come from teaching in this school, through leadership, which is a difficult thing to do...

... it's because they were older than me and I think that is even more difficult, the staff members that are older than you, suppose they're a couple of years, that's okay, but there were those which were substantially older and they definitely battled with the younger person coming in, 'telling them what to do', so to speak. I mean it's not my style as such...but ja. So there was quite a lot of discussion around, I didn't change much initially...

...the one senior lady, she was continuously in my office giving advice on how to lead the school. So it was quite exhausting, and depending what it was, I never put my foot down completely, but she was sixty that year and she did retire at the end of that year and it was a relief, quite a relief not to have that continual 'great advice' coming forward.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB school).

The evidence shows that the first few months of leadership were very trying for the IEB principal as she had to establish her authority in the staffroom, and her physical office space as a domain of authority. The words '*one senior lady*' convey position through experience and length of tenure. This IEB junior primary school does not have any formal management positions other than the principal, there are no HoD positions, however one can infer that some teachers become 'senior' through length of tenure, and that the senior teachers were accustomed to a considerable amount of autonomy, and were accustomed to being consulted and expressing their voice. The new IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, was initially under review by her staff, and sensed that she was the subject of much discussion. The IEB principal firmly established herself as the authority to create change in the school, after six months:

...one change we made, we now have a teacher on duty every morning from twenty past seven in the quad, and I mean that's for safety, you know, so it was something like that where it was non-negotiable, so I brought it up at a staff meeting and they started discussing it and I said "hold on a minute, this is not up for discussion, this is the way it's going to be" and they looked at me, and that was sort of six months into it and I think from then it was slightly easier...hang on a minute, I do allow discussion, but you've got to realise that sometimes you do have to make an authoritative decision: "that's the way it's going to be," usually for safety for the good of the child, you know.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School)

When I looked for evidence of the IEB principal's extent of participation in decision making, the evidence shows that the principal of the IEB school does allow her teachers to raise issues at staff meetings, but she has an unspoken code, she prefers to have any aspect of change that she has to consider raised quietly outside the staff room, so that she can think it through before discussing it with her staff. Mrs Alfred said:

...I think they are fine with when I say "look, hang on, we need to talk about this afterwards", you know, and I think they've got the sense that there are certain things we discuss at a staff meeting, certain things I might want to hear about first, so a new idea "let's have art three times a week" or whatever, okay, don't bring that up at the staff meeting because it's obviously not an option. No, not because it's not an option, don't bring it up at the staff meeting because it's a complete change. I need to hear about it first and I need to decide if I want to bring it up at the staff meetings...

Interviewer: You decide before hand about something, and then maybe filter it in your mind...?

*Yes, yes, and part of that filtering in your mind is... "okay, do I want it to be an end point or not?" or sometimes I am not so sure, you know, let's hear what they (teachers) say, I'm not sure actually where we should go on this but I'd like to have thought about it first. But if they bring up something I'll say "Okay, that's an interesting concept, I haven't thought about that before, let's go away, think about it, and we'll bring it back." You know I don't mind saying that one doesn't have to make a decision right there, or be authoritarian, **or hand it over to them** (teachers), it's like "we need to think about it, I need to think about it, and you're going to think about it as well, but it might be something really great, and I wanna get 'buy-in', and then, I don't want, because you drop the bomb, and then it...*

Interviewer: It can just disperse?

It can just disperse, and then that's the end of it. So part of that filtering is thinking about how we are going to introduce it, what are we going to do.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal IEB School)

This evidence shows that the flat management structure of just principal and teachers in this IEB junior primary school renders the IEB principal vulnerable to the weight of the collective voice of the teachers, and one can infer, the 'senior teachers'. Hence she has normalised an understanding that she is the fulcrum of change, (and not the senior teachers) and she would prefer to know about aspects which introduce change before she enters the staffroom. However, the IEB principal also realises that if she wishes to introduce change, she knows that to be effective she needs 'buy-in' from her teachers. Hence she allows discussion in the staffroom, but she does not practice democratic decision-making, probably because the senior teachers would just hijack the process, and render her powerless. Thus like the retired GDE

principal, the IEB principal extends consultative decision-making to her teachers, but unlike the retired GDE principal, she does hear each teacher's voice, not a representation. The IEB principal does not have a school management team as an interface between herself and her teachers through which to filter decision-making, hence she has normalised an unspoken filtering process, herself, through which to select, edit and respond to issues, and it is tacitly understood by the teachers in the staffroom. Like the retired GDE principal, the IEB principal reserves the right to be authoritarian, and simply make a decision when she believes it to be 'non-negotiable', or in the interest of the children. This is consistent with the school leadership literature, whereby autocratic decision-making by the principal is useful in "critical times," (i.e. high-stress periods of external accountability pressure, such as when the school is anticipating an inspection), however, continuous authoritarian leadership is not useful in the quest for long term school improvement (Harris & Chapman, 2002). Notably, it will be seen that only the retired GDE principal and the acting GDE principal suffer critically high levels of external accountability pressure, from the GDE. In contrast, the IEB principal seems to suffer internal accountability pressure or at least high levels of monitoring, from 'senior teachers' who wish to tell her how to run the school. Both kinds of accountability pressure have resulted in a preference for the practice of consultative decision-making rather than democratic decision-making.

4.2.2 The Domain of a Decision

The second dimension of participative management which I searched the data for was the domain of a decision (Somech, 2002). The concept of the domain of a decision considers the involvement by teachers in the technical domain of teaching and learning or the managerial domain which includes school wide administration (Rice & Schneider, 1994, Somech, 2002).

4.2.2.1 The Decision Domain: The Retired GDE Principal

The retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, indicated to the interviewer that she had a clear understanding of the theoretical conception of the technical and managerial domains of decision-making, and her evidence indicates that she used the two domains strategically: she shared information about the managerial domain with teachers, and she consulted with her HoDs primarily and involved teachers secondarily, in the technical domain to the extent that she felt it was useful and non-threatening to her position of sole accountability:

Okay, well we tried to involve as many people as we could, we always consulted, I always informed the staff, consulted the heads of department, sometimes the three of us made a decision, sometimes I did it on my own, usually (I) informed the governing body, I tried to work closely with the governing body so that there was a good relationship with them, and not just with me, with the staff, I wanted the governing body to value the staff and I think they did....

....if it was something like "when should we have sports day?" then we (management) would consult in the whole staff meeting, I'd say "have a look and see what suits us" and "when should we have the concert?" , those kinds

of things, because it really didn't matter, because those were decisions that they (teachers) could make; and I tried to involve them (teachers) as much as possible, you know, if we were wanting to repeat a child, I always asked for their (teachers) input, took their (children's) books to the department to show them (GDE) because sometimes we (management) had to prove our case, so I think they (teachers) felt involved in that way.

(Mrs Andrews, Retired GDE Principal)

From this evidence, it is very clear that the retired GDE principal has clear reservations on the managerial domain of decision-making as a practice, with regard to whom may make decisions. In this evidence, school events such as concerts and sports days require enormous administrative input from management, yet depend upon enormous commitment from teachers, so the retired GDE principal knew that she must involve her teachers. However, these managerial decision items are events in the life of a school which contribute to the ethos of the school and contribute to the development of the children, but which do not impact on performance measurements for which the Retired GDE Principal suffered accountability pressures from the GDE. Hence they are managerial issues that *'they (teachers) could make.'* In the technical domain, which is all aspects of teachers work, i.e. the realm of teaching and learning, the retired GDE principal knew that she must involve her teachers and she did encourage and trust suggestions from teachers in the technical domain if those suggestions could lead to innovation which enhanced academic performance:

And to trust them (teachers), you know, you have to.....say sometimes they say "We want to try this", and I say "Well I don't know if it's going to work, but go for it and see what happens..."

.... you know we can get very stale, and if new teachers come with a new idea, let's see how it works, try it...., "Can I come and have a look when you've tried it once or twice?" , they didn't mind.

I used to pop in often, just walked around..., "what are you doing?",... "That's nice writing"... they didn't mind, because I didn't come to spite.

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE school).

From this evidence, one can infer a high level of monitoring by the retired principal upon her teachers, nevertheless, combined with a very gentle, caring manner. The retired GDE principal led her teachers, but she did not "police" them, (which I appreciate, because I had experienced first- hand the "policing" of teachers by management in a GDE school in 2013, when the new CAPS curriculum was introduced, and the GDE exerted huge pressure upon principals and managers to align performance measurement with the new curriculum). This caring attitude of the retired GDE principal towards her teachers was confirmed and appreciated by the GDE school teachers in their focus group interview:

GDE Teacher 1: I think it's how you talk to people and how you treat them, ...will influence how a decision goes. If you talk kindly and politely, and

respectfully, you're more likely to have success. But if you're going to be shouting and screaming and have a very negative, attacking mode, then you're not going to have a staff that works.

GDE Teacher 1: And if you're an approachable Principal, then you feel like your door is open, and people can go in and say what they want to say, that's nice. Like the former Principal, she...

GDE Teacher 2: Oh, she was lovely...

GDE Teacher 3: Because just from my newbie perspective, I think the ethos in the school has a lot to do with her and how she approached things....

GDE Teacher 2: So she would be very worthwhile.

GDE Teacher 1: And if you had an idea, she wouldn't shout you down, she would listen and be very discrete if your idea wasn't.... you didn't feel humiliated.... You sometimes feel...for lack of a better word – stupid, and get shut down, and feel, well, “why did I even bother saying something?”, but she would definitely let you down a lot more gently and explain it better to you why we couldn't do that.

GDE Teacher 4: She wasn't there to catch you out, you know what I mean, she was there to support...

GDE Teacher 2: And I think that was an important thing, it was a very positive thing.

(Teachers' Focus Group: GDE school).

This evidence shows that the teachers appreciated that the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, was both respectful and supportive towards her staff. Furthermore, they appreciated that she was *approachable* and her *door was open* to her staff. The basis of her monitoring of teachers' classrooms was well-intentioned and aimed at maintaining and supporting both the emotional and academic well-being of the school. One can infer that a major part of this monitoring by the retired GDE principal is aimed at safe-guarding the instructional capacity in the **technical domain** of learning and teaching, which is a key function of a South African principal (Christie, 2010). This level of pro-active, yet courteous monitoring is also consistent with the retired GDE principal's focus on results, she kept her school a top performing school for 18 years, across a period of huge changes in the educational system. She said:

I was very cognisant of that fact that we should not let our standards drop and that we should do well.... I think that we did maintain it, throughout all of it.

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal GDE school).

The retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, is referring here (*throughout all of it*) to the many changes in the educational system, which she had to negotiate and align with (**managerial**

domain) to maintain the core function of the school (*we did maintain it*) as a site of excellence in teaching and learning (**technical domain**). Her success in maintaining the high standards in the technical domain seems to derive from a mixture of monitoring of her teachers, care for her teachers and trust in the voice of her teachers, whilst restricting access to the managerial domain which is the domain which had to receive, absorb and synthesise the ongoing and enormous systemic change in education. The retired GDE principal was the filter for change, she mediated, implemented and regulated change to maintain the consistency of the academic instructional capacity of the school.

The GDE teachers in the focus group spoke of the ethos of continuity of instructional practice in the technical domain, which was a support and gave the teachers structure, and yet which at times had to be questioned and revised:

GDE Teacher 2: My view is that just because something has been done for 20 years, doesn't mean it has to stay that way. So like a lot of things, "Why do we do this?"..., "because we've done it for 20 years"..., "but why can't we change it?"...You know, the children have changed, the parenting has changed, the teaching has changed, so when we make decisions, sometimes you almost have to forget what has been done in the past, and think about a new solution, and I feel like sometimes that's like "No, this is the way we do it," because that is how it has been done. But actually, there should be a time for change, to suit the needs we have now, instead of "This is the way it's always been done."

(GDE Teacher 2: Teachers Focus Group, GDE School).

The above evidence shows that the ethos of continuity in the instructional practice is something which both supports and yet constrains teachers, and since the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, has served the school for such a long time (22 years) and the acting principal, Mrs van Zyl (not her real name) for 16 years, they together probably sustained the continuity in instructional practice, as a means of maintaining the standards of teaching and learning, i.e. the instructional capacity of the school. The teachers in the GDE Focus Group clearly articulated that they contemplate and expressed the need to question instructional practices; and that they express their voices in the technical domain. The teachers in the GDE focus group also expressed that they felt an increased sense of self-worth when their opinions and contributions in discussion were valued and acted upon, and yet expressing an opinion could also have a disappointing consequence:

GDE Teacher 2: I think you feel valued and validated, that your opinion counts for something.

GDE Teacher 3: It depends on how, where your enthusiasms lie, but you do, you do feel like valued and validated after, you know, they recognised your contribution and maybe go forward with what you said, or you know, work together to make that thing happen.

GDE Teacher 2: But then you can get shut down, or dismissed, so, okay, it can go backwards.

(Teachers' Focus Group, GDE School).

The expression by the GDE teachers of a sense of increased self-worth as a result of participating in discussions in the technical domain is consistent with the literature, that when teachers are involved in decision-making, their sense of themselves' as professionals is enhanced and validated (Somech, 2010). Furthermore, the expression of questioning of the ethos of instructional continuity by the GDE teachers, and earlier evidence above that the retired GDE principal trusted her teachers to innovate, corroborates Somech's (2010) view that participation by teachers in decision-making allows management key insights into problems of teaching and learning in the classroom, and enhances the decisions made by managers. The seven GDE questionnaires generally confirmed that the GDE teachers were satisfied with their perceived level of participation in both the technical and managerial domains, however one teacher expressed a cautionary note about possible "back-stabbing" as a result of participatory practices, which possibly reiterates the evidence above (*it can go backwards*).

4.2.2.2 The Decision domain: IEB Principal

The management structure of the IEB school is very different to that of the GDE school. In the GDE school, the management structure is internal and exists below the principal, comprising two heads of department and grade representatives. In the IEB school, the management structure is external, comprising three principals, the IEB principal, from the junior primary school, a principal of the intermediate school, and a principal of the senior school. The other two principals are maybe more 'senior' because they have many years more experience. The principal of the IEB school, Mrs Alfred, takes decisions concerning the management domain to her external SMT for consultation and consensus, and within the school she encourages her teachers to express their voice when it leads to innovation and improvements in the technical domain, however, like the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, she remains responsible for the final decision:

Big decisions I take to the SMT and then we decide them as a group.

...where I'm not sure what to do, I don't want it up for discussion, it needs to be at a different level, sometimes I'll take it to the SMT and we'll discuss it there and they both have been in leadership positions longer than me, so they have more experience.

Okay, so how are decisions taken in the staff, certainly they are allowed to come, and they know I encourage innovation and creative thinking, come to me with, come to me with your ideas, and good ideas get the go ahead.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School)

The above evidence shows that the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, decides which ideas from her teachers, to accept and act upon. The teachers in the focus group of the IEB School corroborated this view, that they participated in decision-making in the technical domain, and that the management consulted them, and thereafter the principal or the external SMT of three principals made a final decision:

IEB Teacher 1:because here we make ground-level decisions, we don't decide about management decisions, you know, like, what uniforms girls wear, that's not our decision..

IEB Teacher 2: Decisions are like how to deal with a child who's shy, or...

IEB Teacher 3: We teach, our job is to teach the children, and they take care of the rest.

IEB Teacher 4: I think management could consult with those who have strengths in a particular area, and I mean they do, they really come and ask, if you're good, say, with remedial, they'll come and ask you "what do you think?"

IEB Teacher 3: Absolutely.

IEB Teacher 2: And they value your advice.

IEB Teacher 3: I think at the end of the day, it is the school principal who will decide. So, I'm sure they'll take into consideration what we've said, but at the end of the day, the management makes the decisions.

(Teachers' Focus Group, IEB school)

The evidence above from the teachers focus group in the IEB School clearly expresses that they did not participate in decision-making in the management domain (*we don't decide about management decisions*), however they did not express perceptions of decision deprivation, and they had normalised within their group that decision-making in the technical domain was the only appropriate domain in which to participate (*our job is to teach the children, and they take care of the rest*). This finding was confirmed by the data generated from six of the seven IEB questionnaires, only one questionnaire revealed a perception of decision deprivation in the managerial domain.

The IEB school teachers were not subject to monitoring in the technical domain as the GDE teachers are and they value their autonomy. The IEB principal trusted her teachers, she only intervened if an issue arose:

IEB Teacher 2: And people here know what is expected of them, and they just go ahead and do it.

IEB Teacher 1: No having to nag people, and nag people. We all just do...

IEB Teacher 3: We are left largely alone, I mean, I am...

IEB Teacher 2: Ja, but it is because we're good at what we do...

IEB Teacher 4: Yes, we are! We're a very strong staff, we're very good at what we do.

*IEB Teacher 2: ...and that's why we're not checked up on every minute, because our principal **trusts** that we're doing our job, and doing the right thing.*

IEB Teacher 3: But I think if there is an issue and it's brought up, then it is dealt with by the principal.

(Teachers' Focus Group: IEB School).

One IEB teacher expressed a sense of frustration that she felt as a result of the high level of autonomy (perhaps isolation) and lack of supportive monitoring by the Principal:

IEB Teacher 3: Sometimes I find it a little bit frustrating, I don't know, we are just left alone, so completely.

IEB Teacher 3: A new teacher would feel insecure, but I do see them going in to the newer teachers and helping.

(Teachers' Focus Group: IEB School).

The evidence above shows that the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, is confident that her experienced teachers can get on without her monitoring them and they know that she trusts them; however, her new teachers are monitored and supported. The evidence portrays a well-developed sense of collective trust, and collective responsibility (*our principal trusts that we're doing our job*).

In addition, with a fresh new principal of 2 years, the IEB teachers are not as constrained by an ethos of instructional continuity in the technical domain as the GDE teachers are. Like the GDE teachers, the teachers in the IEB focus group also provide management with insight into problems of instruction in the classroom, and they expressed that this was valued by management. They do not express any sense of a possible negative outcome from management.

Further evidence above, (*we're very good at what we do*) shows that the IEB teachers have a very high sense of self-worth, and high levels of motivation and commitment (*people know what is expected of them*). This can be attributed in part to the high level instructional capacity (very experienced teachers); an ethos of professional autonomy (the absence of monitoring by the Principal); and the caring attitude of the IEB Principal. Like the retired

GDE principal, the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, is perceived as approachable. One of the teacher's in the IEB focus group described her previous experience of an authoritarian headmistress at a GDE school, in comparison to her current headmistress, the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, who administers with the expression of compassion:

IEB Teacher 3: I came from a government school where the headmistress was the ruler of that school. And you watched out, ...you did not step on her toes or tell her... and then I came here, and you just come into the principal's office and have a chat.

IEB Teacher 4: Yes, it's lovely.

IEB Teacher 3: Compassion, completely different.

(Teacher's Focus Group, IEB School)

In further evidence to come, it will be seen that a significant contributing factor to the high levels of teacher commitment evident above is the high frequency of participation in decision-making, which happens weekly in the IEB school.

In both schools, the evidence shows that both the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, and the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, restrict teacher access to decision-making in the managerial domain and encourage their teachers' voice in the technical domain, but reserve the right to the final decision. Both principals make some managerial decisions themselves, and some are made with their respective SMT. (The voice of the IEB principal's SMT, which is external and more 'senior' to her, must carry enormous weight and influence her decision-making). This evidence is consistent with the literature that principals involve teachers in decision-making when it relates to the technical aspects of their work, rather than managerial aspects of the school (Somech, 2002). Furthermore, both principals value participative decision-making by teachers when it leads to insight into and innovations in the technical domain (Somech, 2010). However, the GDE teachers are constrained and supported by an ethos of instructional continuity in the technical domain which is a means of maintaining the instructional capacity in an environment of change, and furthermore the GDE teachers express a sense of "shutting down" of their voices in the technical domain which confirms the literature that teachers experience decision deprivation in environments of high decisional control by management (Rice & Schneider, 1994). Both cases confirmed the literature that when teachers offer insights and suggest innovations in the technical domain which are acted upon by management, this can enhance teachers' sense of self-esteem and enhances their perceptions of themselves as professionals (Somech, 2010).

4.2.3 The structure of decision-making

The third dimension of participative management by which I will structure the findings was the dimension of the 'structure' of decision-making as defined by Somech (2002). This

dimension examines the extent of formal structures, and relates this to the extent of involvement in decision-making by teachers; rather than merely informal structures, or “giving advice” (Somech, 2002).

For this research, when setting the questions to generate data, I omitted to include any questions to probe the teachers’ experiences of decision-making at the level of the School Governing Body, I was focused on participatory practices essentially within the school staffroom, between the Principal and her teaching staff. Therefore I cannot clearly describe or analyse participative decision-making by teachers within the realm of the School Governing Body. However, decision-making at the level of the SGB was referred to, and one of the teachers in the GDE Teachers’ Focus Group did provide insight into her experience of participation in the School Governing Body, and I have included this evidence where I felt it appropriate.

4.2.3.1 The Structure of Decision-making: GDE School

The retired GDE Principal’s practice of decision-making appears to adhere to the bureaucratic hierarchy of principal, deputy and heads of department which typically comprises the decision-making team of a GDE school, albeit without a deputy. (The HoD of Curriculum was actually the deputy principal according to the GDE posts, however, within the school, she was positioned as the senior HoD of Curriculum). The retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, consulted her heads of department and SMT in her office to make a decision, and she informed her teachers of the decision in the staffroom, which is typical of the structure and practice of GDE school bureaucratic decision-making. However, on closer inspection, there is evidence that she did have a strategically different, and more democratic approach. The retired GDE principal put in place a broader school management team than most schools, (comprising six people) which is atypical, especially for a small school. Each grade has a grade representative on the SMT, and the teachers from the various grades choose their representative for the SMT. The retired principal had two heads of department, one HoD was in charge of the curriculum, and the other HoD was in charge of the learner support section of the school. Most primary schools have one HoD, who oversees the whole of the Foundation Phase, and one HoD who oversees the Intersen Phase, (together with a deputy and a principal), and they supervise different technical domains, being Junior Primary, and Senior Primary. This type of arrangement is referred to by Elmore (2000) as “loose-coupling”, whereby teachers operate autonomously, without collaboration and is synonymous with a weak instructional core. In this school, both HoDs are in the same technical domain, Junior Primary, and whilst their functions do not overlap, the HoDs have to collaborate with each other. When a decision such as whether a child needs to be retained has to be made, the HoD of Curriculum and the HoD of Learner Support, together with the child’s teacher, would have to discuss the child and decide together whether to retain the child. The HoDs and the teacher would share collective responsibility for the child. Mrs Andrews said:

I had two HoDs and we split it, so that one was in charge of the curriculum, which was Jane (not her real name), she was superb with curriculum knowledge and the other one was in charge of our Learner Support site, and she’s good with that...

...and I didn't want them to sort of feel they were stepping on each other's turf or... so we made a clear split.

.... they have to collaborate on certain things, obviously if a child is going to repeat then Jane looked at how he performed in the classroom and Jill (not her real name) looked at all his emotional and social problems and that sort of thing. They would come to a decision between the two of them with the teacher about whether he was going to repeat or not. And our SMT works slightly differently from everybody else's 'cause we had a representative from each grade on the SMT and the teachers choose their SMT, so it wasn't just Jane and Jill and me, it's a person from each grade...

Quite a big team for a small school... but then everybody felt they had their stuff, because if the Grade 0's had issues they would raise them through their rep, and we would discuss with the SMT, you know, whatever the problem was...

...they would say...

'What can we do for the Grade 0's in aftercare while the rest are doing their homework?' You know... 'Can we employ somebody extra just for an hour or can it become somebody's extra mural?'.. or... 'How are we going to deal with it?'... You know, they raise that through their rep for instance. So we found it works quite well 'cause each grade would have something... everybody has the opportunity of being represented on the SMT, so we found that works quite well.

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal GDE school)

This kind of decision-making is not heuristic of a romanticised, overt, all-inclusive participative decision-making model as described in much of the literature, whereby teachers, led by a charismatic headmistress, in lively discussions in the staff room, with buy in or consensus from all stakeholders, make well formulated decisions which fires up the instructional capacity of the school. Nevertheless, it is a democratically derived decision-making model based on Grade representation, curriculum expertise and learner support expertise, which extends and flattens the typical hierarchical GDE model of the SMT which is generally confined to formal management positions. Extending and flattening the school management structure is associated in the literature with the movement to democratise schools (Somech, 2002). This model does overcome to some extent the teacher isolation inherent in the loose-coupling arrangement which is evident in many primary schools. The retired principal, Mrs Andrews, clearly valued input from her staff via democratic representation from a teacher representative in each Grade, and she valued collaboration in the technical domain between her HoD's and her teachers. However, often, she did not actually hear an individual teacher's voice, she heard a representation (*they raise that through their rep*).

The structure of decision-making was more explicitly described by the acting principal of the GDE school, Mrs van Zyl (not her real name) who had held the position of Head of Department at the school for over 15 years, until the previous principal retired.

All staff meetings and SMT meetings and workshops at the school happen on alternate Monday afternoons, all the other afternoons are allocated to some sort of extra-mural activity. So staff meetings sometimes only happen once or twice monthly, however they are a very effective multipurpose forum. The staff meetings include the discussion by the School Based Support Team (SBST) and also include discussion by the School Assessment Team (SAT) and the School Wellness Team. This is very different to most primary schools. In schools with both a junior and a senior primary, the whole staff meeting is generally for discussion of items pertaining to the managerial domain, and thereafter phase meetings, which separate the junior and senior primary teachers, are used to discuss all technical aspects pertaining to learning and teaching. In this junior primary school, the staff meeting incorporates both the managerial and the technical domains, which one can infer, allows all the teachers to interact together at a broader level than in conventional primary schools, which can only contribute to and strengthen the instructional capacity and internal accountability of the school. Mrs van Zyl said:

So um, doing your prep and recording your marks, and... all of that comes up in the staff meetings...

We're discussing all that work, the management issues and all of it, because it's only one phase, you know, because if it's a full primary school the principal can't waste the time of the intermediate and senior primary by talking to foundation phase people and the other way round, so with us at this school, every meeting is a phase, it is the report meeting, it is, um, what...

Whatever comes. We deal with it, ja... and because our school is so small, and we're supposed to have SBST and SAT, SMT and all these things....

....we have the SBST meeting and those are the kids that have learner needs and how are we going to support them, and we discuss those children. And then we have the SAT meeting, which is the School Assessment Team and there we discuss "Are you on par with your curriculum? Have you assessed all your tasks? Have you recorded them all?" and, you know, things like that, so ja...all these things happen, sometimes in the same meeting.

We deal with lots, we deal with extra murals, we deal with co-curricular, are we having a concert this year, or are we not having a concert?

....And everybody will offer to do this, you don't have to force people, or motivate them, or manipulate them to do something, they'll offer... "oh, I can do that," or "I know somebody who can do that", ...you know....so ja, it's very rich. And it exposes everybody to every sphere of school life, so it's not just you in your class.

(Mrs van Zyl, Acting Principal, GDE School).

The evidence shows that the GDE teachers are exposed to participation across a wide range of concerns at the multi-purpose staff meetings and correspondingly (and confirming the literature), that their commitment level to engage in school activities is very high (Somech, 2010). The acting principal of the GDE School, Mrs van Zyl, also clearly described how the decision-making process worked. Teachers raised their issues with their reps, who took them to an SMT meeting where they were debated, then SMT minutes would be distributed to the staff for their review, then a staff meeting would be held, where decisions made at the SMT meeting would be presented to the teaching staff.

...Normally, we first have the SMT meeting, so they give me their concerns, like in Grade 3 “what are your concerns?” then they will say, then Grade 2 will give their concerns, so then we set a staff meeting, then they take some of the points that come up at SMT and the decisions we have made in SMT and then we now bring it to the staff.

(Mrs van Zyl, Acting Principal, GDE school).

So teachers who are not on the SMT at the GDE school have the ability to raise issues for discussion, but authority to make decisions resides with the SMT. The teachers at the GDE School have a “voice”, they are heard, but their impact on decision-making is moderated by the SMT.

Evidence from the teachers’ focus group interview at the GDE school showed that despite the wide range of participation, there was a concern that there was not adequate time for discussion at the staff meetings, and that only a few people spoke up or were involved, and furthermore that sometimes it was not worthwhile to bring up an issue, that it was more prudent to remain silent:

GDE Teacher 3: But as far as staff meetings go, I don’t think there is enough time for people to... like there is a general structure of a staff meeting, its normally the principal and then Jill (not her real name), who has to talk about Learner Support, but there’s no... but I feel that everyone wants to kind of get out of here within the hour, which is understandable. And there’s no time ... people... there will always be the same people kind of, put their input in as the staff meeting is going along, and then you’ll get some people who won’t say anything, because they’re either too shy or to say something in front of everyone. But I don’t think there’s enough discussion involving everybody in a staff meeting.

GDE Teacher 3: Normally the same few are outspoken about things, and there’s not really time at the end of the staff meeting to bring up any concerns you might have. Everyone just wants to get going. So maybe more, I mean, like I said, we don’t want so many meetings, but...

GDE Teacher 1: People come from different viewpoints, and you actually know what their viewpoints are before, and you know you're going to have troubled waters by saying something.

GDE Teacher 3: ...or even suggesting...

GDE Teacher 1: Ja, so you just keep quiet...

GDE Teacher 2: You keep quiet because you know it's going to cause grief...so you steer clear.

(Teachers' Focus Group, GDE school).

The evidence suggests that in staff meetings the extent of participation in the GDE School is limited to a few teachers, who are confident to speak, and that the frequency of decision-making is also insufficient, the scheduled meetings do not allow enough time for the discussion of teachers concerns. The evidence above shows some degree of pragmatic muzzling of their own voices by teachers whom wish to avoid conflict with or disapproval by management. Therefore one can infer that teachers express themselves in a delegated voice, rather than a dialogical voice. The GDE teacher's focus group also expressed their reservations about their capacity to influence decision-making at the level of the SMT and they expressed some level of decision deprivation:

GDE Teacher 2: But within the school, I think there can be more decision-making, so the SMT can discuss things and it's filtered down, and there is discussion where people can say "I disagree."

GDE Teacher 4: But sometimes what is said in the meeting can be changed.

GDE Teacher 2: And certain things are discussed, and bring about change.

GDE Teacher 3: But do you think what's discussed in the SMT is really given to others to argue?

GDE Teacher 1: No, I don't think so.

GDE Teacher 3: I think it's decided and then passed down. But within a grade you could argue and say "I don't want to do this anymore".

GDE Teacher 1: And then you can't even do that. But you can raise that you do things.

(Teachers' Focus Group, GDE School)

This evidence shows that even at the Grade level meeting, teachers still have to be careful as to which concerns, within the technical domain, that they express.

The teachers' focus group clearly expressed that the Grade meetings were less formal, and that is where teachers raised issues, with their Grade Leaders. These issues were

then raised formally at the SMT meeting, and then if an issue required a significant amount of funding, it was taken to the School Governing Body to make a decision. If the School Governing Body agreed with a request, but could not afford the item within the budget immediately, the issue would be prioritised as an item of expenditure for the following year. The focus group teachers at the GDE School also expressed that decisions could be taken which they were not happy with, where their collective voices were contradicted and that decisions were imposed upon them that they were unhappy with:

GDE Teacher 4: Ja, in terms of innovation, I would like bring up technological advance and introducing white boards, smart boards, that kind of thing, that would not, you can't just address that in your grade forum.

GDE Teacher 2: That's a SMT thing.

GDE Teacher 4: ...it comes up at the SMT, "can we afford it?" ...to the governing body, we can forward it there (SGB) as well...

GDE Teacher 3: A lot of decisions are made at SGB level, looking at the budget, and what the priorities are, so, it might not necessarily be what the teachers want.

GDE Teacher 4: It could just be that next year might well be that, it be suitable for white boards to come in. But it depends on the budget at the time.

GDE Teacher 2: So there are systems in place...

GDE Teacher 4: And we don't necessarily agree with the decision...

GDE Teacher 3: If you like it, it's fine, but if you disagree, then you feel very unsettled. That can be a problem, because it can rub and irritate...

(Teacher's Focus Group, GDE School).

This evidence clearly shows the sense of dismay teachers experience when a decision is taken by the SMT or SGB which did not align with the expressed needs and motivations of the teachers. The evidence shows that the SGB is the forum for decision-making when a change incurs significant expenditure, and one can infer that the school budget priorities are voiced by the SMT (probably the principal) and then negotiated and decided upon by the SGB.

One of the teachers in the GDE Teachers' Focus Group expressed that she experienced significant decision deprivation in the technical domain, and that to

overcome this, she had motivated and worked to be a representative on both the SMT and SGB. As a consequence of participating in decision-making at the SMT and SGB level, her perspective on decision-making had broadened and she was more appreciative of the need to consider the whole school community and their perspective, and appreciated decisions taken by the SGB which might not concur with her individual perspective. She said:

GDE Teacher 4: But before I used to get very frustrated, because I used to come up, and say “We need to do this in my class” or “I need this for my class” or “can we do this?” and it was always like “Well, I’ll take it to the SMT” or “I’ll take it to the SGB”, and I kind of just, I just had it in mind that that person will have the final say, and now that I’m actually on the SGB and SMT and all that, I kind of have more appreciation for the way that the school actually works, because it can’t just be a decision and what’s right for me, I might think it’s right for me and the school, but when you discuss this with the whole governing body, I’ve realised that there’s actually different things that I haven’t maybe thought of...or even aware of...

...so I think I have more appreciation for the way decisions are made, just being on the committee, I still do get a bit frustrated when we try to fight for what teachers want and...well, not that we fight, like bring it up and try convince the governing body that’s what teachers need or want. You try not to take it personally, so I appreciate that more now that I’ve seen how things work. It’s not just one person that makes all the decisions, it’s a team of people.

(GDE Teacher 4, Teacher’s Focus Group, GDE School)

The above evidence clearly shows that teachers have to “fight” or motivate to achieve change. The teacher concerned accessed the structure of participative decision-making which occurs at successive levels in the school, and she witnessed and appreciated that democratic processes for decision-making are followed throughout the school. The greater body of the teacher group and their collective voice is heard at the lowest level, thereafter they are represented, but they are not actually collectively present, in the fora where major decisions are made. For the teacher suffering extreme decision deprivation, only by accessing both the major decision-making structures, the SMT and the SGB, was her sense of decision deprivation appeased.

In spite of the expression of some restriction of their voices at times, and some sense of decision deprivation arising from the insufficient frequency of meetings, the GDE teachers expressed a very high sense of collective responsibility and commitment to their work:

*GDE Teacher 2: I think that each of the teachers employed are really **trustworthy**, they’re hard-working, they seem to be ‘those’ kind of people that have been employed, honestly, I personally can’t see any teacher that’s been employed and isn’t pulling her weight.*

GDE Teacher 3: We're just a different type of people, I think, we're very conscientious, and we will go the extra mile, and I don't know if that's trained or taught.

(Teachers' Focus Group, GDE School)

The evidence above suggests the expression of a high level of commitment and collective trust which correlates with a satisfactory or high level of participation (Adams, 2013), so one has to infer, that although the teachers express some aspect of decision deprivation, that they are sufficiently involved in participatory practices to experience validation as professionals (Somech, 2010). High levels of trust indicate a “cohesive instructional core” (Adams, 2013). This cohesive instructional core was evident in earlier discussion as the ethos of continuity in the instructional practice, in the GDE school, which both supported and constrained teachers, yet functioned as a safety net to safeguard the technical domain from erosion as newly trained teachers came in with lowered instructional capacity.

In the GDE school the retired principal, Mrs Andrews, has flattened and extended the SMT to include grade representation, and democratic participatory practices are occurring at successive levels within the school. Teachers concerns are gathered in Grade meetings, taken to and discussed in SMT meetings, (and possibly SGB meetings) and then decisions made are fed back to teachers as information in the multi-purpose staff-meeting. The retired principal, Mrs Andrews, and the acting principal, Mrs van Zyl, believed the decision-making structure was satisfactory. The high level of teacher commitment evident correlates with high levels of involvement by teachers in decision-making, and validation as professionals. However, the GDE teachers express that the frequency and span of the staff meetings is inadequate to allow inclusive discussion; that participation is limited to a few voices, and furthermore, the GDE teachers sometimes experience pragmatic muzzling of their voices in staff meetings and Grade meetings to avoid conflict.

However, if I reflect upon the process of decision-making in this GDE junior primary school, in relation to my own experiences of two GDE schools and now an IEB school, the degree of transparency and access to decision-making occurring within this school is remarkable, and democratic. I have never read the minutes of an SMT meeting, nor have I ever been asked what issues I would like raised at an SMT meeting. I have never been in a school system which included regular, formalised feedback from SMT meetings. This lack of transparency; restriction upon inputs into the SMT; and absence of feedback from the SMT seems to be a norm in schools experienced by Johannesburg teachers. At all three schools that I have worked in, the SMT was not extended democratically to include Grade representation by teachers, it was confined to the principal, the deputy principal, the Intersen and Foundation Phase HoDs, or “management”. Furthermore, in one of the schools in which I taught, teachers were instructed/ intimidated to vote only the management team onto the SGB, there were no teacher representatives on the SGB, and no practice of democratic voting.

4.2.3.2 The Structure of decision-making, IEB School

The IEB School has a staff meeting *once a week*, which is a multi-purpose forum, similar to the GDE school staff meeting (which is held once or twice a month). The school management team of the IEB school, comprising the three principals, also meets once a week, which is also more often than the GDE school, where SMT meetings alternated with staff meetings and workshops in a month. The external SMT of three principals reports to, and refers major strategic decisions to The Board of Governors. The IEB Principal, Mrs Alfred, referred to The Board of Governors as her boss, they employ her.

The teachers in the IEB focus group described that staff meetings are collaborative, and inclusive, everybody participates:

IEB Teacher 3: We have meetings once a week, and that is a forum where it is very open, and we discuss lots that's happening on, you know, in that week, and decisions that have to be made, and it's very collaborative, we all have a turn to discuss what works in the past, that happens, and how we can improve on certain areas, like for example, a sports day or concert or you know, anything like that...

IEB Teacher 2: At the end of the meeting, we're each given a chance to bring up anything additional, you know, within a topic, everyone's given a chance to...

IEB Teacher 1: But I do feel that the principal has the final say. You know she is summing things up... "I think we should go this way", "let's do that."

IEB Teacher 2: But everyone's given a chance to air their views.

(Teachers' Focus Group, IEB School)

The teachers in the IEB focus group express satisfaction with the frequency of decision-making, probably because it is very frequent, i.e. once a week, and the flat management structure of principal and teachers means that decisions are taken quickly. They express slightly less satisfaction with extent of decision-making, that consistently the principal makes the final decision. They also express satisfaction with the expression of all their voices; that each person participates, unlike the GDE School where it is always the same people who speak up. However, the principal of the IEB School is sensitive, and she realises that not all her teachers express what they are actually feeling at a staff meeting, so she extends participation through emails, which allows individuals to contribute what they actually feel, discreetly. (Also, we saw evidence earlier that the IEB principal has normalised a culture whereby if something involves change, she needs to know beforehand). Furthermore, there is some evidence of withholding of voice, but perhaps not nearly as onerous as experienced by the teachers at the GDE School, shown in the evidence below (*they don't want to...rock the boat*). The flat management structure which allows for decisions to be made quickly in the open forum, also allows the senior teachers to resist a new idea. Therefore, the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, prefers a deferred, introspective and discrete decision-making process of

introducing an idea at a staff meeting, allowing discussion, deferring decision-making to allow teachers to reflect, engage in discrete, consultative discussion, then engaging collectively in further discussion, and thereby cultivating “buy-in” from her senior teachers. Mrs Alfred said:

One can start with mentioning something I've been thinking about, or you feel about, or whatever...have a little bit of a discussion about it, let everyone go away and think about it, we are not going to make a decision yet, lets come back to it and carry on, and I can also say sometimes "Send me your emails with your thoughts," because some people don't want to say what they thought in the staff meeting, because they don't want to...

...to rock the boat, yes, so they send me emails, then we'll often bring it back to the table and I'll say "These are the sort of emails I've been getting, this is where we are going", and maybe the third time, "Okay, this is where we're headed," but by then often you've got buy-in from everybody because you have explained why you are going where you are going.

...you seldom get buy-in from a hundred percent, I mean they may not say to me, but I'm sure they are not all on board, but if you have got sort of eighty percent on board, that's good enough, you know, and the others will, over time, they will forget we were doing something one way and now we've done it another way, and that's the way, it just becomes the way.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School).

These findings suggest that in this IEB junior primary school, the ethos of instructional continuity in the technical domain is held by the senior teachers, and it is the new principal of two years who cultivates innovation, and who has to motivate the senior teachers, whom have served the school for many years, to accept change. This contrasts with the GDE school whereby the ethos of continuity of instruction was held by the retired principal and the acting principal, whom had been at the school for many years, and where new or younger teachers brought fresh ideas and had to motivate the management for innovation in the technical domain. From the IEB principal's evidence (*some people don't want to say what they thought in a staff meeting*), one can infer that the IEB teachers express themselves in a delegated voice, rather than a dialogical voice, which is similar to the GDE teachers expression of voice.

The flat management structure of principal and teachers is something which the teachers of the IEB school appreciate, as it allows access to decision-making, and avoids the protracted decision-making process of a more bureaucratic structure, as evident in the GDE school. The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, cited one of her teacher's comments that were written in the context of a performance appraisal which included, significantly, an appraisal of the IEB principal's performance, as perceived by her teachers:

...let me read you what this one teacher wrote in her appraisal, ...so she very kindly gave me all fours. But she says here, and she comes from a corporate background which is quite interesting, ..., 'the way the current management structure is implemented works well, the flat structure eliminates bureaucracy and politics, the team work well together as a unit, decisions can be made immediately without having to go up a chain of command.' And that's why she said to me: 'leave it as it is, don't... (change it)...because, you know, I said to her, 'I really need an HoD' and she said 'no, it is nice that it's just us and yourself.' Maybe it would be a problem if you had an authoritarian principal, and nobody could do anything, you know. But she's always said to me 'it's so nice that decisions can get made so quickly'. Big decisions I take to the SMT and then we decide them as a group.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School)

This evidence is intriguing to reflect upon, because it reveals a progressive, bottom-up appraisal system, by teachers, from within, or below, the principal, looking upwards at her. In contrast to this, I have only experienced top-down appraisals such as the IQMS in the GDE system, and an even more excruciating appraisal system in the authoritarian IEB school in which I recently worked. The progressive staff appraisal system and flat management structure emanates from a clearly articulated ethos of values which the school as a religious institution assimilates and adheres to as a member of a world-wide body of religious schools. The IEB principal mentioned to me that The Board of Governors were particularly committed to the flat management structure. The evidence substantiates earlier insights that the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, is subject to ongoing monitoring by her teachers, whereas in the GDE school, it is the teachers who were monitored by the retired principal, Mrs Andrews.

The evidence further clarifies that decisions about significant changes (*big decisions*) are made in another forum, the external SMT of three principals. In this regard, there is some similarity with the GDE school, that significant decisions are made in a forum separate from the collective voice of teachers in the staffroom. However, there are notable aspects of dissimilarity between the two schools with regard to participatory practices as the level of decision-making rises. The GDE model of decision making as practiced by the junior primary school in this study, allows grade representation by teachers at the level of the SMT, (which is atypical), and both teacher and parent representation to inform decision-making, at the level of the SGB, which is legislated. The school achieves democratic participation by the school community in decision-making at successive levels, as confirmed by the evidence. In the IEB school, the external SMT of three principals, which is the forum where significant decisions are made, does not include either teacher or parent representation. Thereafter, strategic decisions such as the appointment of a new principal for the senior school, are made by the Board of Governors. The internal decision-making process in the staffroom, without the interface of a layer of management, appears progressive, but the yield is consultative decision-making rather than democratic decision-making, and thereafter, in the forum where significant decisions are made the external SMT, there is no participation, unless you are a principal. The extended school community of teachers and parents of the IEB junior primary

school does not participate in decision-making at all. The frequency of decision-making in the IEB school is notable, the principal of the junior primary school meets formally with her teachers every week, and with the external SMT every week, and informally, even sooner. So decision-making is effected quickly, and one can infer that to include parents, (for whom meeting weekly would probably not be possible), would slow down the decision-making process substantially. The frequency of decision-making has been prioritised over a slower, more cumbersome, but inclusive democratic process, and the teachers positively associate the speed of decision-making as liberation from politics and bureaucracy. However, the decision-making in the IEB school allows participation by teachers, but it is not democratic; the wider school community is not involved. However, in the IEB school, all decision-making is referred to the divine, for guidance, contemplation and resolution, so a wider aspect of parental decision-making is present or rather, omnipresent, but not overtly apparent, in bodily form, as the parents of children in the GDE school are.

The evidence above shows that the principal of the IEB School, Mrs Alfred, would like to have an HoD to assist her as her responsibilities are extensive, but The Board of Governors is dedicated to the flat management structure. She said:

Ja, it's a lot of work for me because I'm HOD and estate manager and Principal.

They are adamant about having a flat structure at this school and it has its pros.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School)

There is evidence that the teachers of the IEB focus group felt the same, that it would be useful and supportive to have either a deputy or an HOD , because the IEB Principal was often unavailable for informal meetings, when teachers needed her, for instance, to mediate with a parent:

IEB Teacher 3: She (the Principal) is very stretched, very difficult to get hold of...

IEB Teacher 4: You've got to make an appointment, she's very busy...

IEB Teacher 2: I get frustrated...

IEB Teacher 1: Ja, 'cause that's the only thing that is suffocating...

IEB Teacher 3: Because when she (the Principal) is out, that person has a role.

IEB Teacher 2: Would you call her the deputy?

IEB Teacher 1: HOD

Interviewer: She (Mrs Alfred) said she needs an HOD.

IEB Teacher 2: I agree.

IEB Teacher 4: I agree with that. I would be backing that up.

IEB Teacher 3: And if the Principal is out at a meeting, you could lean on the HoD.

(Teacher's Focus Group, IEB School).

The evidence shows that in spite of the ease of participation by teachers with the principal, which they value, allowed by the flat management structure, that the IEB teacher's feel the need for an additional manager, to provide support, especially when the headmistress is not in her office.

At both schools, the level of teacher participation in decision-making in the technical domain was significant, teachers were very committed, there were high levels of collective trust, and both schools are characterised by a corollary of collective trust, i.e. an extensive and cohesive instructional core (Adams, 2013). However, in the GDE school, decision-making was slow and cumbersome, but inclusive and democratic. In the IEB school, the decision-making is speedy, and discreetly and serenely autocratic, key decisions being made without representation by parents or teachers by an external SMT of three principals, and thereafter by a Board of Governors. However, the teachers, (and one can infer, the parents), trust in the constant referral to and trust in the divine, by the SMT and The Board, to guide decision-making. When I asked tentatively whether they had any suggestive input in the choice of a new headmistress for the senior school, or the strategic direction of the school, the IEB teachers expressed that such issues were not their domain, and that they trusted the SMT and The Board to make those decisions:

IEB Teacher 2: No, we teach, our job is to teach the children, and they take care of the rest.

IEB Teacher 4: Ja, we don't want to know about unnecessary things.

Interviewer: because it takes up your time?

IEB Teacher 2: Absolutely.

IEB Teacher 1: That responsibility, and once again, we trust them, because of the school that we are.

IEB Teacher 2: And so far, it's been fine...

(Teachers' Focus Group, IEB School)

This evidence was corroborated by six of the seven questionnaires returned by the IEB School, which consistently indicated that there was no participation by teachers in school-wide strategic decision-making, and yet there was no expression of decision deprivation. Furthermore, two of the teachers crossed out items such as participation in the selection of a senior manager or the principal, and wrote that such items were non-applicable. So the IEB teachers had normalised that they only make decisions in the technical domain, and they expressed satisfaction with this. However, one senior teacher, whom had worked carefully and earnestly through the questionnaire, did indicate a sense of deep decision deprivation with regard to items such as the selection of senior managers, such as an HoD, and the selection of a principal.

4.2.4 Rationale of decision-making

The fourth dimension of participative management which I will use to structure the cross-case comparison, was the dimension of ‘rationale of decision-making’ which relates a principal’s theoretical or philosophical basis for participation (Somech, 2002). This scholar distinguishes between a humanistic/democratic rationale which motivates that teachers have the right to participate; or as a pragmatic/human relations rationale which anticipates that participation is a means to promote improved school outcomes (Somech, 2002).

4.2.4.1 Rationale of decision-making: GDE School

I do not have explicit supporting evidence to show the Retired GDE Principal’s rationale for decision-making, however I can infer an aspect of the humanistic/democratic rationale for decision-making in the GDE school by the retired principal, Mrs Andrews:

I think, that’s what I tried to do... was engender an ethos that “this is our school”, I never tried to say “this is my school”. I tried to always say “this is our school and we must try and do the best we can”. I always use that sort of language, I tried to never say “I think” or whatever. I mean, I would put my point across, but I’d try not to steamroller them, I always gave them the chance to talk, and if I didn’t agree, I said that.

...I try to involve them (teachers) as much as possible. I very much had the philosophy that this was our school, and that whatever we did we did for all of us, so if it was a major decision, then they had to be involved in it...

(Retired Principal GDE school).

There is a clear sense of unity in action inherent in the Retired Principal’s words, (*whatever we did we did for all of us*) which is evocative of an inclusive democratic philosophy, and also a clear sense that *all* her teachers need to be involved in the major decisions in the school. (It is also very clear that the retired GDE principal considered that teachers do not need to be involved in minor decisions).

The retired principal, Mrs Andrews, and the acting principal, Mrs van Zyl, and the teachers’ focus group of GDE school spoke of a completely different kind of rationale to decision-making, the ‘mandatory’ external directives that the school received from the GDE, which

were completely autocratic, and which the retired headmistress tried to mediate as humanely as possible, to maintain the morale of her staff, whilst at the same time aligning the school with the performance standards. Mrs Andrews said:

Well sometimes I felt that what they wanted was unbelievably...

Interviewer: Unrealistic?

Unrealistic yes, and too much required of teachers, and so I very much tried to interpret things in a way that wouldn't cause too much stress or would be what they wanted but wouldn't place too much pressure on the teachers. I was very aware of the fact that many of them had children, had homes, they had lives to lead and that sometimes it wasn't always necessary to do it exactly the way the department wanted it done, you could find a way around it. I was very insistent that we meet deadlines and that we were always ready and prepared for whatever they wanted us to do, but I didn't feel that it was always necessary to pass on all the nit bits of information and drive them mad the way the department drives me mad, because I found the department very disorganised...you know, you'd get memos and you'd have to be in three places at once because the Curriculum Department hadn't liaised with the Labour Department and they hadn't liaised with the Principals' meeting and you'd land up with three meetings on the same day. And then, you have to say "Where am I supposed to be?" You know, frustrating.

...so there wasn't much direction, and so often I did my own thing and I said to them (teachers) "We'll ask for forgiveness rather than permission, and we'll do the best we can, and we won't let our standards drop."

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE School)

The evidence suggests that the retired principal of the GDE school both sought to protect her teachers from unnecessary stress, whilst at the same time, **insisting** that her staff comply with the requirements of the GDE, and furthermore, maintaining the high standards of teaching and learning, which she was solely accountable for.

The focus group of teachers at the GDE school, said that their retired principal, Mrs Andrews, was a buffer, that she protected them from the bullying aspect of the GDE:

GDE Teacher 2: You have no idea how lonely it is as a principal because you're holding all this information, you can't actually pass it on because you know the staff won't cope, so she (the principal) was definitely a buffer, and she only passed through the bare, necessary things, like you have to hand this in...

GDE Teacher 4: I mean, the GDE is like a big bully.

(Teachers' Focus Group, GDE School).

The GDE Teachers in the Focus Group also spoke of the authoritarian, mandatory nature of the external directives from the GDE, which were decisions they had no choice over except to comply:

GDE Teacher 1: Some decisions we have no choice over. So, like a directive comes, and we have to submit our mark books and risk forms. You have no choice on that.

GDE Teacher 4: Ja, it comes from the GDE and you have no choice.

GDE Teacher 1: You can't negotiate a different time, a different day...

GDE Teacher 2: The Common Exam that the Grade 2's are writing, they've got no choice, they can't "but you didn't give them to us on time", "but we don't have enough time", it has to be done, and we have to work around it.

(Teachers' Focus Group, GDE School).

The acting principal, Mrs van Zyl, described with dismay how the Common Exam papers set by the GDE were not printed on time, and the school had been redirected to write the exam across a period ending the day before the holidays, so there was no time for printing reports and parent interviews:

*There's a favourite word that they use...it's **mandatory**, you have to comply with whatever you are being asked now and that makes it very difficult.*

Then you have to turn around and now motivate...

At the moment, we are going through our Common Papers that we have to write for the GDE, which is mandatory....So, last week Thursday they let us know that the papers have not been printed, so it threw our whole plan for the term...into disarray.

There's specific times allocated for parent interviews. Now all of that is disrupted...The teachers are like: "but Mrs van Zyl!", and I'm: "Here's my instructions from the department."

The district people also can't guide you, so they tell you it comes from head office and we just have to comply....and I'm like: "But it can't fit into the management plan, you are making the school unmanageable by disrupting the management plan."

So, we have had a staff meeting and a SMT meeting to discuss this whole issue...So we've come up with a solution...

(Mrs van Zyl, Acting Principal, GDE School).

The findings seem to suggest that a strong sense of collective responsibility exists amongst the GDE staff which allows the school as a team to think critically and creatively to work around unreasonable centralised directives from the Department. The district, intent upon performance measurement, creates disorder, the teachers and management team restore the order, via participation, they have discussed the problem collectively, and found a solution. The Common Papers are an aspect of the centralised benchmarking process, to monitor that schools are aligned with the performance measurements. As such the Common Papers are an accountability tool, which can be ascribed as a democratic tool, yet it is issued without discussion or participation with the school management, and is perceived by the teachers as authoritarian, unfair and undemocratic in intention and effect. This evidence provides a vignette of the tension between external accountability and democracy, whereby to establish accountability, the district wields absolute, (and turbulent), autocratic power, thus undermining the democratic aspect of external accountability, and rendering it almost sinister (*big bully*). However, the evidence also shows high levels of internal accountability and collective responsibility within the GDE School, to coalesce swiftly around a problem. The rationale of democratic participation within the school, established by the Retired Principal, has ensured that the school teachers have the commitment and emotional resilience to cope collectively with the unreasonable external accountability pressures.

4.2.4.2 Rationale of decision-making: IEB School

The rationale for decision-making in the IEB School is referral to the divine and is manifest as an ethos of “love for the child”, compassion at the level of interaction with parents, and trust in the three Principals and The Board of Directors to chart the course of the school. The values of democracy and democratic decision-making are considered subservient to, or irrelevant to, or perhaps the antithesis of a system based on trust in the divine. The IEB school has a clearly defined ethos of virtues which it subscribes to, and strives to manifest in collective mind, heart and action, and the concept of democratic participation is seen as a secular preoccupation, or secondary good. However, the commitment by the Board of Governors to a flat management structure within the school staffroom, of principal and teachers is progressive, which alludes to humanistic endeavour. This progressive structure allows a great deal participation by teachers in the technical domain, which is their primary focus, and encourages high levels of commitment and collective trust. The commitment by the Board to a flat management structure does not correlate with a democratic rationale. A democratic rationale would assert that teachers and parents have a right to participate at the level of the SMT and The Board of Governors, which is surrendered in this school. Within a faith-based educational system, the notion of rights and democracy are values associated with the political and secular world, and are perhaps considered less pure than the virtues with which the IEB school is aligned. The progressive flat management structure within the IEB school is perhaps evidence of a pragmatic/compassionate rationale which encourages participation as a means to promote excellent school outcomes that simultaneously encode the virtues which the school adheres to. The school does achieve excellent outcomes and the principal and teachers are very committed and caring towards the children, and the teachers do not appear to suffer from decision deprivation, they surrender decision-making in the management domain to trust in the management. At my initial meeting with the IEB principal

as gatekeeper, she spoke of her abundant love for each child, and how lucky she was, and the school was, to interact in the medium of love. In the recorded interview, she said:

You know, I can walk around and talk about every child, and I know what she might be battling with...

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School)

As the interview proceeded, I asked the principal of the IEB school, Mrs Alfred, about trust, and her response indicates a high level of collective trust, and also provides evidence of the **rationale of adherence to a code of virtues** which guides interactions and decision-making:

Trust is very strong, it's not an issue at all, I mean, I trust my teachers implicitly, and I think they trust me implicitly as well, you know, that I would have their best interests at heart, the children's best interests at heart, the school's best interests at heart, and every one of my teachers know I can say that I feel the same about them.

In addition, she said:

Yes, and I think if you don't have that you need to face it head on, you know, "sorry, you're stepping out of line, this is the way we do it at The Valley Junior Primary (not it's real name), this is who we are, this is what we stand for, and I don't believe you are holding those values true at the moment".

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School)

The IEB principal is accountable to The Board of Governors for the academic performance of the school, and the culture and ethos of the school, and to an international faith-based body of schools for spiritual development of the children, and the school outreach programme. The IEB school writes international benchmarking tests. When the tests results are returned, the SMT review them, and report them to The Board of Governors. If there is a problem, the SMT discuss it, consult with the teachers, come up with a solution, and then, the SMT reports both the problem and the anticipated solution to The Board of Governors. The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, described a maths problem that was dealt with in this manner a few years ago. She said:

Six or seven years ago, we wrote (IBT's), and we noticed there was a problem with word problems, so you know, that needs to be recognised, and needs to be dealt with, what are we going to do, and how are we going to change, how are we going to get on top of it? We actually changed our whole maths system, in fact, but that was at the SMT level, but then you are reporting to The Board, you are telling The Board, we have noticed this, and this is what we are doing about it.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School).

This evidence shows the strong instructional capacity of the school to resolve a problem in the technical domain. The internal accountability level is strong, and the school responds to meet its external accountability responsibilities with a commitment to continuous improvement (*we actually changed our whole maths system*), which confirms the literature relating high levels of collective trust to strong instructional capacity, shared responsibility and continuous improvement (Adams, 2013). The school responds to a problem as a team of professionals, they both identify a problem and provide the solution, and there is no fear of shaming involved in the process of providing external accountability to The Board of Governors.

Within the interview data from the IEB School, there was no evidence of the external SMT or The Board of Governors applying external accountability measures to bully the principal or teachers in the way that the GDE teachers suffered mandatory, external accountability directives from the district. The external SMT reports to The Board of Governors, and both the SMT and The Board function to negotiate and steer the school away from turbulence, they do not inflict turbulence, as was evident in the GDE School with the mandatory directive to write a bench-marking exam, the Common Paper, ending on the second last day of term. In the GDE school, instead of performing the customary functions of writing reports and holding parent interviews which are school rhythms associated with good, well-functioning schools, the GDE School had to surrender some of its good habits to mediate the turbulence of a random, mandatory directive to achieve external accountability. The IEB school is free from external accountability turbulence, the children do write external bench-marking tests but the tests are scheduled, not randomly imposed, as was the case in the GDE school. The IEB school enjoys strong internal accountability, as a result of the collaborative participation in the technical domain, and compassionate, approachable leadership in the technical domain. Within the compassionate leadership is the practice of filtering out of decisions which involve significant or strategic change, and the deferral of those decisions to a closed management hierarchy that contemplates decision-making within an ethos of love for the child and trust in the divine.

The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, spoke of the Board of Governors providing a layer of positive authoritarian direction and support, when strategic changes were required, which the teachers might resist. The IEB principal described a strategic/structural change in the technical domain that was in the process of being negotiated at various levels in the school. The junior primary school was going to employ a remedial teacher to start a bridging class for those children who were not coping adequately in the mainstream classes. The teachers had been part of the discussion about the need for the remedial teacher in a separate class, however they were not yet aware of the financial implications, that to pay the remedial teacher's salary, the teacher: pupil ratio would increase from 24 children per class to 26. So the effect on the teachers was that they would have to cope with a slight increase in class size. The IEB principal was aware that the teachers may be unhappy about this, so she will propose the change as a directive from The Board. She said:

...we need to go up (teacher: pupil ratio) so that we can cover her salary, so that will be explained, they've (the teachers) been with me on the process with

what the need for it is, and so on, and ...you've got The Board backing you, the finance committee, and the reality is, I'm on the finance committee, so we all talk about it, and I would obviously bring it up, and that's how it would be discussed. So sometimes you have structural changes.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School).

The findings show that in this IEB School, it is normalised that decisions made by The Board are made on good authority, from above, for the good of the child, and thus the persona of The Board is perceived as supportive (*backing you*) and trustworthy, which is in very strong contrast to the manner in which the district of the GDE is perceived by teachers, as a bully.

Somech's (2002) findings showed that principals in Israel were of a pragmatic/human relations rationale, that none were of a democratic philosophy, and that they used consultative decision-making in preference to democratic decision-making. The Israeli principals commonly used formal positions to determine who participates in decision-making, and in which decisions they participate (Somech, 2002).

Similarly, The retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, also uses consultative decision-making in preference to democratic decision-making, but she extends decision-making beyond formal positions. The inclusion of democratically elected Grade representatives on her school management team, which flattens the decision-making structure, and her openness to issues and problems arising from all her teachers, and the inclusion of those issues in the SMT agenda, and the transparency of the SMT minutes, are practices of a humanistic/democratic rationale, rather than a pragmatic orientation. However, there is an aspect of the pragmatic/human relations rationale to her leadership, which motivates for improved school outcomes, because the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, was focused on maintaining the school as a top performing school, that was her spoken, overt goal, and democratising her management structure and allowing consultative decision-making were not necessarily secondary, but subscribed within, or inherent, to her goal to maintain the academic performance of the school. (But if I consider this in relation to my own experience, having worked in a top-performing GDE primary school, characterised by a high staff turnover, and tyrannical, ruthless management, it is possible to be completely focused on achieving an excellent academic performance without "wasting time" on integrating any democratic practices such as participative decision-making by teachers). Nevertheless, the retired principal of the GDE school, Mrs Andrews, and the acting principal, Mrs van Zyl, have suffered the tremendous tension between centralised external accountability and the practice of democratic participation through formal structures in the school.

The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, uses consultative decision-making as a pragmatic response to achieve improved school outcomes. There is however an underlying aspect of a compassionate rationale, in that she holds the children, the teachers and the school *at heart*. The rationale guiding decision making in the IEB school is alignment with and expression of a code of virtues, by means of continuous referral and deferral to the divine. The flat

management structure of teachers and Principal is progressive and allows a high level of collaborative interaction in the technical domain, which promotes a strong instructional core, and strong internal accountability, strong collective trust, but it is not democratic. There are no teachers or parents on the SMT, and no teachers or parents from the junior primary school on The Board of Governors. The principal of the IEB school cannot be considered a democratically accountable leader, (Mullen, 2006), as she does not operate in a school committed to the establishment of a democratic agenda. The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, is a compassionate leader, who consults with an external, closed, compassionate management structure and reports to a closed, compassionate Board of Governors. The Board of Governors is not derived by democratic participation, and is not democratically accountable. The agenda guiding the school is collective trust in guidance by the divine, aligned with behaviour manifesting virtues drawn from faith.

Upon reflection, in the seven years that my daughter has attended the senior primary and senior school, I have seen consistent evidence of care and compassion towards my child. The two school principals I have interacted with, have listened to my concerns, which have occurred at the level of peer interactions, and later, concerns over subject choice, and applied themselves to the concerns, with the decision residing in the medium of compassion for the child. However, I have never been to an annual general meeting where parents to nominate the members of The Board. As parents we have been invited to nominate parents onto the PTA, whose purpose is solely to raise funds. At the PTA meetings, there is no discussion by parents as to the selection of items or projects requiring funding, and there is certainly no discussion of possible strategic developments other than those which will raise funds for the school. Discussion revolves around the organisational requirements of fund-raising events. The list of items or projects for funding seems to be pre-determined by the SMT. As a parent, and architect, I have often thought how beneficial it would be for the fauna and flora of the area (and to the children), if the school were to carefully replace its exogenous plants with indigenous trees and shrubs. When I wrote to the school to consider this, and to consider some integration of democratic practice within the school culture to safeguard the long-term survival of the faith in a multi-cultural society, I was directed politely to join the PTA. Shortly thereafter, I attended a parents evening, I sensed with dismay that I was the subject of scathing ridicule by the senior teacher who serves as the secretary to The Chairman of the Board. I already know that at the PTA there is no discussion of strategic developments, or school culture and ethos, only funding of pre-determined projects.

There is no concept of democratic participation by the parent community to direct or influence decision-making within the school. Parents may raise funds and organise fundraising events. I have been vexed by this. To try to express some aspect of concerned parental voice at the level of the strategic direction of the school, has led me to be poorly perceived, even though we are a supportive family with a conscientious child, and the concerns expressed are extremely relevant to the school and thereafter the greater body of faith-based schools. However, my child is happy in the school, and she is well cared for, she adores her teachers and Principal, and manifests in speech and action the code of virtues which underpins the school, which are similar to those which underpin the home. The school

is extremely well run, manifesting care and attention to all aspects that a parent would hope to find, connoted in the term “good school”. The tension I experience is not a tension between democracy and accountability, it is a tension between trust and surrender at the level of significant and strategic decision-making directing the school. In the IEB School, there is a tension between an ethos of all-enveloping trust, by which you give your child over to be held *in the heart*, in the collective heart, of the school, and surrender of participation at the level of significant and strategic change. Access to the Principal to discuss any concerns over your child is open and compassionate. It is my child that is held at heart, in the bosom of the school, for which I am extremely grateful, and yet as a parent, I am also rendered occasionally *disheartened*, unable to contribute meaningfully to decision-making except to facilitate fundraising. For a parent there is simply a tussle between trust and surrender, however, the tension is generally exceeded by gratitude for the well-being of the child. However, at the level of preparation for participation in society, my child will also emerge without the necessary practical knowledge of the democratic practices which are necessary to live and contribute responsibly in South Africa.

4.2.5 The participation target of decision-making

The fifth dimension of participative management by which the findings are structured is the dimension of the participation target of decision-making which considers the “dyadic relationship” between a principal and a teacher (Somech, 2002, p.347) This scholar cited earlier research by Yukl and Fu (1999) which found that expertise, formal position, objectives and time spent with the principal determined the extent of participation in decision-making by a teacher (2002, p.347). Somech’s (2002) research found that principals targeted teachers for participation in decision-making according to a teacher’s motivation and interpersonal skills, rather than expertise.

4.2.5.1 The participation target of decision-making at the GDE School

The retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, spent more time consulting with her HoDs than with her management team, which prioritises the expertise and formal position of the HoDs over the objectives brought by and time spent with her Grade representatives.

How were decisions taken? Okay, well we tried to involve as many people as we could, we always consulted, I always informed the staff, consulted the heads of department, sometimes the three of us made a decision, sometimes I did it on my own, usually informed the governing body....

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE School).

This evidence (which is cited more extensively earlier), clearly shows that the Retired GDE Principal prioritises the heads of department, and extends decision-making to them, either fully, finding consensus, or in consultation, requesting their expertise, or alone. One can infer that perhaps the principal took decisions alone at times for expediency, however my sense is that it was when she was acting to protect the internal system of the school, acting as a buffer or shield, and perhaps sometimes the most expedient way to protect the school would be to take decisions alone, and not engage the democratic agenda of the school, but simply invoke

it at a more conducive time, when the democratic agenda structured in the school would not be threatened, by the harsh intrusions of the GDE. The Retired Principal said:

...there will be times where I will be authoritarian and just make a decision because it has to be made and there will be times when I can't share things with you but you have to trust me.

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE School).

There is evidence that the retired principal, Mrs Andrews, resisted the democratic agenda structured into the school, when she believed it was for the benefit of the children. Earlier evidence indicated that the teachers wanted whiteboards in the classrooms, so this request was carried, via the democratic structures to the School Governing Body. At that level, the retired principal refuted the purchase of whiteboards. She is the 'senior teacher' in the school, she is holding the ethos of instructional continuity, so she refutes the democratic process for the good of the children:

I do sit down and let them (the children) work around me, I'm a great believer in carpet work, you can see that I'm old fashioned... that's why I fought my school governing body, they used to say "We need white boards", and I used to say "Before we need whiteboards, we need reading books and equipment for the classroom, that's what they need more than a whiteboard, there will be plenty of time for whiteboards later".

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal GDE School).

This evidence shows that the Retired Principal made the decision alone, she was her own good advice, she holds the highest formal position and the greatest expertise and innate knowledge of what the children need, and she prioritises the good of the children over democratic consensus, and contests the School Governing Body. As such, the retired principal, Mrs Andrews, was her own target of decision-making, she trusted herself.

4.2.5.2 The participation target of decision-making at the IEB School

We have already seen evidence that the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, has socialised her teachers to address any aspects of significant or strategic change discreetly, she prefers to know about any aspect of change in advance, however she does encourage a great deal of participatory practice, and every voice is heard. There are no formal positions, other than hers as Principal, however, there is a significant amount of teaching expertise, and she consults with her senior teachers, discreetly:

What I do is work with some of the more experienced teachers and have them in here quietly and say "What do you think?" and "how do you think we should move forward?" So not me, myself, and I deciding it, but sometimes it's not necessary for all sixteen of us or so to be discussing it. You might just take four to six teachers and discuss with them, and then bring it to the rest of the staff.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School)

This evidence shows that in the technical domain, the IEB principal targets her senior teachers for their expertise, and in the managerial domain, she either makes a decision for herself, or she refers it to her external SMT. The IEB principal targets her external SMT for their expertise in the managerial domain, for their formal position, and for their objectives, their consistency of focus on the code of virtues which underpin the school. However, at the level of time, the IEB principal seems to be equally spread, meeting her teachers and external SMT at the same frequency, once a week, and more often in between.

The findings above seem to suggest that both the GDE school and the IEB school confirm, to varying degrees, the research by Yukl and Fu (1999) cited by Somech (2002) that principals target teachers for participation in decision-making with regard to their expertise, and formal or senior position, objectives and time spent with the Principal. In the GDE school there was evidence of pragmatic muzzling of the teachers' voices for fear of rejection, and the same people spoke up at meetings, which corroborates the above theory, that the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, targeted people for decision-making that held the same objectives as her own. The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, openly targets all her teachers for participation in decision-making, however, she senses that some don't speak up for fear of rocking the boat, and so she targets a few teachers discreetly first. One can infer that the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, also targets teachers whom she believes hold the same objectives. With regard to time, the IEB principal targets all her teachers equally in the forum of the staffroom, once a week, whereas the retired GDE principal targeted all her teachers in the staffroom perhaps once or twice a month, in rotation with the SMT, where she targeted Grade representatives. However the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews, had to target her teachers at all three levels of decision-making, in the staffroom, at the SMT and at the SGB. In contrast, the IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, only has to target and persuade her teachers in the staffroom.

The IEB principal is herself open to being a target for participation by parents, and so too are her teachers. The IEB principal has an open door policy, and the parents of the IEB School are demanding and apply a high level of accountability pressure for their children's performance. Mrs Alfred said:

They are paying a lot of money and they expect deliverance.

Ja, we're lucky, ours is not a high paying independent school fees compared to the others, and when I talk to those principals you can't believe how demanding the parents can be, but at the same time, the parents know my door is always open, they can come in, and some take advantage of that you know, complaining about silly little things and they expect to see (results), you know.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal IEB School)

The IEB teachers were also targets for participation in discussions with parents in the early morning, they had to be at school early for parents to talk to, and it added a lot of pressure to their day:

IEB Teacher 2: This school has a very open door policy, and parents can walk in whenever they have a problem and talk to teachers wherever they are...

IEB Teacher 3: It also adds pressure, because you could be having a meeting in the corridor before you're even started...

IEB Teacher: 2: It happens to me daily...

IEB Teacher 4: And that adds a lot of pressure to the day.

(Teachers' Focus Group, IEB School).

The above evidence shows that the IEB teachers feel pressurised at the start of the day, as participation targets by the parents, when any spontaneous meeting could happen. However this is a very moderate, manageable pressure in comparison to the high levels of external accountability pressure that the GDE teachers experience to perform standardised tests. Yet the pressure is significant at the level of moment by moment interactions, for the teachers not only have to account for the academic performance of the children, but they also have to account for behaviour, speech and action of the school community, that is in accordance with the code of virtues. If behaviour of the teachers does not concord with the code of virtues, then the code is invoked for alignment purposes. The code of virtues is an internalised accountability system, an internal bench-marking tool to assess, moderate and guide the collective behaviour of the school teachers. The headmistress of the IEB school spoke of a very talented teacher who recently came to the school, the teacher believed that she had been called to the school, by the divine, yet developing her behaviour to fit the school ethos was a process of ongoing effort to align with and internalise the code of virtue, and the IEB teacher had to adjust the way she spoke to teachers and parents. Mrs Alfred described the development of the teacher in line with the code of virtue:

I had a new teacher not long after I became head and she had an altercation with one of the other teachers and I spoke to her and I had a negotiation around the table and she ended up walking out of the door and I gave her a written warning, I said "That's not what we do here and that is not part of our ethos". You know, because I need to trust her and I need to trust that she's behind this ethos and I said: "you're getting a written warning. It will last for six months and this is what I need and this is what I need to see" and I mean, she now a few years later is one of the strongest teachers, I mean, she is really strong.

Mrs Alfred added:

She improved, she kept on coming back: "Okay I've done this, I've done that, I think I've done something wrong, I've said this to a parent", and we've been

through it, but she showed the desire to fit in here, she really felt she was called by God to fit in here and she felt she need to change to fit in, you know, she really has changed to fit in, she's made a conscious effort, her feelings with the children, the parents, everything. She came in with such a natural ability to teach children and just to know how to do it, but it was the other things that we needed to fit in with The Valley Junior Primary (not its real name) and it's actually been quite a lovely process.

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School).

The evidence shows the teacher went through a process to align with a code of virtue, to guide her interactions with children and parents. This is very significant in this school because the teachers are expected to be available to engage with parents every morning, they are the participation targets of parents, the frontline of the school. This is a very high frequency of participation, in the technical domain, so it is not surprising that the teachers do not suffer decision deprivation in the managerial domain, they are too busy for extended participation in the managerial domain.

The evidence that has been laid out in the above cross-case comparison was structured using the five dimensions of participative management (Somech, 2002). The interpretation of the evidence was theoretically directed to reveal accentuations of the presence of trust, instructional capacity, and accountability in two junior primary schools, and how this was related to practices of participative decision-making, as understood and practiced by the principals and the teachers. Two further sections will be presented, relating participative decision-making to trust and instructional capacity, and thereafter relating participative decision-making to instructional capacity and accountability.

4.2.6 Participative decision-making, trust and instructional capacity

. This section will present findings for participative decision-making and collective trust, and present evidence with regard to development of instructional capacity. The erosion of instructional capacity is also discussed.

The GDE focus group teachers spoke of the high collective work ethic of the staff to attend to their duties, and the support that they give each other. The GDE focus group teachers said:

GDE Teacher 3: Like for instance, playground duty. When that bell goes, those teachers are out, they remember their duty...they're on the ball, it's amazing.

GDE Teacher 2: And there is a bit of peer pressure from that perspective.

GDE Teacher 4: People do cover for each other, as well. If they see somebody struggling, they'll step in and help. I noticed that when I came here, you're not left to sink.

(Teacher's Focus Group, GDE School)

The above evidence demonstrates a successful team at work, teachers care about each other, and the performance of each member of the whole school is important (you're not left to sink). One can infer a high level of collective trust has accumulated in this school. They also mentioned that their informal discussions were sometimes also focused on the technical domain, and could lead to decision-making. A GDE focus group teacher said:

GDE Teacher 1: I think informal discussions with teachers can bring up questions, and you say, "Hang on, but shouldn't we be doing this or that?" ... and it will go forward and a decision must be taken.

(GDE Teacher, Teacher's Focus Group)

The evidence suggests teachers enjoy a high level of collegiality; that they can speak to each other with regard to teaching and learning without risk (*but shouldn't we be doing this?*). One can again infer the accumulation of collective trust, and collective responsibility, which is focused on maintaining the instructional capacity of the school. Thus one can infer that when teachers speak amongst themselves, they speak with a dialogical voice, but in formal meetings, they speak in a delegated voice.

At the IEB school, the IEB focus group teachers spoke in a similar vein of their high collective work ethic, and their success as a cooperative team. The IEB teachers said:

IEB Teacher 4: We sort it out. We work together, we're not afraid.

IEB Teacher 2: Like a simple thing...maybe a bit of discipline at line-up. Let's all discuss what could work. And let's work together...and also, what we expect, and then we put thought into it.

IEB Teacher 4: Absolutely! We really are just a phenomenal team...

IEB Teacher 3: And we work hard, there's no one that just slacks off and someone else has to pick up the pieces.

(Teachers' Focus Group, IEB School)

The above evidence shows that the teachers at the IEB school teachers speak to each other without fear of risk, one can infer a strong culture of collegiality amongst them and one can sense the accumulation of collective trust. Like the GDE school teachers, the IEB teachers used their informal discussions time to discuss and resolve issues, and share ideas. The IEB focus group teachers said:

IEB Teacher1: When you're with your colleague...you discuss things, or if you're on break duty together, "Let's do this tomorrow, or give me an idea for this", or "I'm going to need help with a child"

IEB Teacher 3: We share ideas all the time.

IEB Teacher 2: And also, some of us have a few frees together, and sometimes we sit in the staffroom and chat, and find something that can help the school or help a child.

(Teachers Focus Group, IEB School)

The findings suggest that the teachers enjoy a high level of collegiality and are naturally inclined to focus on issues in the technical domain. One can infer a high level of collective trust, which emanates from cooperation, and a collective sense of responsibility for the technical domain. The findings suggest that when the IEB teachers speak to each other they express a dialogical voice, whereas in formal meetings, they expressed a delegated voice. For both schools the findings suggest a confirmation of the literature, that collective trust accumulates with participation that is open and cooperative; and furthermore, that the presence of collective trust indicates of a strong instructional core (Adams, 2013). This suggests that participatory practices are related to, and enhance, collective trust and instructional capacity.

The retired GDE principal spoke of a two post-apartheid interventions of the state which impacted negatively on the instructional capacity of the education system. The first action was the offer by the state in 1997 for education professionals to accept a retrenchment package and leave state employment, which drained the system of the highly qualified teachers, and the second was the closure of the teaching colleges, resulting in new teachers coming from the universities with theoretical knowledge, but insufficient practical knowledge.

... '97 I became Principal, I went to the school in '93 but I was Principal in '97 because remember they offered the opportunity, anyone who wanted to leave, to go, and my Principal took it.

... It's one of the worst moves they've made as far as I'm concerned.

....they said you can take the package but then you're not allowed to teach in government schools again...

.....she did (work for a private school) for a while and then she worked for an NGO, she's done all sorts of things. But teaching is her love and she's not happy where she is, and she is brilliant, a brilliant woman. It's sad they lost so much expertise.

Interviewer: That's a pity. That was a very bad move.

.....It was, together with closing down the teachers colleges, terrible, terrible move because what we see coming through is not the same, there is plenty of theoretical knowledge but they have no practice, they come to school for maybe six weeks out of a year and they try observe and if they get good

teachers they're lucky and they pick up good practices and if they haven't got good teachers they repeat all the mistakes in their own classroom..., and it places quite a big burden on the schools to train them when they come in the first year – and you know – it's not easy when they know it all already. And then you have to say 'let me show you how to do this'...

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE School).

The changes referred to by the retired principal of the GDE school, describe an erosion of teaching expertise on the one-hand, and an inability to replace the lost expertise on the other. What the Retired Principal is referring to as “*the worst move*” is the loss of instructional capacity in schools; i.e. the practical knowledge of how to teach; and thereafter the “*terrible move*” is the democratically intended overhaul of the higher education system resulting paradoxically in the ongoing training of new teachers whom enter the system with reduced instructional capacity. Within her school, the retired GDE principal guarded the ethos of instructional continuity by monitoring and support, and she invoked a formally structured democratic agenda to ensure that her teachers engaged in participative decision-making in the technical domain of teaching and learning. This suggests a confirmation of Altrichter and Kemethofer's (2015) theoretical model, that an improvement in instructional capacity is underpinned by increased participation by teachers in decision-making. The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, did not express such a vivid experience of the loss of instructional capacity as the retired GDE principal, she confirmed that she had always worked in the private school system, and that experienced teachers were keen to move from state schools to the private school system.

4.2.7 Participative decision-making, instructional capacity and accountability

The themes of instructional capacity and accountability have been revealed in the presentation of evidence, analysis and interpretation of the dimensions of participative decision-making. Both schools were selected as sites for research because I hoped to gain some insight into the decision-making practices in two top performing junior primary schools, and the accountability pressures associated with different institutional habits.

Both schools enjoy practices which are open and collaborative in the technical domain which is an indicator of a strong instructional capacity (Adams, 2013; Taylor, 2009). Both schools enjoy high levels of internal accountability, i.e. coherence around the processes to achieve excellent school outcomes (Taylor, 2009) The GDE school utilises a democratic agenda of representation and accountability to direct decision-making practices, and the IEB school has normalised a code of virtue and trust to direct behaviour and structure decision-making. In the GDE school the highest level of decision-making, the SGB is accessible to parents and teacher representation, and within a democratic agenda, the strategic decision-making process is accessible and transparent. In the GDE school, teachers do not have to face parents every morning, to account for the performance of a child, and the teachers are guided by a simple ethos of care for the child, their behaviour is not strictly coded. In the IEB school, the teachers have a high level of pressure at the bottom-level of decision-making, whereby they have to interact with and account to parents in the classroom or corridor and modify their behaviour to express a code of virtue. Thereafter the teachers interact with the IEB principal,

and the parents may also target the principal, but beyond the principal, decision-making is closed to parents and teachers, and it is the external SMT of three Principals who account to The Board of Governors. In both schools, the high level of internal accountability allows the school to face external accountability pressures.

With regard to the development of instructional capacity in response to accountability pressure, the GDE School has made a significant structural adjustment to align the inclusive education policy with the performance measurement standards and the IEB school is in the process of undergoing a similar adjustment. (When I approached the two schools, I was aware that the GDE School had a remedial programme, but I had no idea that the IEB school was in the process of making a similar adjustment). The GDE school has three remedial classes (one per grade), with three full-time teachers, which are supported and paid for by the School Governing Body. The objective of the remedial class programme is to support and develop the children sufficiently so that they can return to the mainstream classes. Mrs Andrews said:

We work very hard with the children....we have three remedial classes

We've got that because the school governing body pays for that.

Interviewer: You pick them up, literally, the weak ones, you develop them and get them back in the mainstream.

The mainstream, yes, that's the object of it, and we do a lot of remedial work. There are full-time remedial teachers, we test at the beginning of every year, not the Grade 1's, the Grade 2's and 3's. The Grade 1's evolve as the year goes on and we see who needs help and who doesn't, but you can pretty soon pick up at the beginning of Grade 1, it's mainly the language children, mainly the children who don't have language. And then they go through to Susan (not her real name), and then the Grade 2's and 3's we test and the ones with the lowest reading and spelling and Maths ages go full-time.

Interviewer: Into the remedial?

Into the remedial, while their peers are having Maths in the classroom, those ten children are working with the remedial teacher and it's the same with English. And the ones we can't fit in we have remedial after school for two days and we have computer programmes, so we try.

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE School)

The retired principal of the GDE School developed the remedial programme from a system whereby a remedial teacher came several times a week, and took children out of the classroom, but it was not effective, she was too thinly spread, and the teachers did not like the

disruption. The retired GDE principal developed the programme in consultation with her teachers, it was their collective response to support children. Mrs Andrews said:

I inherited a system where...we had one lady who would come on sporadic days and take children out, but it didn't work, she couldn't reach everybody and the teachers didn't like coming and going, so we thought about it and ...we tried it with the Grade 3's first, the first year we did it. And then we extended it to Grade 2's and the Grade 1's said "We need help! We're getting too many children that have no language, and because they have no language, we're struggling with the reading and we're struggling with the Maths." And so we did that. We used the dressing rooms at the back of the hall, it was supposed to be for plays, and then eventually a few years ago we built these remedial classrooms.

(Mrs Andrews, Retired Principal, GDE School).

The evidence shows the Retired Principal and teachers of the GDE school responded to the problem of insufficient establishment of the language of learning and teaching with a reflective response to commit to resolve and improve the situation, by structurally engaging with the timetable and the infrastructure and hiring additional teachers, whom the parent body paid for. Such a response reflects positively that the school has a high level of shared responsibility and participation by teachers and parents in the solution.

At the IEB School, the first remedial class, which the IEB Principal calls a bridging class is scheduled to open in 2017. Like the GDE school, the IEB school has evolved from a situation whereby a remedial teacher came in to see children during the week, to a permanent member of staff committed to remedial classes. In 2017, four out of twenty-six children from each class in Grades 1, 2, and 3 would be removed to the bridging class for English and Maths, and then return to the mainstream class for whole class activities such as Art and Music and Drama. This response is remarkable because the school already has learning centre with an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, a speech therapist, and a child psychologist to support the children. The principal of the IEB School believes that the restructuring of remediation to a separate venue will be beneficial to the child's esteem. She said:

...so what I'm talking about is having somebody permanently, where they actually go out of classes, English and Maths, and go back in afterwards, similar to a bridging class that they run at other schools, that sort of concept....it's so needed, and there is this whole thing about inclusive education, and the child being in the same class: "I can't do it, everybody else is doing it but I can't do it", and their self-images just get lower and lower. Whereas, when they are in their own little class, and "hang on, we can do this," never mind that it's a slower pace, it doesn't matter, "I can do it", self-esteem goes up, and...aahh,you know!

(Mrs Alfred, Principal, IEB School).

The evidence shows that beyond the provision of a suite of professional support therapists, the IEB school is responding similarly (to the GDE school) to children who need extensive support by removing them for Maths and English to work ‘at their own steam’, in a separate venue. One of the IEB teachers spoke of her personal ambition to become a full-time remedial teacher at the school, which will come into effect in 2017. This personal ambition was supported by the IEB principal. The IEB teacher said:

IEB Teacher 3: ...it took three years, but she (Mrs Alfred) went out of her way to make my personal aims come true, so, I'm the remedial teacher from next year.

(IEB Teacher 3, Teachers' Focus Group)

The evidence demonstrates that the IEB principal listened to her teacher and grew her professionally; aligning the needs of the school with the desire of the teacher to develop.

Both junior primary schools have responded structurally to the need to align with the performance standards by raising the level of instructional support to the extent that there is a formal, structural, adjustment to the practice of inclusive education. This innovation was established by the GDE school in 1998 as a response to insufficient establishment of the language of teaching and learning in the children entering the school. In the IEB school, the establishment of the language of teaching and learning did not emerge as problematic, however, alignment with the performance standards, and awareness of the innovation of bridging classes in other IEB schools, has led the IEB school to a similar structural adjustment in the provision of support for the child. Such a solution arises, one can infer, as a result of the high level of participatory practice in the schools, focused on care for the child. This again suggests support for Altrichter and Kemethofer's (2015) theoretical model that anticipates that a high level of participative decision-making by teachers leads to an improvement in instructional capacity. This finding also suggests that capacity building strengthens the internal accountability of the school, and allows it to withstand external accountability pressure (Taylor, 2009).

4.3 Conclusion

The Chapter reveals that both the retired GDE principal and the IEB principal preferred consultative decision-making rather than democratic decision-making and had formally structured participative decision-making in the technical domain of teaching and learning into the school culture, whilst reserving decisions in the managerial domain to their respective management teams. The GDE teachers expressed some pragmatic muzzling of their voices with regard to their collective requirements, and whilst the IEB teachers expressed a serene surrender of decision-making in trust to the management, the IEB principal sensed that her teachers did not always speak up for fear of rocking the boat. Thus for both schools one can infer that in formal meetings, teachers expressed themselves with a delegated voice. The GDE school embraces a democratic agenda which includes teachers and parents, whilst the IEB school embraces a code of virtue to direct decision-making which allows high levels of

parental interaction with teachers on a daily basis, but excludes teachers and parents from strategic decision-making. At both sites the teachers expressed high levels of collective trust, commitment and endeavour consistent with high levels of participative decision-making in the technical domain.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter compared two similar junior primary sites in terms of the practice of participative management of the leaders and in response to this, the extent, experience and understanding of participative decision-making by the teachers at these two sites. This chapter aims to summarise the study; draw conclusions from the findings of the study; consider the implications of the study; and offer recommendations for the development of participative decision-making and instructional capacity.

5.2. Study Summary

The study was initiated by my disquiet at the absence of professional, confident, dialogical teachers' voices in staffrooms and staff meetings, and the lack of collegiality in staff relationships. The problem statement and South African literature highlighted external accountability pressures as an action which prevented the extension of leadership and the associated participatory practices, in conjunction with a traditional form of school leadership and management which was hierarchical, and autocratic. The critical research questions sought to examine firstly the nature and extent of participative decision-making by teachers in two top-performing, collegial, junior primary schools; secondly, the understanding and practice by the two school principals of participative decision-making; and thirdly, the different effect of accountability pressures on the school management team and the practice of participative decision-making in institutions of dissimilar institutional habit, being public and private. The first research question determined the research design: being an instrumental case study because it focuses on the phenomenon of participative decision-making by teachers, and a collective case study because the two sites were similar and therefore comparable, but dissimilar in institutional habit and accountability pressures. The literature review discussed South African studies with embedded references to participative decision-making, and found that schools which embraced a collegial and collaborative culture thrived in terms of improved teacher outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment and efficacy. Collegial school cultures were permeated with trust and collective responsibility. The theoretical framework traced the development of Decision Theory, providing the multi-dimensional construct of participative management (Somech, 2002) which was used as an analytical structuring device with which to order a cross-case comparison. Key related themes in the South African literature of trust and accountability were presented theoretically in the theoretical framework, and found to be associated with instructional capacity and participative decision-making. These themes informed the vocabulary of the data interpretation. Both sites were information rich, with strong formal practices in place for discussion and participation in the technical domain of teaching and learning, the GDE school asserted a democratic agenda to determine formal decision-making and the faith-based IEB

school ascribed to a code of virtue within a progressive flat management structure which normalised surrender of strategic decision-making to trust in an external SMT and Board of Governors.

To answer the first critical question, which sought to understand the nature and extent of participative decision-making of teachers, I have to have answered the second, which is to grasp the practice and understanding by the school principals of participative decision-making. Within both schools, the principals practiced a collegial form of consultative decision-making rather than democratic decision-making in the technical domain, and reserved decision-making in the managerial domain for management structures. Both principals reserved the right to be authoritarian when they believed this to be in the interest of the school. Hence in both schools, the teachers manifested a delegated voice rather than a fully empowered dialogical voice. In both schools, teachers felt valued and validated when their expertise and opinion was sought and made manifest in the school. In both schools there was some fear of “rocking the boat”, however, whilst the GDE teachers could clearly express their sense of decision deprivation, and fear of risk, the IEB teachers were serene and had surrendered the expression of a dialogical voice. It was the earnest response of the IEB principal who revealed that she sensed that her some of her teachers withheld their voices for fear of “rocking the boat” even though she consulted all of them, whereas the retired GDE principal was satisfied that her democratic management structure with grade representation “worked well”, she did not express a sense of her teachers being dissatisfied. Both schools had progressive decision-making structures. The retired GDE principal understood participative decision-making to be a democratic endeavour; hence the structure and processes she put in place were democratic. The retired GDE principal allowed grade representation on the SMT, and teachers could voice their concerns and have them placed on the agenda of the SMT meeting, and the principal gave feedback from the SMT meeting formally in staff meetings and again via SMT minutes. For those teachers in the GDE school who experienced decision deprivation in the managerial domain and strategic decision-making, they could access the SMT as a representative, and thereafter the SGB as a teacher representative. The SGB was participatory and allowed expression of a dialogical voice by the teacher representatives, but that still did not necessarily positively effect teachers’ needs, as the school-wide community voiced their concerns. The IEB principal understood participative decision-making to be a pragmatic/compassionate endeavour guided by trust in the divine, and the high frequency of meetings weekly with all her teachers promotes participation as a means to achieve excellent school outcomes within a serene, collegial atmosphere. The exclusion of teachers from the external SMT and the exclusion of teachers and parents from the Board of Governors clearly indicates that within the IEB school, democratic, participative decision-making is a secular aspiration, and that in this school decision-making in the managerial domain is the reserve of management and decision-making in the strategic domain is the reserve of the Board of Governors, who guide the school’s strategic decision-making with referral to divine guidance.

The third critical research question asked how accountability pressures affect the principal and teachers and the practice of participatory decision-making. Both schools are top-

performing schools with highly committed teachers, and both schools write external benchmarking tests. In the GDE school, the external accountability pressures can be both random and mandatory, causing upheaval to the school, and interrupting the regular rhythms of the school. However the internal accountability levels of the school are resilient, and teachers collaborate and cooperate to meet the external accountability pressures. The effect of external accountability pressures on the retired GDE principal made her guard the instructional continuity in the school, she monitored and supported teachers and their innovations, and she reserved the right to be authoritarian in her decision-making to protect the school, which clearly demonstrates the tension between democratic practices and accountability pressures. The retired GDE principal also acted as a buffer between the district and her teachers, she mediated the external accountability pressures so that the unreasonableness of certain requirements was reduced, however she did insist that deadlines were met, and standards maintained. In the IEB school, whilst bench-marking tests put pressure on the teachers, these pressures are scheduled, not random, and the principal and teachers examine the results and focus on weaknesses as a collaborative exercise to drive improved school outcomes. However the accountability pressures on the teachers and the principal from the parents is high, and teachers are targeted by parents for ad hoc meetings on a daily basis, and in their interactions the teachers are expected to display adherence to a code of virtue. The accountability pressures on the IEB principal, who has an open door policy, from parents is also high, and perhaps this is why parents are prevented from accessing the SMT and Board of Governors, so that they can't bully the school for their own ends. Both schools have adjusted to standards-based performance measurements by structurally adjusting the inclusive education policy, removing slowly performing children to formal learner support classes for instruction in Maths and English, and returning them to mainstream classes for all other activities.

The instrumental collective case study found that the level of participative decision-making in the technical domain in both schools was sufficiently collegial for the teachers to express high levels of commitment and both schools are resilient to accountability pressures with high levels of collective trust and strong instructional cores.

5.3 Conclusions

This section will draw conclusions for each dimension of participative management that was used to structure the cross-case comparison, and thereafter the themes of trust, instructional capacity and accountability.

5.3.1 Conclusion: the principal as the leader of leaders and the extent of decision-making

For the dimension of participative management which probes the principals' role as leader of leader and the extent of decision-making, the study reveals that the retired GDE principal, Mrs Andrews determined the level of collegiality in her school, and she had set in place the progressive formal structures for the democratic agenda of the school. The retired GDE principal set in place an ethos of care and support for her teachers and extended consultative decision-making within a democratically structured decision-making process. The IEB principal, Mrs Alfred, also determines the level of collegiality in her staffroom, which whilst every teacher speaks, she has normalised a filtering process whereby an issue which involves

change is discussed discreetly, she would like to know and think about it before it is broached with all the teachers. The decision-making structures of external SMT and Board of Governors is a formal structure of the greater school, it is not something which the IEB principal of the junior primary can change, and the flat management structure in the junior primary school of principal and teachers is a directive from the Board of Governors. The IEB principal is thus not in a position to assert a democratic agenda. However, she extends consultative decision-making mediated with an ethos of compassion for her teachers and an “open door approach.”

5.3.2 Conclusion: the domain of a decision

For the dimension of participative management which examines the domain of a decision, I can conclude that in both the GDE school and the IEB school, teachers have access to decision-making in the technical domain of teaching and learning, and that decisions which affect the management domain are reserved for the management teams. In the GDE school, the retired principal structured grade representatives on her management team, although the evidence showed that she still reserved decisions in the managerial domain for herself or as a team with her two HoD's. In the IEB school, the SMT is external, so all management decisions are taken to the external SMT. In the GDE school the teachers expressed some sense of risk to speak up, and there was evidence from a focus group teacher of decision deprivation in the managerial and strategic domain, which the teacher was able to address by accessing the SMT and SGB. In the IEB school, the teachers had normalised that they do not make management decisions, that these are relinquished in trust to the external SMT of three principals and in general, they did not express a sense of decision deprivation. However one senior teacher did express decision deprivation with regard to managerial and strategic decision-making on her questionnaire. The open door approach of the IEB principal does suggest that her teachers can approach her discreetly to suggest issues which affect the management domain, and she gave evidence that anything which required change she needed to know about first. The high frequency of meetings at the IEB school (weekly) does seem to allow a high level of participation in the technical domain, and allows a speedy response from the SMT about issues affecting the managerial domain. In both schools the teachers are very committed, so one can infer that the level of participative decision-making in the technical domain is sufficient to keep the focus on a strong instructional core, and maintain the high commitment levels of the teachers.

5.3.3 Conclusion: the structure of decision-making

The structure of decision-making at the GDE school set in place by the retired GDE principal is exemplary of a progressive democratic structure, because it allows teacher representation by grade on the SMT, and the typical hierarchy of HoD and deputy principal has been replaced by two equi-distant HoDs of differing expertise, being an HoD of learner support and an HoD of curriculum. The teacher representation on the SGB is legislated, and in this school, the teacher representatives for the SGB are democratically elected on, as it should be in practice. In the GDE school the process of decision-making is unambiguous and transparent, issues are discussed by grade, then raised for the agenda of the SMT meeting, and then feedback of decisions taken at the SMT are issued, and feedback is given at the staff

meeting. The monthly frequency and length of time allocated for staff meetings was inadequate for teachers to speak inclusively, and there was evidence that it was always the same voices which spoke up. One can infer that the level of collegiality and collective trust is not sufficient to exclude risk, so some teachers do not speak up.

The structure of decision-making in the IEB school is also progressive and participative within the staffroom, being the principal and her teachers, however thereafter it is not a participative structure but a closed, two –tiered external referral structure based on faith-based trust which excludes teachers and parents. Much of the process of decision-making is discreet, the principal consults with a few teachers privately, and she needs to have thought about an issue beforehand, she uses emails to gather evidence of consensus without putting teachers at risk, and then she uses participation to achieve “buy-in”, for a decision which essentially she has already made. The weekly frequency of decision-making is very high, which the teachers enjoy.

Both schools enjoy sufficient structured participation in the technical domain for the teachers to express high levels of commitment to their work and to maintain high levels of internal accountability.

5.3.4 Conclusion: the rationale of decision-making

The retired GDE principal used a humanistic/democratic rationale whereby she both cared for and supported her teachers and set in place a democratic decision-making structure with processes to ensure accountability and transparency of the agenda and decisions taken. The IEB principal uses a pragmatic and compassionate rationale to underpin decision-making. The rationale is pragmatic because the IEB principal’s intention is to achieve improved school outcomes. However the IEB principal also subscribes to and enforces a code of virtue, hence the decision making rationale can be considered compassionate.

5.3.5 Conclusion: the participation target of decision-making

In both schools, the principal targets teachers for decision-making according to expertise. In the GDE school, the retired principal, Mrs Andrews, targeted her two HoD’s for decision-making in the technical and managerial domains because they hold both formal positions and expertise as the HoD of Curriculum and HoD of Learner Support. In the technical domain, the retired GDE principal targeted her teachers via her teacher grade representatives. At the level of the SGB the retired Principal also had to target parents, and nevertheless she could still contest consensus and make an important decision herself. In the IEB school, the principal, Mrs Alfred, targets all her teachers in the staffroom, for decision-making affecting the technical domain, however for important decisions in the technical domain, she targets 3 or 4 senior teachers, according to their expertise, and then targets her teachers for “buy-in”. In the IEB school, the decisions in the managerial domain are made by Mrs Alfred alone or referred to the external SMT of three principals.

5.3.6 Conclusion: participative decision-making, trust and instructional capacity

Both schools enjoy a culture of consultative collegiality which is cultivated by the principal, the teachers generally manifest a delegated voice, however, there is some fear of “rocking the boat” in both schools, nevertheless, the collegiality is sufficiently open and cooperative in

both schools to accumulate strong collective trust. In both schools the teachers are very committed and motivated. Both schools enjoy a high level of consultative participative decision-making in the technical domain, and are committed to maintaining their strong instructional core. In the GDE school, the retired principal, Mrs Andrews, and the acting principal, Mrs van Zyl, held the ethos of instructional continuity, and the teachers pushed for innovation. At the IEB school, the senior teachers hold the ethos of instructional continuity, and the principal of three years, Mrs Alfred, motivates for innovation. In the GDE school, the retired principal monitored and supported her teachers in the technical domain, to maintain the instructional capacity. In the IEB school, the experienced teachers are granted autonomy, which most of the teachers enjoy, however the frequency of participation in the technical domain is very high. Both schools are committed to participation which focuses on continuous improvement in the technical domain. The study suggests a confirmation of theory: that participatory practices that are open and cooperative allow the accumulation of collective trust (Adams, 2013), and furthermore, that the presence of collective trust is indicative of the instructional capacity of a school (Adams, 2013). This suggests that participatory practices, trust and capacity building are indeed related.

5.3.7 Conclusion: participative decision-making, instructional capacity and accountability

Both schools enjoy a high level of consultative participative decision-making in the technical domain (capacity building), and are committed to maintaining their strong instructional core. Thus one can infer that both schools are committed to ongoing capacity building (Taylor, 2003). Both schools demonstrate strong internal accountability, i.e. coherent structures and processes for achieving and maintaining academic outcomes. The GDE school has to withstand mandatory external accountability pressures from the department which can be random and disruptive, and at the IEB school teachers and the principal prepare for annual bench-marking tests, and furthermore, they have to be on hand every morning for ad hoc meetings with parents, which is a subtle but ongoing form of random external accountability pressure. Both schools are top-performing schools which have successfully aligned with standards based accountability. In both schools the teaching staff have responded to pressure to align the instructional capacity of the school with standards-based accountability by structurally adjusting the interpretation of the inclusive education policy. Children who struggle academically are removed to a learner support (bridging) class for the core subjects of Maths and English, and then returned to the mainstream classes for the remainder of the day.

The study suggests a confirmation of theory: that participatory practices focused on teaching and learning build the instructional capacity of a school (Taylor, 2009); that the internal accountability of a school, is enhanced by teacher participation in decision-making in the technical domain, i.e. capacity building (Taylor, 2009; Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015); and that a school with strong internal accountability focused on teaching and learning is resilient to withstand external accountability pressure (Taylor, 2009).

5.4 Recommendations

As I have been writing the conclusions, I was painfully aware of how idealistic and inexperienced I am as a teacher, with only five years of experience, and that I have never experienced the pressure that resides on a school principal or manager. I do recall being in an ad hoc staff meeting with a GDE principal, and she was pale and visibly shaken. She led a top performing GDE school, and the ANA's were approaching, and very gently she implored us to revise the ANA questions every day so that the children could prepare for the style and array of test questions. She simply said that she had had a meeting with other principals at the district. She never mentioned why she was so pensive. We were all shaken for her. We inferred that she had been bullied, threatened with shaming. We prepared like dervishes and the school outcomes were typically excellent. We teachers were delighted. The principal was smiling too; it was a smile of relief. So, as I prepare to write recommendations, I realise that I am simply not entitled to an opinion, having never led a school, and the recommendations would be most meaningful for leaders of schools, since they have to put in place the structures and processes of participatory practices. As such, I am painfully aware, that it is probably quite galling for a past principal to have to read my novice recommendations, which may be read as nothing more than a confirmation of existing strands of theory that are then simply woven together.

5.4.1. Recommendation: the principal as leader of leaders and the extent of participation

My earnest recommendation is simply a code of best practice from theory, that when a principal develops an ethos of care and consultative collegiality, this affords teachers a delegated voice which validates teachers' sense of professionalism and enhances their efficacy. If the collegiality allows the accumulation of sufficient collective trust, and the principal is able to extend democratic participative decision-making, then it is likely that teachers would manifest a dialogical voice and speak without risk and demonstrate heightened commitment and efficacy. However, as I write, I recall an earlier citation by Grant *et al* (2010) of Macbeath (2005), who cautions those who wish to build a collegial school culture of the risk they face from harsh accountability pressures.

5.4.2. Recommendation: the domain of a decision

Whether a school allows participative decision-making in the managerial domain or not, one can recommend that a high level of participative decision-making in the technical domain in a collegial environment of trust allows teachers to work with high levels of commitment and focus on the instructional core. However, there are teachers who suffer decision deprivation in the managerial domain, for whom job satisfaction requires that they have access to participative decision-making at management level, or more democratically, that management issues are discussed in the open forum of the staffroom. Recall here that Singh and Lokotsch (2005) cautioned that participatory decision-making can be tedious.

5.4.3 Recommendation: the structure of decision-making

The democratically structured agenda of the GDE school with grade representation on the SMT is recommended as a very progressive step to inculcate a democratic agenda, as are the processes whereby issues are gathered by grade for the agenda of the SMT and both formal

and verbal feedback are given. The IEB principal's use of emails to gather consensus may be useful when some teachers feel exposed and at risk to express their voice.

5.4.4 Recommendation: the rationale of decision-making

The clarity and consistency of the IEB principal's pragmatic/compassionate rationale for decision-making and as code to guide behaviour is highly recommended as ideal for a faith-based institution. Having worked in a private school which had no clear rationale for decision-making and no clear code of conduct to guide consistency in interactions with children and parents, the clarity and consistency of the IEB principal's rationale is exemplary. The democratic/humanistic rationale of the retired GDE principal is also exemplary and suitable for state schools.

5.4.5 Recommendation: the participation target of decision-making

Whilst I am personally idealist and committed to democratic participation which targets all teachers, I am aware that achieving a collegial culture takes time and persistence, to develop and sustain, and that the activity of participative decision-making is an activity of capacity building in itself. Recall Singh and Lokotsch (2005) that participators may lack the very skills required to engage in participation, such as trust and collaboration and a sense of accountability. Since these recommendations would be written for a traditional state school which hoped to become more collegial, I would recommend a democratic participation agenda similar to The Glade junior primary, whereby all teachers concerns are raised with their grade representative, whom the principal targets at the SMT.

5.4.6 Recommendation: participative decision-making, trust and instructional capacity

A collegial culture whereby teachers participate in decision-making in the technical domain allows collective trust to accumulate and builds the instructional capacity of a school. The high weekly frequency of the staff meetings at the IEB school seems ideal, as the teachers gave no indication of decision deprivation.

5.4.7 Recommendation: participative decision-making, instructional capacity and accountability

Participative decision-making by teachers which is cooperative and focused on the technical domain of teaching and learning is an action of capacity building, and it builds the internal accountability of the school, i.e. the coherence and norms within the school for getting work done to a high standard, on time. For a school which faces harsh external accountability measures, as South African state schools do, with the awful possibility of naming and shaming, then the growth opportunity provided by participative decision-making within a democratically structured agenda which allows concerns to be voiced at management meetings and SGB meetings seems to be ideal, as suggested by Bush (2007).

5.5 The implications of the study

I set out to study what do teachers actually do in two top-performing junior primary schools with a collegial culture, and I found teachers who were very committed and focused on the processes of teaching and learning, and I uncovered a democratic agenda which is exemplary, and atypical, and a serene code of virtue that I had not properly cognised or appreciated. The study confirmed for me that participation by teachers that is collaborative and cooperative in

the technical domain builds the strong instructional core, collective trust and accountability. As such the collective case study is indeed an example of theory or concept sampling (Creswell, 2012). The monitoring by the retired GDE principal to provide support and safeguard the instructional continuity of the school was an eye-opener. So too was the learner support programme. However, the findings from a small, instrumental collective case study cannot be generalised (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2003), at best they are heuristic in some way of the norms and experiences of participatory practices in two thriving junior primary schools.

5.6. Conclusion

The chapter commenced with a summary of the study, which included and answered the critical research questions. The summary briefly outlined the research design typology, the key themes of the literature review and the theoretical framework. By answering the three critical questions, the findings of the study were described. Thereafter, conclusions were provided, structured as a consequence of the data presentation, i.e. by the multi-dimensional construct of participative management (Somech, 2002) and thereafter the themes of trust, instructional capacity and accountability. The recommendations followed as a consequence of the conclusions, however they commenced with a cardinal reflection that I have not experienced the accountability pressures upon the shoulders of a principal, and I have chosen a study throughout which I remain continuously biased towards democratic participation by teachers. Hence, I conclude with a resounding of the cautionary notes of scholars of participatory practices that trust and accountability take time to build, yet I remain with my conviction, that a culture of collegiality rich in trust and accountability is initiated and built by including teachers in participative decision-making.

APPENDIX A: GDE ACTING PRINCIPAL'S INFORMATION LETTER

4 May 2016

The Acting Headmistress and the Head of the School Governing Body

Dear Mrs Vanzeeberg, and the School Governing Body Chairperson,

My name is Simone Meintjes and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on participatory decision-making by teachers and my research project title is "Participatory decision-making in schools: A study of two schools in Gauteng".

My research requirements are threefold:

Firstly I would like to ask your teachers and Heads of Departments to complete a questionnaire, which will probe their understanding and practice of participatory decision-making at school. The questionnaires will be anonymous; however I will request that the Heads of Departments indicate their position on the questionnaire, so that research data from teachers is not mixed with research data from management. The questionnaires will take about 10 - 15 minutes to complete. For the sake of confidentiality, I will ask your teachers to refrain from discussing their responses with their colleagues.

Secondly, I would like to interview you, for possibly an hour, to gain an understanding of your preferred leadership style, and the extent to which you are able to extend participative decision-making to your staff. I will also ask you to describe those aspects which prevent you from extending participative decision-making to your staff. I would like to audiotape this interview, with your permission, and then transcribe it and return the transcript to you for verification. The reason I wish to audiotape you is just for completeness and accuracy, so that I don't miss something which is relevant, nor misrepresent you erroneously.

Thirdly, I request permission from yourself and your Heads of Departments and teachers to silently observe a staff meeting between you and your management and teaching staff members. I may also request to examine the minutes of staff meetings to gain insight into the patterns of participation in your school.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I am a Foundation Phase teacher, and I am keenly interested in all aspects of the teaching, management and leadership of the Foundation Phase and particularly, participative decision-making by teachers. The second school in the research is an Independent Examinations Board girls-only, faith-based Foundation Phase school.

I am inviting your school to participate in this research, and I wish to express that your participation is voluntary and that any of your staff can refrain from participating should they feel so inclined.

The research participants, i.e. yourself, your Heads of Departments and your teachers, will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. I reassure all of you that you can withdraw your permission to participate at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The research participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project. This includes the audiotaping and transcripts.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I attach a consent form for your consideration. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Simone Meintjes

25 Sussex Road,

Parkwood, 2193

Email: snmeintjes@gmail.com

Cell: 0836306590

Home tel: 011-4425120

Supervisor: Dr Siphiwe Mthiyane

Email: siphiwe.mthiyane@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX B: IEB PRINCIPAL'S INFORMATION LETTER

4 May 2016

The Principal and the Head of the School Governing Body

Dear Mrs Elfick, and the School Governing Body Chairperson,

My name is Simone Meintjes and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on participatory decision-making by teachers and my research project title is "Participatory decision-making in schools: A study of two schools in Gauteng".

My research requirements are threefold:

Firstly I would like to ask your teachers and Heads of Departments to complete a questionnaire, which will probe their understanding and practice of participatory decision-making at school. The questionnaires will be anonymous; however I will request that the Heads of Departments indicate their position on the questionnaire, so that research data from teachers is not mixed with research data from management. The questionnaires will take about 10 - 15 minutes to complete. For the sake of confidentiality, I will ask your teachers to refrain from discussing their responses with their colleagues.

Secondly, I would like to interview you, for possibly an hour, to gain an understanding of your preferred leadership style, and the extent to which you are able to extend participative decision-making to your staff. I will also ask you to describe those aspects which prevent you from extending participative decision-making to your staff. I would like to audiotape this interview, with your permission, and then transcribe it and return the transcript to you for verification. The reason I wish to audiotape you is just for completeness and accuracy, so that I don't miss something which is relevant, nor misrepresent you erroneously.

Thirdly, I request permission from yourself and your Heads of Departments and teachers to silently observe a staff meeting between you and your management and teaching staff members. I may also request to examine the minutes of staff meetings to gain insight into the patterns of participation in your school.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because as a Foundation phase teacher, I am particularly interested in the participative decision-making by teachers in the Foundation phase. The Gauteng Department of Education school which I will research alongside yours is a co-educational Foundation phase school.

I am inviting your school to participate in this research, and I wish to express that your participation is voluntary and that any of your staff can refrain from participating should they feel so inclined.

The research participants, i.e. yourself, your Heads of Departments and your teachers, will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. I reassure all of you that you can withdraw your permission to participate at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The research participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project. This includes the audiotaping and transcripts.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I have attached a consent form for your consideration. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Simone Meintjes

25 Sussex Road,

Parkwood, 2193

Email: snmeintjes@gmail.com

Cell: 0836306590

Home tel: 011-4425120

Supervisor: Dr Siphiwe Mthiyane

Email: siphiwe.mthiyane@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL'S CONSENT FORM

Principal's Consent Form

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in a study called: Participatory decision-making in schools: a study of two schools in Gauteng.

My name is: _____

Permission to review/collect documents

Circle one

I agree that staff meeting minutes can be used for this study only.

YES/NO

Permission to observe you in a staff meeting

I agree to be observed in a staff meeting.

YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview.

YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.

YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be interviewed for this study.

YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to
answer all the questions asked.

YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

APPENDIX D: GDE TEACHERS' INFORMATION LETTER

Information Sheet for Teachers and Heads of Departments: Gauteng Department of Education
Foundation Phase school

4 May 2016

Dear teaching staff,

My name is Simone Meintjes and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on participatory decision-making by teachers and my research project title is "Participatory decision-making in schools: A study of two schools in Gauteng".

My research requirements of you are two-fold:

Firstly I would like to ask you, the teachers and Heads of Departments, to complete a questionnaire, which will probe your understanding and practice of participatory decision-making at school. The questionnaires will be anonymous, however I will request that the Heads of Departments indicate their position on the questionnaire, so that research data from teachers is not mixed with research data from management. The questionnaires will take about 10 - 15 minutes to complete. For the sake of confidentiality, I will ask you as the teachers and Heads of Departments to refrain from discussing your responses with your colleagues.

Secondly, I request permission to silently observe a staff meeting between the headmistress, the Heads of Departments, and the teaching staff members. I may also request to examine the minutes of staff meetings to gain insight into the patterns of participation in your school.

A third aspect of research which I hope to conduct, (but which does not involve yourselves) is to interview your headmistress, about her leadership style and the extent to which participative decision making is possible.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I am a Foundation Phase teacher, and I am keenly interested in all aspects of the teaching, management and leadership of the Foundation Phase, and particularly the practice of participative decision-making by Foundation Phase teachers. The second school in the research project is an Independent Examination Board faith-based, girls-only Foundation Phase school.

I am inviting you as the teachers and Heads of Departments to participate in this research, and I wish to express that your participation is voluntary and that any of you can refrain from participating should you feel so inclined.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. I reassure all of you that you can withdraw your permission to participate at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. You will not be paid for this study.

Your names and identity and the identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Simone Meintjes

25 Sussex Road,

Parkwood, 2193

Email: snmeintjes@gmail.com

Cell: 0836306590

Home tel: 011-4425120

Supervisor: Dr Siphiwe Mthiyane

Email: siphiwe.mthiyane@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX E: IEB TEACHERS' INFORMATION LETTER

Information Sheet for Teachers and Heads of Departments: Independent Examination Board
Foundation Phase school

4 May 2016

Dear teaching staff,

My name is Simone Meintjes and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on participatory decision-making by teachers and my research project title is "Participatory decision-making in schools: A study of two schools in Gauteng".

My research requirements of you are two-fold:

Firstly I would like to ask you, the teachers and Heads of Departments, to complete a questionnaire, which will probe your understanding and practice of participatory decision-making at school. The questionnaires will be anonymous; however I will request that the Heads of Departments indicate their position on the questionnaire, so that research data from teachers is not mixed with research data from management. The questionnaires will take about 10 - 15 minutes to complete. For the sake of confidentiality, I will ask you as the teachers and Heads of Departments to refrain from discussing your responses with your colleagues.

Secondly, I request permission to silently observe a staff meeting between the headmistress, the Heads of Departments, and the teaching staff members. I may also request to examine the minutes of staff meetings to gain insight into the patterns of participative decision-making in your school.

A third aspect of research which I hope to conduct, (but which does not involve yourselves) is to interview your headmistress, about her leadership style and the extent to which participative decision making is possible in your school.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because my I am a Foundation Phase teacher, and I am keenly interested in all aspects of the teaching, management and leadership of the Foundation Phase, and particularly the practice of participative decision-making by Foundation Phase teachers. The second school in the research project is a Gauteng Department of Education co-educational Foundation Phase school.

I am inviting you as the teachers and Heads of Departments to participate in this research, and I wish to express that your participation is voluntary and that any of you can refrain from participating should you feel so inclined.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. I reassure all of you that you can withdraw your permission to participate at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. You will not be paid for this study.

Your names and identity and the identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Simone Meintjes

25 Sussex Road,

Parkwood, 2193

Email: snmeintjes@gmail.com

Cell: 0836306590

Home tel: 011-4425120

Supervisor: Dr Siphiwe Mthiyane

Email: siphiwe.mthiyane@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX F: TEACHERS' CONSENT FORM

Teacher and Heads of Departments Consent Form

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in a study called: Participatory decision-making in schools: A study of two schools in Gauteng

My name is: _____

Please indicate your position: I am a teacher/I am a Head of Department

Circle one

Permission to observe you in a staff meeting

I agree to be observed in a staff meeting.

YES/NO

Permission for questionnaire

I agree to fill in a question and answer sheet for this study.

YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

APPENDIX G: A SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

A semi-structured interview for engaging with the principals of two Gauteng junior primary schools; to ascertain their understandings and practices of participative decision-making by teachers in their schools.

1. For how long have you been principal at this school?
2. How has your leadership practice evolved across this tenure?
3. Do you aspire to a certain kind/style of leadership? (Maybe instructional or authoritarian/managerial or democratic?)
4. How are decisions taken in your school? (Are you able to extend decision making to your staff?)
5. How do accountability pressures affect your capacity to engage in participative decision-making with staff?
6. How do you able to build relations of trust and responsibility amongst staff?
7. How does the SMT extend leadership to teachers?

APPENDIX H: TEACHERS' FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

1. Does your level of participation in decision-making enhance your sense of job satisfaction, or hinder it?
2. Does your level of participation in decision-making increase your sense of control (self-efficacy), or do you sometimes have a feeling of powerlessness?
3. Does your level of participation in decision-making enhance your commitment level to your job?
4. Does your level of participation in decision-making satisfy your expectations as a professional?
5. Does the level of participatory practices in the school enhance a sense of trust between staff members?
6. Does the level of participatory practices in the school enhance a sense of shared responsibility amongst staff members?
7. Does the level of participatory practices in the school spread a sense of shared accountability amongst staff members?
8. Do accountability pressures on the principal and senior managers have an inhibiting effect on the level of participative decision-making in the school?
9. Do the formal structures such as staff meetings allow for sufficient participation in decision-making?
10. Do informal interactions influence decision-making? (Or is one merely giving advice?)
11. Does participation in decision-making cause you frustration because decisions take too long?
12. Does participation in decision-making cause you to feel overloaded?
13. Does participation in decision-making make you feel more vulnerable?
14. Do instruction-focused discussions undermine your sense of autonomy (is there a sense that the privacy of your classroom practice is invaded?)
15. Do you benefit from instruction-focused discussions with your colleagues?
16. Does the level of participation in your school focus everyone on the school goals and school vision?
17. Are there any other aspects relating to participation in decision-making that you feel have an impact on participatory practices at your school?

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Participatory decision-making in schools: A study of two schools.

Dear teachers and HoDs,

The following questionnaire has been compiled to explore the nature and extent of your participation in decision-making in your school. The questionnaire requires that you indicate both your actual level of participation, and your desired level of participation. Thereafter there are some questions of a more exploratory nature to respond to.

Before you complete the questionnaire, please provide the following information:

Are you a teacher or a Head of Department? _____

How many years of experience do you have as an educator? _____

What level of qualification do you have? _____

Questionnaire to develop an understanding of teachers' perceptions and practices of participative decision-making in two Gauteng Foundation Phase schools.

Please indicate your level of actual participation in decision-making at school, and also your desired level of participation in decision-making at school. Please mark your choice with a cross.

	Actual participation				Desired participation		
	never	seldom	often	always	Too little	enough	Too much
Curriculum and Instruction							
1. I participate in decisions regarding how English should be taught.							
2. I participate in decisions regarding how English should be assessed.							
3. I participate in decisions regarding how Mathematics should be taught.							
4. I participate in decisions regarding how Mathematics is assessed.							
5. I participate in decisions regarding the nature of homework.							
6. I participate in decisions regarding the extent of homework given.							
7. I participate in decisions regarding the class timetable.							
8. I participate in decisions regarding how to interpret the curriculum.							
9. I participate in decisions regarding coverage of the curriculum.							
Student Achievement							
10. I participate in decisions regarding preparation for the ANAs/benchmarking tests.							
11. I participate in decisions regarding the outcomes of the ANAs/benchmarking tests.							
12. I participate in decisions regarding the preparation for inspection by GDE/Umalusi.							
13. I participate in decisions regarding the outcome of the inspection by GDE/Umalusi.							

	Actual participation				Desired participation		
	never	seldom	often	always	Too little	enough	Too much
14. I participate in decisions regarding the analysis of assessment results							
15. I participate in decisions regarding the retention of a student.							
16. I participate in decisions regarding awards given to students.							
Pupil personnel services							
17. I participate in decisions to contact a student's parents/guardian.							
18. I participate in decisions to refer a student for remedial support.							
19. I participate in decisions to refer a child for counselling.							
20. I participate in decisions to recommend an external assessment of a child by an educational psychologist.							
Policy development							
21. I participate in decision-making regarding the setting of disciplinary procedure at school.							
22. I participate in decision-making regarding the appearance of students.							
23. I participate in decision-making regarding the non-attendance by students.							
24. I participate in decision-making regarding the late arrival of students.							
25. I participate in decision-making regarding the spiritual development of students.							
Staff development							
26. I participate in decision-making with regard to attendance at professional workshops.							

	Actual participation				Desired participation		
	never	seldom	often	always	Too little	enough	Too much
27. I participate in decisions with regard to the development/interpretation of the staff evaluation policy.							
28. I participate in decisions with regard to the nature of classroom visits, (when they take place, by whom).							
29. I participate in decision-making regarding the outcome of classroom visits.							
30. I participate in decision-making with regard to a professional development plan.							
School-wide Planning							
31. I participate in decision-making regarding the compilation of the term /year planner.							
32. I participate in decision-making regarding the development of school infrastructure.							
33. I participate in decision-making regarding the strategic development of the school.							
34. I participate in decision-making regarding the nature and extent of fund-raising.							
35. I participate in decision-making regarding the organisation of fund-raising events.							
36. I participate in decision-making regarding the allocation of extra-mural duties.							
37. I participate in decision-making regarding the choice of excursions and shows.							
38. I participate in decision-making regarding the selection of new teachers.							
39. I participate in decision-making regarding the selection of senior managers (HoDs)							
40. I participate in decision-making with regard to the appointment of a new principal.							

	Actual participation				Desired participation		
	never	seldom	often	always	too little	enough	too much
Budget management							
41. I participate in decision-making regarding which classroom equipment is purchased.							
42. I participate in decision-making regarding the purchase of textbooks.							
43. I participate in decision-making regarding the choice of workbooks.							
44. I participate in decision-making with regard to the purchase of the reading scheme.							
45. I participate in decision-making with regard to the maintenance of infrastructure.							
46. I participate in decision making with regard to the maintenance of equipment.							

47. Does your level of participation in decision-making enhance your sense of job satisfaction, or hinder it? _____

48. Does your level of participation in decision-making increase your sense of control (self-efficacy), or do you sometimes have a feeling of powerlessness? _____

49. Does your level of participation in decision-making enhance your commitment level to your job?

50. Does your level of participation in decision-making satisfy your expectations as a professional?

51. Does the level of participatory practices in the school enhance a sense of trust between staff members? _____

52. Does the level of participatory practices in the school enhance a sense of shared responsibility amongst staff members? _____

53. Does the level of participatory practices in the school spread a sense of shared accountability amongst staff members? _____

54. Do accountability pressures on the principal and senior managers have an inhibiting effect on the level of participative decision-making in the school? _____

55. Do the formal structures such as staff meetings allow for sufficient participation in decision-making? _____

56. Do informal interactions influence decision-making? (Or is one merely giving advice?) _____

57. Does participation in decision-making cause you frustration because decisions take too long? _____

58. Does participation in decision-making cause you to feel overloaded? _____

59. Does participation in decision-making make you feel more vulnerable? _____

60. Do instruction-focused discussions undermine your sense of autonomy (is there a sense that the privacy of your classroom practice is invaded?) _____

61. Do you benefit from instruction-focused discussions with your colleagues? _____

62. Does the level of participation in your school focus everyone on the school goals and school vision? _____

63. Are there any other aspects relating to participation in decision-making that you feel have an impact on participatory practices at your school?

APPENDIX J: ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE LETTER

Wits School of Education



27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

10 March 2016

Student Number: 8608816H

Protocol Number: 2016ECE002M

Dear Simone Meintjes

Application for ethics clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Participatory decision-making in schools: a study of two schools in Gauteng

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that **clearance was granted**.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

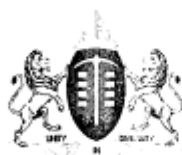
Yours sincerely,

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

cc Supervisor -Dr Sphiwe Mthiyane

APPENDIX K: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER



For administrative use only:
Reference no: D2017 / 070
enquiries: Diane Bunting 011 843 6503

GAUTENG PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	11 May 2016
Validity of Research Approval:	11 May 2016 to 30 September 2016
Name of Researcher:	Meintjes S.N.
Address of Researcher:	25 Sussex Road; Parkwood; Johannesburg; 2193
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	011 442 5120; 083 630 6590
Email address:	snmeintjes@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Participatory decision-making in schools: A study of two schools in Gauteng
Number and type of schools:	TWO Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Johannesburg North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB) must be presented with a copy of this letter.
2. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid.

Handwritten signature and date:
2016/05/12

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management (ER&KM)

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001

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