Transforming school management system using participative management approach in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The South African educational system relies on school management. The link between good management and academic success is well-established. This study examined establishing participatory school management as part of secondary school reform in South Africa. The study sampled schools in KwaZulu-Natal’s King Cetshwayo area. The relationship between participatory management and school reform was quantified. The study investigated school participatory management literature. Primary data was also collected from 25 school principals from 25 schools in King Cetshwayo’s Nkandla, Richards Bay, uMlalazi, and uMthonjaneni circuits. The research suggests that most schools need participatory management to transform. Principals without participatory management methods may confront problems when administering their schools. Principals should promote this unique school management strategy. Thus, South African school principals should include other stakeholders in school management.

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Introduction

According to Ajani (2021), a significant relationship exists between a country’s educational system and the level of development it can achieve. The intricate nature of schools, learners, and other stakeholders within the educational system in South Africa has been acknowledged as a challenging task for school principals, as per the findings of Buthelezi and Ajani (2022). Notwithstanding, educational administrators must formulate efficacious methodologies for school management to augment efficiency and overall academic achievement. According to Smith and Vigour’s (2011) assertion, school managers and leaders who adopt a participative approach involve their employees in decision-making by presenting the issue to them. Employees are kindly invited to present ideas and suggestions. A wide range of factors have influenced the development of participatory management. The education sector's structural modifications require enlisting a fresh group of skilled personnel. The desire of teachers to participate in their schools’ decision-making processes and have a say in the execution of their job responsibilities is on the rise, owing to their increasing proficiency in their respective disciplines.

According to Milkovich and Boudreau (2011, Buthelezi & Ajani, 2021), adopting participative decision-making practices by managers and leaders can enhance the likelihood of creating a collaborative work environment. Collaborative problem-solving, seeking feedback from others, and delegating decision-making authority to team members are methods for achieving this. The claim put forth by Paul and Lasisi (2019) suggests that involving staff members in decision-making can be viewed as a bottom-up strategy that promotes the efficient operation of educational establishments. Implementing participatory management can increase job satisfaction, creativity, and morale among teachers and other personnel and improve professional relationships with their school administrators. Tomlinson (2004) emphasises the importance of understanding the school culture and ensuring that decision-making processes are consistent with the school’s ethos to promote participatory decision-making. This demonstrates that various interactive methodologies can be employed in primary and secondary educational settings (Ajani, 2018; 2020).
In primary schools, there is a higher frequency of collective decision-making among the staff. The decision-making process in senior schools is characterised by increased complexity, owing to the existence of statutory frameworks and processes. According to Kerr (2013), active participation can augment dedication toward collective and institutional values, thereby fostering efficacy, effectiveness, and tangible progress. As an alternative approach, involvement can enhance the attainment of pre-established goals. In implementing participative management, school managers and leaders must research institutional culture (Buthelezi & Ajani, 2021). The principal objective of this study was to assess the viability of participatory management as a tactic for the transformation of secondary schools in South Africa.

**Literature Review**

**Management of Schools in South Africa**

The sociopolitical environment in South Africa has played a pivotal role in shaping the approach, conditions, ambience, and leadership strategies that educational administrators and supervisors have had to embrace (Gamede et al., 2022). While the current democratic system promotes participatory administration, schools in South Africa's apartheid era stood out for their bureaucratic or mechanistic approach (Ajani, 2020). The discussion surrounding the bureaucratic character of schools can be traced back to the works of Max Weber, a German sociologist who lived between 1856 and 1915, and Frederick W. Taylor, commonly recognised as the founder of scientific management. Swaepoel et al. (2009) reported on this subject matter in their publication. Even with contemporary changes in post-apartheid South African institutions, bureaucratic protocols had previously proven effective in multiple spheres of society, such as schools. According to Robbins et al. (2013), there is a perception that bureaucracy is more effective in larger organisations, such as schools. Swaepoel et al. (2009) argue that the notion of bureaucracy is conducive to the establishment of efficient work units. Notwithstanding the adoption of transformative strategies, there is potential for the bureaucratic administration of schools in South Africa in the aftermath of apartheid (Ajani & Govender, 2019).

The rigid policies, procedures, and hierarchical structure of academic organisations hinder the adoption of flexible work arrangements to tackle school-specific issues. At the moment, a notably rigid methodology distinguishes school-level education management. The education authorities wield considerable influence over multiple facets of day-to-day school operations, encompassing work schedules, timetables, subject matter, summative examination schedules, submission deadlines, and the issuance of school reports, among others. The teacher may be granted a restricted level of input concerning the non-negotiables mentioned above by the Department of Basic Education, which functions as the state employer.

More attention should be given to integrating learner interests into leadership and school management decisions. By the regulations stipulated in the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), the participation of parents and learners in the administration of schools is restricted to an indirect role, which is enabled through their representation in school governing bodies (SGBs) (South Africa, 1996). This regulatory requirement pertains to learners currently registered in the educational tiers from eighth to twelfth grade. Many educational administrators need help in facilitating effective learner participation in decision-making processes. Duch and Falco-Gimeno (2021) and Mthethwa et al. (2022) assert that it is the responsibility of school management teams to ensure that decision-making processes are inclusive of the viewpoints of learners, staff, and other stakeholders and that collective decisions are held accountable.

**The Historical Emergence of Participatory Management**

According to Alsubaie's (2021) research, Carter and Greer (2008) have observed that the concept of participatory management has a historical lineage in Europe that can be traced back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The origins of participative management can be identified in a period predating the development of labour relations and the notion of estranged labour. Integrating democratic theory and labour relations into the participatory management framework is a coherent idea. The onset of industrialisation in Europe in the 1760s led to the development of collaborative management approaches in work settings (Pausch, 2013). According to the literature review, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau were the leading proponents of participative management, despite its historical roots in the 1920s. Doughty (2014) conducted an analysis that indicates that Locke recognised the indispensability of authority in maintaining order while concurrently emphasising the significance of protecting specific individual rights, specifically the right to property.

Furthermore, Locke argued that the legitimacy of governments is contingent upon the consent of the governed. As per his claim, this resulted in a comparatively relaxed and tolerant construal of Hobbes' deviation from a condition of worldwide strife. The theories of Locke are commonly acknowledged to have exerted a substantial influence on the emergence of the American Revolution. Scholars who specialise in liberal democratic theory were the ones who first promoted the idea of participatory management. According to Pausch (2013), democracy is distinguished by the principles of individual autonomy and self-governance and is intricately connected to education and empowerment in all areas of society. According to Pausch (2013), John Dewey (1916) asserts that any instance of barring individuals from involvement in a given activity amounts to a form of oppression that is not tolerable in any societal setting. According to Pausch, Dewey placed significant emphasis on the value of education and advocated for the democratisation of all aspects of society. Pausch (2013) cites Dewey (2008), who posits that the absence of democratic principles in the regulation and administration methods employed in managing secondary social groups can have adverse effects on the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of citizens in the most comprehensive sense (Pausch, 2013; Mkhasibe et al., 2021).
His personal experience and direct observation informed Dewey's understanding of the American industrial landscape. One of the principles he espoused was the advocacy for advancing workplace democracy. The genesis of participative management can be attributed to workplace democracy, which surfaced during the industrialisation phase of Western nations. The term "industrial democracy" was introduced by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon to articulate his vision of an equitable and unobstructed economic system. Proudhon posited that liberal democratic ideologies inadequately addressed the democratisation of the workplace. As per Doughty's (2014) findings, Jean-Jacques Rousseau is acknowledged as one of the forerunners of participatory management, in conjunction with Locke and Dewey. According to Doughty, it can be argued that Rousseau's theory provides the fundamental basis and crucial substance for any discussion of democracy's participation.

The psychological significance of participatory management is based on the principles advocated in Rousseau's Social Contract, which serve as its foundational basis. The French philosopher presented a theoretical argument for a form of workplace democracy from a liberal standpoint. According to Pausch (2013), Rousseau is commonly acknowledged as the foremost advocate of participation theory, a claim supported by Pateman's (1970, 25) citation. Within the context of Rousseau's philosophy, participation is not necessarily limited to politics. Implementing this approach across all domains of existence is crucial to alleviate disparities and oppression. Implementing a participatory management approach is crucial for promoting and accelerating organisational success in contemporary societies. This approach should be evident in various workplaces, including schools. According to Doughty's (2014) analysis, it can be deduced that Rousseau advocated for democratic principles, as demonstrated by specific examples referenced in the Social Contract.

It can be postulated that in the hypothetical event of the existence of a divine race, a democratic system of governance would be utilised. The suitability of an ideal democracy for human beings may be subject to scrutiny. Doughty (2014) posits that the most effective and natural approach is for the most proficient individuals to govern the populace on the condition that they guarantee that their judgements are based on the community's welfare rather than their benefit. The notion of the "universal will" posited by Rousseau reflects the authentic desire of the general public to engage in affairs that bear significance for them. Rousseau is widely acknowledged as the individual who popularised the concept of democracy to a greater extent than any other person and is thus credited with its inception. Doughty (2014) posits that the persecution of the Jewish community by Hitler can be traced back to the influence of Rousseau. Most individuals who participated in Rousseau's concept of direct democracy displayed economic disparities.

Nevertheless, the degree of economic inequality between individuals did not justify the subjugation of one member of society for the benefit of another. Direct democracy or active participation is considered appropriate in diverse fields of human endeavour, including professional environments. For a considerable duration, socialist theory largely dominated the theoretical justifications for workplace democracy. Following the conclusion of World War II, European labour unions were involved in a concerted effort to establish and safeguard workers' labour rights.

The notion of participatory management was propelled into prominence in 1947, owing to the scholarly contributions of Alfred J. Marrow (Pojidaef, 1995). Marrow observed that most of the labour force in his manufacturing enterprise consisted of young women from rural mountainous areas with limited access to education. Despite exhibiting suboptimal productivity levels, these women were hired for employment. Dr Marrow's impetus to scrutinise the origins of this conduct and examine plausible techniques for its alteration stemmed from his expertise in psychology. The study's results indicate a noteworthy improvement in productivity among employees who were granted the chance to make consequential decisions related to their work. The adoption of participatory management practices resulted in a notable improvement in the manufacturing company's productivity. The concept of participatory management has generated substantial attention throughout the 20th century.

Theoretical Framework

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership should be distinct from delegation. Delegation entails assigning tasks to others for completion, and fostering such a culture among school leaders is not conducive to a healthy work environment. If leaders engage in frequent delegation, tasks are often passed down the hierarchical structure, resulting in individuals with limited availability and lower compensation being responsible for their completion. This phenomenon may lead to a sense of resentment among the workforce towards organisational leaders, as the prevailing perception among employees is that those in positions of authority are indolent and do not exhibit the same level of diligence as their subordinates. Distributed leadership aims to enhance the leadership potential within a school, thereby facilitating genuine and organic growth and development without resorting to deceptive or manipulative tactics. The collective efforts of leaders within a school, guided by a shared vision and values towards a standard set of goals, can facilitate the institution's transformation into a more effective educational entity. In essence, the concept of distributed leadership entails endowing school leaders with a sense of ownership by enabling them to lead their teams and advance their strategies that align with the overarching priorities of the entire school. Implementing distributed leadership in schools is paramount for effective school administration, particularly in light of the varied contexts present within South Africa.

What is the operational mechanism of distributed leadership in schools? Distributed leadership is underpinned by three fundamental principles: autonomy, capacity, and accountability. All areas are equally significant and mutually reliant. The authors' interpretation of the leadership model is depicted in the Venn diagram.
The distributed leadership model entails granting leaders in a school the independence to make crucial decisions within their respective domains of responsibility. The attainment of the goal, as mentioned earlier, of empowering leaders and endowing them with a sense of ownership over their work is contingent upon the presence of autonomy. It is recommended that individuals in leadership positions refrain from micromanaging their subordinates. However, for newly appointed leaders, this may prove to be a challenging task. Granting a significant degree of autonomy to senior or middle leadership team members necessitates substantial trust, which frequently lies beyond the realm of comfort for numerous principals.

Nonetheless, the conferral of full autonomy to ineffective leaders can be perilous, and hence, the concept of "earned autonomy" is frequently employed. The attainment of autonomy is accompanied by the responsibility to be accountable. If an individual lacks the authority to direct the strategy, what measures can be taken to ensure that they are held responsible for producing results? The two concepts mentioned above are closely connected. However, it is crucial for leaders, particularly principals, to be highly conscious of a significant caveat. As the principal, you are responsible for maintaining standards throughout the school. Genuinely embracing distributed leadership promotes a certain level of collective accountability.

The discourse on leadership has witnessed a gradual decline in the consideration of the organisational perspective (Crawford, 2012). Ogawa and Bossert (1995) asserted that this viewpoint has roots in the early works of organisation scholars but needs to be addressed in contemporary leadership research. The central contention posits that while the significance of school leaders has been underscored, it has often been divorced from the broader social milieu (Collinson et al., 2018; Lipke & Manaseri, 2019; Tan, 2012), thereby limiting the scope for organisational or contextual rationales. Comprehending a school that satisfies the requisites of contemporary teaching and learning necessitates revisiting the leadership discourse concerning organisational matters. Glatter (2006) argues that in educational research, it may be necessary to redirect leadership efforts towards concepts related to organisational structure. The authors assert that the term "educational leadership and management" may not be comprehensive enough to fully encapsulate the intricacies of the multifaceted and adaptable systems that are educational organisations. (p. 79).

The evolving comprehension of leadership as a collaborative social phenomenon has additionally facilitated the progression of an organisational outlook in the discourse on leadership. Various partially intersecting concepts characterise this communal perspective on implementing leadership. Doőş’s (2015) employs "shared leadership" to denote a scenario where two or more formally designated managers possess identical managerial authority and jointly undertake responsibility and collaborative work assignments. Conversely, Gale and Densmore (2003) utilise the term "democratic leadership" to describe an educational leadership practice distinguished by democratic influences. The approaches mentioned earlier centre around hierarchical leadership roles, whereas collective leadership pertains to a collaborative effort among all individuals involved in a given endeavour, thereby representing a pluralistic phenomenon (Denis et al., 2012). The distributed perspective underscores the notion that leadership practice is not solely confined to positional leaders but is also shared among followers. The increased allocation of specific responsibilities to school teachers, such as teacher team leaders, development leaders, and subject leaders, has potential relevance in the educational context.

In Swedish, teachers in these positions remain primarily dedicated to pedagogy and do not hold official administrative responsibilities within the school hierarchy. Hence, it is imperative not to consider them synonymous with official teacher leaders in the Anglo-Saxon leadership framework. The principal is the sole individual in the Swedish educational system in formal leadership. Despite the notable distinctions among the aforementioned collectivistic leadership approaches and similar notions, they collectively provide a broader perspective on the governance and leadership of schools. This perspective extends beyond formal positions' confines, and challenges established organisational hierarchies (Harris & Muijs, 2005). The present study employs a distributed perspective on leadership as a theoretical framework to comprehensively comprehend leadership in a school setting. This approach, as proposed by Diamond and Spillane (2016) and Gronn (2000), considers the collective actions of individuals and the impact of contextual factors such as organisational structures, activities, and cultural beliefs on the dynamics of leadership practice. Stated differently, leadership practice is characterised by the interrelatedness of leaders, followers, and the contextual circumstances in which they operate. Among
these various aspects, the subject of the situation has received comparatively minimal attention in the realm of distributed leadership research. Thus, we concur with Liljenberg’s (2015) assertion that investigating how various elements of the organisational context facilitate or impede leadership practices is a valuable pursuit from a distributed standpoint.

Research and Methodology

The research methodology utilised in the study was quantitative. Terreblanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2012) suggest that using quantitative research methods depends on the research goals and the data type necessary to attain these objectives. Creswell (2003) posits that employing post-positivist principles is integral to generating knowledge through quantitative methodology. This approach entails the application of cause-and-effect reasoning, reduction to specific variables, hypothesis formulation, employment of measurements and observations, and testing of theories. This methodology also utilises research methodologies such as experimentation and surveying, and information is collected through pre-established instruments that produce statistical data. The current study employed a quantitative methodology to achieve its research aims, involving a comprehensive analysis of the research inquiries and accessible resources.

Following the formulation of the research question, the subsequent step involved the development of the research methodology. According to Newman (2014), formulating an inquiry necessitates the exercise of discernment in choosing an appropriate case or sample, identifying pertinent factors and selecting appropriate measures, and opting for a research methodology such as an experiment or questionnaire. The researcher was responsible for designing the questionnaire administered to school principals. The academic discussed the importance of considering the validity and reliability of research data while selecting appropriate research methodologies.

Population and Sampling

The study focused on the target population of two hundred public secondary schools located in the King Cetshwayo district of South Africa. In this study, a random selection of principals from public secondary schools was made. The study sample was derived from four distinct education circuits: Nkandla, Richards Bay, Umhlaluze, Umlalazi, and Umthomwaneni. The researcher employed a random selection process to choose a sample of 25 secondary school principals from each education circuit for this study. Deputy principals were not included in the target population due to the similarity in the nature and context of their management responsibilities with school principals. The selection of four education circuits, namely Nkandla, Richards Bay, Umlalazi, and Umthomwaneni, was based on the vast geographical expanse of South Africa, which encompasses schools situated in urban, semi-urban, and rural areas.

According to Kumar (2014), the preference for the quantitative research method was due to its simplicity, lack of bias, and adherence to the fundamental assumption of probability, which posits that every element in the population has an equal probability of being selected. The researchers considered the matter of data validity and reliability while selecting the study’s participants. As mentioned earlier, 200 principals from secondary schools within the education circuits were selected randomly and invited to participate in the study by completing questionnaires.

Data Collection Instrument and Administration

The present study employed a questionnaire as a quantitative research methodology. The researcher recognised the need for a questionnaire to extract the requisite participant data. Kumar (2014, 181) concurs with this perspective, asserting that the questionnaire can enhance the probability of acquiring precise information, particularly in scenarios where sensitive inquiries are posed. The matter of resource accessibility was duly considered during the formulation of this inquiry. The data collected through questionnaires were subjected to analysis and interpretation. The researcher enhanced a data verification system to uncover facts about participatory management as a component of educational reform, as reported by the study participants. This allowed for the formulation of generalisations based on the research outcomes.

The researcher conducted a pilot test of the research instrument, specifically the questionnaire, in five secondary schools located in South Africa. The secondary schools involved in the initial trial initiative were subsequently omitted from the inquiry. The primary purpose of conducting a pilot study of the research instrument is to determine the necessity of modifying the research instrument's layout, the quality of the research questions, the identification of spelling errors, and the average time required to complete the questionnaire. The objective of administering research instruments was to obtain data from the participants. The data collection process involved the utilisation of the education circuits of Nkandla, Richards Bay, Umlalazi, and Umthomwaneni to obtain information from the study participants. The selected educational circuits encompassed urban, semi-urban, and rural schools. 200 questionnaires were distributed to a randomly selected group of principals within the chosen education circuits.

Data Analysis

The responses obtained from the quantitative research data were coded by the researcher, who subsequently developed frequencies to analyse the concept of participative management as a transformative aspect in secondary schools. The researcher performed data presentation, interpretation, and analysis to achieve the objectives of this study and address the research inquiries. The validation of the collected data was carried out in consultation with scholars specialising in education management. This procedure was
implemented to meet the reliability and validity criteria of the study. According to Newman (2014, p. 21), the issues of reliability and validity hold significant importance in all forms of measurement. The concept of reliability pertains to the degree of consistency or replicability of similar conditions, while validity pertains to the extent to which our constructs accurately measure social reality. The secondary objective of data verification was to engage individuals with a novel perspective on the matter. The researchers extrapolated from the data to more extensive populations and settings relevant to educational management and leadership in South Africa.

Findings and Discussions

This section discusses results emanating from quantitative data.

Staffing in schools (n=180)

According to the data presented in Table 1, most participants, precisely 69%, reported having deputy principals. The percentage mentioned above needs to clarify the nature of the role functionaries’ positions, specifically whether they served in an interim capacity or had been formally designated by the Department of Basic Education in the Republic of South Africa. According to the table, it can be observed that 97% of the participants held the position of department head. It is likely that within smaller schools, an individual holds the position of departmental head. In the event of the temporary absence of a senior staff member, departmental heads may serve as acting deputy principals or principals. Ramalepe (2014, p. 1) cautions that the deficiency of collaborative leadership and absence of coherence among the school management team members could potentially adversely impact the school’s academic performance. The presence of a shared objective among the school’s management personnel and their ability to work together can offer benefits in pursuing a transformative endeavour such as implementing participatory management. The responsibility lies with the school’s management team.

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<th>Component</th>
<th>No. of schools with deputy principals</th>
<th>No. of schools with heads of departments</th>
<th>No. of teachers per secondary school</th>
<th>No. of schools with security personnel</th>
<th>No. of schools with support staff, e.g. clerks</th>
<th>No. of schools with librarians</th>
<th>Other staff members</th>
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<td>125</td>
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Creating Participatory Management as a Component of School Transformation

Need for principals to accommodate staff members in participative management initiatives

According to the findings presented in Table 2, all of the respondents (100%) expressed the belief that principals must assess the preparedness of their staff members before implementing participatory management strategies. According to Colquitt et al. (2009), school principals and other members of school management delegate responsibility for crucial behaviours to employees deemed capable of performing the assigned task. School principals must assess the preparedness of their staff before implementing participatory management strategies to prevent employees from being overwhelmed.

The need for principals to involve staff members in the process of decision making

According to the findings presented in Table 2, all participants expressed a strong level of agreement regarding the necessity for principals to facilitate the involvement of staff members in the decision-making process. According to Riggs et al. (2012), contemporary employees desire to participate in the administration of their company. Conversely, Kappel (2018) asserts that delegating decision-making responsibilities to employees indicates high trust in their abilities. Consequently, secondary school principals need to facilitate the involvement of staff members in the decision-making process.

The need for principals to establish a decision-making model for staff involvement

According to Table 2, an overwhelming majority of 98% of the participants concurred that implementing a staff participation model in schools is imperative. According to Hellriegel et al. (2003, p. 518), the leader participation model developed by Victor Vroom and Phillip Yetton in 1973 offers a framework for determining the appropriate level and type of participatory decision-making suitable for various contexts. Using a staff participation model in decision-making processes aids in delineating the rationale behind implementing participative management within secondary schools.
The need for principals to align individual staff personal objectives with the organisational goals to attain participatory management.

According to the findings presented in Table 2, an overwhelming majority of 98% of the participants acknowledged the necessity for principals to align personal objectives with the organisation's objectives to achieve participative management. According to van der Westhuizen (2014, 101), J. W. Getzels and E. G. Guha (1957) have presented in their social system theory the importance of integrating the requirements of individuals with those of the organisation in the context of participative management. By aligning employees' needs with the organisation's goals and objectives, employees are more likely to perceive a sense of value within the workplace. There is potential for improvement in the employees' productivity and job satisfaction levels.

The need for staff engagement in staff professional practices

According to Table 2, a significant majority of the respondents, precisely 99%, expressed their agreement regarding the necessity for principals to engage staff members in issues related to professional practice. According to Joyce and colleagues (2012, p. 137), school principals must engage their staff members in matters related to their professional conduct. The active participation of staff is crucial in fostering a sense of ownership regarding decisions made collectively on professional matters.

Staff encouragement for participation in school extra-curricular activities

Table 2 demonstrates that all participants acknowledged principals' need to promote staff involvement in extra-curricular activities. According to Caldwell and Spinks (2012, p. 75), the involvement of staff in extra-curricular activities is a crucial aspect that contributes to the success of schools. The involvement of faculty members in extra-curricular pursuits may hold pedagogical significance for the individual growth and development of learners.

Initiation of participative management to minimise organisational conflicts.

According to the findings presented in Table 2, all of the participants surveyed concurred that principals must implement participatory management strategies to mitigate conflicts within the organisation. The table indicates that implementing participative management by principals is necessary to mitigate organisational conflicts. Robbins (2011, p. 157) cautions that excessive dependence on participative management could incite conflict. This assertion holds merit, as participatory management often results in the amplification of divergent perspectives among personnel. In contrast, Lichtenstein (2008, 31) posits that participative management is based on the notion that involving employees in decision-making can reduce organisational conflicts. Lichtenstein perceives participative management as a mechanism that can foster tranquillity, consistency, and efficiency in the work environment.

Principals using participative management for power sharing in diverse decision-making procedures

According to the data presented in Table 2, a significant majority of 95% of the participants acknowledged the importance of participative management as a crucial component of power distribution in diverse decision-making procedures, particularly among principals. The incorporation of power sharing is often regarded as a crucial element in the implementation of participatory management. John Dewey (1916) posits, as cited in Pausch (2013, p. 87), that excluding individuals from participation constitutes a form of suppression that is not conducive to healthy social relationships. Implementing participative management in schools may require principals to distribute power among staff members. Table 2 indicated that a proportion of five per cent of the participants remained indecisive regarding this issue.

The need for principals to use participative management for consensus decision-making with staff members

According to the findings presented in Table 2, a considerable proportion (92%) of the participants concurred that principals and staff must arrive at decisions through consensus. The primary element of participative management is attaining organisational objectives through consensus. According to Bush (2011, p. 72), participative management is linked to collegiality, wherein decisions are arrived at through a process of discussion that ultimately leads to consensus. The efficacy of this procedure is contingent upon the staff's shared comprehension of the organisation's objectives. A total of 8% of the participants expressed dissent concerning the necessity of principals and staff arriving at decisions through consensus.

Need for principals to use regular staff meetings to share information

Table 2 demonstrates a significant level of endorsement for the convening of routine staff meetings. The overwhelming majority of participants, precisely 95%, concurred that principals must place importance on frequent staff meetings to disseminate information. Most participants likely perceive staff meetings as a means of exchanging thoughts and concepts. According to Trewatha and Newport (2012, p. 437), using participatory management techniques, such as staff meetings, allows employees to actively participate in decision-making processes that impact them. Nevertheless, a portion of 5% of the participants did not express a clear stance regarding the issue. The prevailing atmosphere within the school may not foster a disposition among the participants to place a high degree of importance on convening routine gatherings of personnel to exchange pertinent data.
This, in turn, leads to the development of joyous moods and ultimately contributes to overall happiness, as suggested by Tkach and

Implementing participative management has been observed to promote increased engagement and collaboration among team members, necessitating the presence of individuals who possess strong interpersonal abilities (Lawler, 1992; Buthelezi & Ajani, 2021). According to previous studies conducted by Argyle and Lu (1990) and Hills and Argyle (2001), social interaction has been identified as a significant contributor to the experience of pleasure and happiness among individuals with high levels of extroversion. This, in turn, leads to the development of joyous moods and ultimately contributes to overall happiness, as suggested by Tkach and

Discussion

Numerous studies have demonstrated that participatory management, which involves collaborative decision-making or shared decision-making authority between a superior and their subordinates (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998), can yield numerous advantages for both the school organisation as a whole and its staff members (Gebert et al., 2003; Day et al., 2005; Ajani & Govender, 2019). However, research conducted by Sato et al. (2002) has demonstrated that the participation of teachers in decision-making can result in stress related to their job and ambiguity in their role, leading to tension and conflict among teachers, principals, and administrators. Implementing participative management poses a challenge to conventional practices as it promotes self-governance, receptiveness to innovative proposals, and unconventional goals (West, 2002; Ajani, 2020). According to Stevens and Ash (2001), a participatory management setting entails heightened social and cognitive requirements, including job significance, accountability for others, and cooperation.

According to Weihrich et al. (2008), Muthala et al. (2022), and Mthethwa et al. (2022), management is regarded as one of the most crucial human activities. Since the inception of group formation to achieve goals beyond individual capabilities, management has been crucial in coordinating individual contributions. The significance of managerial roles has been on the rise due to the growing dependence of society on collective endeavours and the expansion of numerous organised groups into larger entities.

Implementing participative management endows employees with greater accountability for the organisation's performance and for formulating planning and organising strategies. This approach conveys the message that the organisation acknowledges the potential of its employees to make significant contributions to its success (Luthans, 1995; Stevens & Ash, 2001). Prior research conducted by Penley and Tomaka (2002) and Vollrath (2001) has demonstrated that individuals who possess a high level of conscientiousness tend to perceive themselves as capable of meeting situational demands. Furthermore, these individuals are more inclined to take responsibility for any issues that may arise and exhibit persistence in the face of obstacles.

Implementing participative management practices has been observed to promote increased engagement and collaboration among team members, necessitating the presence of individuals who possess strong interpersonal abilities (Lawler, 1992; Buthelezi & Ajani, 2021). According to previous studies conducted by Argyle and Lu (1990) and Hills and Argyle (2001), social interaction has been identified as a significant contributor to the experience of pleasure and happiness among individuals with high levels of extroversion. This, in turn, leads to the development of joyous moods and ultimately contributes to overall happiness, as suggested by Tkach and

Table 2: Participative Management as Transformative Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals must analyse staff members' readiness before introducing participative management initiatives.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for principals to allow staff members to participate in decision-making.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for schools to have a model for staff participation in decision-making.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must match individual needs with organisational goals to pursue participative management.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for principals to involve staff members in matters of professional practice.</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for principals to encourage staff participation in extra-curricular activities.</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for principals to initiate participative management patterns to minimise organisational conflicts.</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must regard participative management as a critical aspect of power-sharing in various decision-making processes.</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for principals and staff to reach decisions by consensus.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for principals to value regular staff meetings to share information.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lyubomirsky (2006). Participative management holds promise in achieving equilibrium between the engagement of managers and their subordinates in information processing, decision-making, or problem-solving (Wagner, 1994).

According to Edmondson (1999), implementing a participative management environment facilitates the identification of novel prospects and obstacles for teachers and fosters their learning through acquiring, sharing, and integrating knowledge. Organ and Lingl (1995) suggest that individuals with high levels of conscientiousness exhibit a propensity for work involvement, which increases their chances of receiving both formal and informal work-related rewards such as respect and a sense of personal accomplishment. According to Robbins and Coulter's (1996) perspective, a participative or democratic leader is characterised by their inclination to engage subordinates in the decision-making process, delegate authority, promote participation in determining work methods and objectives, and utilise feedback as a means of coaching. Participatory management fosters a collective sense of identity among employees and empowers them to take ownership of decisions made by managers.

Participative management, also referred to as employee involvement or participative decision-making, is a management approach that promotes the engagement of stakeholders across all organisational levels in problem analysis, strategy development, and solution implementation. According to Mullins (2008), the democratic leadership style is characterised by a power distribution that is more evenly distributed among the group and a higher level of group interaction. The distribution of leadership functions is collaborative among group members, with the manager assuming a more integrated role within the team. The involvement of group members in decision-making, policy determination, and implementation of systems and procedures is significant.

Mkhasibe et al. (2021) extend an invitation to stakeholders in every school to partake in the decision-making process through engagement in activities such as goal-setting, work schedule determination, and suggestion-taking. Additional forms of participative management entail augmenting the accountability of personnel through job enrichment, establishing self-governed teams, quality circles, or quality-of-work-life committees, and obtaining survey feedback. Buthelezi and Ajani (2021) assert that participatory management, on the other hand, encompasses a broader scope beyond mere employee involvement in decision-making processes. In addition, effective management entails consideration and respect for the ideas and suggestions proffered by employees.

Conclusions

The present study has conducted an empirical inquiry on implementing participative management as a transformative element in secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo district of KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. The questionnaire was employed as the research instrument during the investigative process. The researcher devised the questionnaires to evaluate the correlation between participative management and school transformation. The systematic methodologies employed in gathering information on the research issue were deliberated upon, following which the data was exhibited, explicated, and scrutinised.

Following the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of statistical data, the researcher incorporated additional information from the literature review and personal experience with participative management in the context of school transformation within the King Cetshwayo district. When statistical data indicated a discernible trend, inquiries were made to ascertain the underlying causes and mechanisms, such as “What factors contribute to this phenomenon?” and “What is the process by which this occurs?” This study employs an empirical data-driven approach to examine participative management practices as a transformative factor in secondary schools within the King Cetshwayo district. The aim is to identify and expose school management challenges, which relevant education authorities can then address.

The researcher additionally furnished a synopsis and outcomes of the inquiry. An attempt was undertaken to gather feedback on individual elements to draw particular inferences. Following the discussion of the findings, the researcher formulated a series of recommendations regarding implementing participatory management in the context of educational transformation at secondary schools in South Africa.

In this study, it is recommended that

i. Principals consider participatory management as a crucial component of the transformational process in secondary schools.
ii. Principals are advised to facilitate opportunities for staff members to participate in the decision-making procedures within secondary schools actively.
iii. Providing a platform for learners to express their opinions on school-related issues has the potential to reduce the occurrence of avoidable conflicts in high schools.
iv. There exists a significant imperative for principals and other members of school management teams to contemplate South Africa's transformative initiatives and agenda at an elevated level.
v. The imperative to exhibit collaborative endeavour in implementing the stipulations of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) is highly significant.

Conversely, the success of every school system lies in the cooperation among the stakeholders, which calls for cooperation through mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of every individual. Hence, school principals should endeavour to engage and accommodate all in the decision-making process for the schools.
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Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data is not publicly available due to restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References


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