PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to :

My late father for his sacrifice and commitment towards my development.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that :

PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN
SCHOOLS

is my own work both in conception and execution and all sources used or quoted have been
acknowledged by means of complete references.

B P Mpungose

Durban, December 1999

ABSTRACT

This research examined participative decision making and conflict management in schools.

The researcher made use of questionnaires to gather data on whether educators participated in decision making. He also examined whether the assumption that teacher involvement in decision making reduces conflicts in schools was true.

It became clear from the study that despite efforts by the Department of education to involve all stakeholders in decision making in schools, it is still apparent that not all principals are prepared to involve educators in decision making processes.

This research study is aimed at creating awareness on the importance of inclusion/ involvement of educators in decision making as prescribed by the South African Schools Act of 1996.

(v)

LIST OF TABLES   PAGE

APPENDICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS   PAGE

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT

CHAPTER THREE

THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH INTO PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS   PAGE

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Power sharing and participation are often seen as the tenets of democratic principles (South African Constitution 1994). This happens in almost all spheres of life, namely communities, families, workplace and even in schools (South African Schools Act 84 of 1996). This is perhaps because there is general determination and desire to uphold democratic principles.

Participative or consultative management traces its origin from the business or industrial sector. Bell (1979:1) asserts that many people today identify participation with industrial democracy.

The current South African constitution empowers all people to be part of decisions that affect their lives. This is even conspicuous in the education system, which prescribes the involvement of all stakeholders, including parents and learners in decision making (South African Schools Act 1996).

Katz and Lawyer (1994:47) view participative decision making as decision making by members of an organization or group that enables each to experience influence in determining a particular direction. Participative decision making promotes decision that leads to co-operation.

Despite the introduction of the new Legislation the South African Schools Act of 1996, as a framework of participative decision making, the researcher is of the view that those in authority in schools have not been adequately prepared for the emerging educational framework. As a result, conflict often arises because of the gap between what ought to be and what is, in terms of the practical application of legislation.

CHAPTER ONE

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quality.

The study assesses whether educators participate in decision making processes in schools. This research intends to determine the extent to which participation alleviates disharmony between teachers and principals.

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1.3   <u>STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</u>

The current South African education system is democratic in nature. This is because of the fact that the constitution of the country is democratic. Although schools are expected to subscribe to the democratic principles as espoused by the state (South African Constitution 1994), some principals still rely on autocratic practices of the past, and deliberately exclude teachers in decision making.

The shift from authoritarian to participative decision making seems to be hindered partly by the autocratic and authoritarian principals, hence the delay in schools transforming themselves. Without educator participation in decisions, ownership of decisions is threatened, so is commitment to implementing this.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 prescribes participation of all stakeholders in decision making. Participation is therefore regarded as a value in all communities, as they legally have a right to participate in decision making of their schools.
The establishment of bodies such as School Governing bodies ensures that all stakeholders participate without fear of intimidation and victimization of any nature.

The expectation of the state is that participation by all stakeholders in decision making will lead to improved educational system, thus minimising chances of conflict in schools

3

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the study is to determine whether participative decision making can contribute towards management of conflict in schools. The researcher will determine the extent to which non-involvement of teachers in decision making affects the daily activities of those institutions.

Questions that this research will be asking will include the following :

- Are teachers involved in decision making at schools?
- Does non-involvement of teachers in decision-making contribute to conflict that schools experience?

The researcher in this study holds the assumption that participative decision making is an ideal way of minimizing conflict in schools. Teachers and principals directly affected by the transformation process will be required to express their experiences in as far as participation in decision making is concerned. It is hoped that this study will offer guidelines to practising educators to alleviate factors hindering conflict in schools. It is also envisaged that this study will offer guidelines regarding educator participation in decision-making in schools. The findings of the research will hopefully provide framework for a change in management by adopting a more participative approach to make schools more effective and tension free.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The research hypothesis for this study is:

Assumption No. 1

Some principals do not involve teachers in decision making despite the prescription of the South African Schools Act of 1996.

Assumption No. 2

Non-involvement of teachers in decision making often results in conflict in schools.

Assumption No. 3

Principals are not adequately trained to deal with transformation, hence some of them resist managing schools participatively.

1.6 PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

The study sample consisted of educators and principals in selected schools in Umlazi. Both, schools and respondents were selected randomly. It was the intention of the researcher to involve a variety of ages and a gender balanced population.

Questionnaires were administered to educators.

1.7 OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

1.7.1 PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING

Participative decision making is the process whereby the leader involves his subordinates in decision making.

1.7.2 DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

Van der Dennen and Falger (1990:2) define conflict as incompatibility of interests, goals, values, needs, expectations and or social cosmologist or ideologies. Katz and Lawyer (1996: Viii) define conflict as a situation or state between at least two interdependent parties which is characterised by perceived differences that the parties evaluate as negative. This often results in negative emotional states and behaviours intended to control the other parties in the interaction.

1.8 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The programme of study was organised as follows:

Chapter One was an orientation chapter.

Chapter Two reviewed literature on participative decision making and conflict management, in order to put the study in its theoretical framework.

Chapter Three dealt with methodology and research procedures.

Chapter Four dealt with the interpretation and analysis of data.

Chapter Five offered conclusions and recommendations . These were drawn from the researcher's findings in the whole study.

5

1.9 <u>CONCLUSION</u>

This chapter provided an introduction, which also served as the background to the entire study.

CHAPTER 2

PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The central purpose of this study was to evaluate whether involvement of level one educators in decision making helps to alleviate conflict between principals and educators in schools. The level of conflict between principals and teachers seems to have escalated in South Africa, probably because of the transformation process that started taking place after 1994 democratic elections. Changes in the education system have been the results of modern concept of democracy, which prescribes participation by all stakeholders in decision making.

Teachers as stakeholders in education are entitled to participation in decision making at school level. This is not always the case, in some schools teachers are not part of the decision making body. Often in those instances teachers mobilize themselves and engage in direct confrontation with those in management.

Transformation of South African education attempts to bring about participation and movement away from centralised to a more inclusive type of the school system. According to Isherwood and Hoy (1973: 125) in schools where hierarchical authority prevails it seems likely that decision making will be at the hands of the few, namely those in management. This is contrary to what the South African Schools Act is propagating. Guest and Fatchett (1974: 21) point out that the interest in participation has been growing in recent years, because it is deemed a response and sometimes a solution to certain pressures within the society.

It was the intention of this research to examine and investigate the perception that teachers own decisions, if they participate in decision making processes of their organization. Also included or related to this perception is that participation minimizes conflict. The purpose of this chapter was to review literature in participative decision making and its

role in creating harmony in schools.

2.2 <u>HISTORY OF PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING</u>

Decision making is a component for all organizations. The school is no exception to the rule. This view is brought forward by Campbell and Gregg (1957: 275) when they say that the need for decision making is found in all organizations.

Not all organizations perceive participation of workers as necessary and rightly deserved. Workers' demands of participation in management are an old persistent idea. In the United States, beginning in the mid 1980's, a growing number of individual schools, schools districts and school systems began to experiment with participative strategies and models that capitalized on the professional talents of education communities, teachers, parents and administrators (Keith and Girling 1991: 36-37).

Chapman et al (1995:118) state that by the 1990's in Australia, action relating to process elements of participation in decision making, decentralization and devolution of decision making had progressed significantly.

Mosege and Van der Westhuizen (1997. 17(4):196) point out that participation in decision making by subordinates has long been the basis of educational reforms in countries such as the United States of America, Denmark, Tanzania, Mozambique and Australia. The dawn of a new "South Africa" has seen a proliferation of school governance and management, which is underpinned by participation.

Research on desirability of participation by subordinates has been conducted in various countries. A research of this nature has also been done in South Africa and led to Mosege and Van der Westhuizen (1997 : 196) concluding that teachers desire more participation than they have recently had.

Steyn (1998 : 131) however states that teachers need to be empowered to participate

fully in decision making. To support this assertion of teacher empowerment, he mentions the recommendations of Education White Paper 2 of 1996, which emphasize the importance of teacher empowerment. This coincides with current changes taking place in the governance of education.

The desire for teacher participation in decision making is not new. Steyn (1998 : 132) argues that democratisation, shared decision making, participative management and teacher empowerment are not new concepts in education. Throughout the seventies and eighties, educators debated and encouraged teacher empowerment.

This assertion is also held by Sayed and Carrim (1997.17(3) : 91) They say that the demand for democracy and participation in South African education has a long history. It stretches from the flight of the first slaves from their colonial masters in the early 17th century to the intense and bitter student protests of the 1980's. Central to these struggles were two key ideas:

- that decision making in schools and school governance structures should include all sectors / role players / stakeholders.
- that greater representation would ensure educational accountability, legitimacy and democracy.

These demands concretely manifested themselves in the 1980's in the growth and development of Parents, Teacher and Student Associations (PTSAs). These PTSAs were seen as community structures, which gave political voice of the disenfranchised (Sayed and Carrim 1997: 17(3) : 91).

Sayed and Carrim (1997 : 92) further state that the elections in April 1994 marked a significant shift in policy development. The installation and establishment of a legitimate, non-racial and democratic, National Ministry of Education, opened the way for the enactment of official policy acts. The South African Schools Act of 1996 is one of these acts. It outlines the political arrangement within which school governance structures are located. The issue of participation in policy developments since 1994 surfaces in two

distinct ways. Firstly, much development work is geared towards enhancing the participation of stakeholders and citizens processes of policy formulation.

Secondly,the South African Schools Act of 1996 identifies teachers as legitimate stakeholders in education, thus are entitled to participate in decision making in schools.

Bell (1979 : 2) states that neither the concept nor the practice of participation is new. There are many examples of successful participation that go back over more than one generation. Some companies have had works committees for more than 50 years. Profit sharing and co-partnership stem from the 1880s. The more recent pressure for participation at higher levels in the enterprise, results from a number of different factors.

According to Knudsen (1995 : 1) participation is a popular concept. Almost everybody seems to be in favour of it. Managers, trade unionists, politicians and teachers. The central tenet of participation is that harmonious social relations can only be established and maintained if society takes the interest in workers and other dependent groups into consideration. They must be accommodated by constructing institutions of a socially integrative character.

Campbell and Gregg (1957 : 275) allude to the fact that all administrators, in fact all members of an organization, are called upon to make decisions of an organizational nature. Thus in educational administration, the community as a whole, the board of education, the superintendent, principals, teachers, non professional workers and even the pupils, both individually or collectively, make decisions which have an impact on the school system.

2.3   BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATION

According to Campbell and Gregg (1957 : 278-279) there are many advantages that can be accrued from staff participation in educational decision making. One of these is that participation helps the staff member to identify himself with institutional purposes and

programmes.

Participation in decision making encourages a disposition on the part of staff members of the school system, who are willing to make effective contributions to the educational programmes.

Keith and Girling (1991 : 38-39) state that when employees at lower levels of the organizational hierarchy have a chance to share in power from above, they feel greater fulfilment of their psychological needs. They experience greater team identity and are more co-operative. Empowering teachers to address organizational and educationally relevant matters unlocks hidden capabilities. Making knowledge about the organization, such as information about the budgets or minutes of certain meetings, routinely available to teachers, can promote the understanding and commitment of those at lower levels to the larger organizational goals.

Katz and Lawyer (1994 : 47) ibid assert that participative decision making promotes decisions that lead to co-operation rather than alienation and conflict. Within groups, participative decision making builds commitment to an organization or a group's goals.

Katz and Lawyer (1994) further state that participative or shared decision making enables the members of an organization or group to experience influence through involvement. The level of involvement required for the members to experience influence is considerable and necessarily involves a strong commitment from the group as a whole to participative decision making.

The following are further benefits of participative decision making as identified by Katz and Lawyer (1994).
- improves the quantity and quality of communication with the group.
- allows the group to use all its resources.
- builds commitment to decision (s).
- Deepens a sense of mutual interdependence among participants.

11

- Enhances satisfaction among participants with the organization's leadership and organization as a whole.
- Establishes higher performance goals.
- Deepens motivation to accomplish result.
- Heightens satisfaction among participants with the solutions and decision making process.

Duke et al. (1980 .16 (1) : 96) support the view of teacher participation in decision making by saying teacher involvement in school decision making is supposed to represent a means by which teachers can gain a greater voice in determining how schools are run.

Sayed and Carrim (1997 .17 (3) : 94) emphasize the importance and relevance of participative decision making in schools. They say that everyone mentions the word and for many it is naturally a good thing and something that is highly desirable. Participation in the education system provides a strong sense of solidarity between individuals, and consequently a stable form of group participation and representation.

Duke et al. (1980 : 98-99) argue that teachers are likely to see three benefits resulting from shared decision making namely: feeling of self efficacy, a sense of shared ownership and, advancement of workplace democracy.

(1) Feeling of self efficacy
Feeling of self-efficacy refers to the satisfaction, which many people derive from accomplishing something, which they consider important. A teacher who serves on a committee that develops and recommends a new curriculum might feel efficacious if he or she contributes to what the leader considers an improved course for his or her learners. Involvement is likely to be regarded as satisfying only if the participant is able to have a real impact on the outcome of the decision making process.

The above is supported by Steyn (1998. 18 (3) : 136) when he argues that teacher participation in decision making is rewarding when it develops the staff's confidence in

12

their decision making abilities. It is important to involve them in decisions that have possibility of successful implementation.

(2) Ownership

Duke et al. (1980) state that besides added confidence in one's ability to control his or her environment, shared decision making conceivably contributes to an individual's feeling of being part of a collective enterprise. The notion that one has a stake in the future of an enterprise sometimes is referred to as a feeling of shared ownership. Such a feeling might be considered a distinct benefit, since it can combat the destructive forces of anomaly and alienation.

Milstein (1980 : 251) is also in support of ownership when he argues that one of the benefits of participative decision making is the increased ownership and deeper commitment to make the decision work.

(3) Workplace democracy

Workplace democracy is the doctrine that workers have a basic right to participate in the making of decisions, which affect the utilization of their labour. Some teachers may derive satisfaction from exercising what they believe to be their right to participate in deciding how their time and energy will be used on the job.

Clarke et al. (1979: 9) see participation as a means of promoting the satisfaction and personal development of the individual worker on the ground that workers should have a greater say in decision making at work, extending democracy from the political to industrial sphere.

Apart from what has been said thus far, Cookson and Schneder (1995 : 232) assert that by taking part, people become increasingly skilled in participation. People begin to value the benefits of participation and become better able to decide which decisions require involvement and which do not.

13

Steyn (1998 : 131) ibid argues favourably towards teacher participation and he quotes Garrison (1988) when he says that individual teachers should be empowered to participate in the process of knowledge, production, distribution and not simply passive consumption. Decisions should be made by teachers who are in touch and know what they are doing.

Cookson and Schnerder (1995 : 235 -236) warn that when people begin to have access to information, when they are drawn into decision making , when they are empowered to exercise meaningful influence, they often demand rights without seeing that rights have related responsibilities. When people come together in a workplace an effort must be made to ensure that the organization is productive, that it adds value and that peqle work together towards a common purpose.

The necessity of a decision making structure in an organization like a school is emphasized by Rambiyana et al. (1996. (16) 4 : 192) when quoting May (1987) who said that a decision structure is necessary for collective responsibility to be owned by a group or the whole institution.

According to Bell (1979 : 2) participative decision making gives birth to improved quality of working life and the satisfaction obtained from work. He asserts that participation is the key to improve efficiency and productivity of the enterprise.

Adams (1979 : 9) points out that participation is seen as a way to enhanced effectiveness, to increased (or gained) status, to a socially more just and satisfying relationship, and more enjoyable job with far less stress and strain.

Campbell and Gregg (1957 : 278) argue in favour of teacher participation in decision making process. They say it is particularly appropriate to encourage wide participation in decision making in an educational organization.

2.4   **PROCESSES OF PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING**

Bell (1979 : 10) identifies consultation and joint decision making or co-determination, as the processes participation in decision making.

2.4.1   Consultation

Bell (1979) suggests that consultation is the process whereby employees are consulted in advance before decisions are made. Consultation can be very effective for employee involvement in decision making.

Clarke and others (1972: 48) also identify consultation as a form of participation. They state that consultation takes place on an informal basis in most work places.

2.4.2   Joint decision making or co-determination

Bell (1979 : 10) asserts that collective bargaining is a form of co-determination. In collective bargaining a decision is reached by a process of negotiation and compromise between different starting positions. The ultimate decision is neither management's nor the union's, it is determined jointly.

Joint consultation is viewed by Clarke and others (1972:49) as a way of making the worker a full partner in industry. They warn however that, successful participation through joint consultation rests on the acceptance by managers and workers of common assumptions about their respective roles. It is therefore incumbent on managers to ensure that adequate machinery for consultation exists. Workers on the other hand must be prepared to accept that the decisions arrived at by management take full account of their stated interests and that these are given appropriate weight.

2.5   SHORTCOMINGS OF PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING

Like all other systems, participative decision making has its shortcomings.   Milstein (1980   : 251) clearly warns the danger of concluding that participative decision making is the best approach to virtually every kind of problem.

Some principals do not consider involvement of teachers in decision making as necessary aspects of their daily responsibilities.   Steyn (1998.18(3) : 131) states categorically that many principals maintain involving teachers is a waste of valuable time. These principals hold the view that involving teachers in decision making is their prerogative. The power lies with the principal who is able to determine the degree of teacher participation.

Duke et al (1980: 95) agree with this.   He says time devoted to participation in decision making process, is time not devoted to teaching activities.

Cookson and Schnerder 1995:230 state following as possible fears that could exist in principals:

- control will be lost
- that decision   making will take too long
- that group thinking will reduce quality
- that individuality will be lost
- that apathy will threaten the process
- that rights and responsibilities will not be in balance
- that focus on performance will be lost
- and that management will abdicate if teachers participate in decision making

To a certain degree it is true that it can be time consuming to arrive at decision if a large number of people are involved. Cookson and Schnerder (1995) argue that it is also

possible for people to have inappropriate expectations for involvement. This could manifest itself in teachers wanting unreasonable involvement in almost everything.

Another danger of participation in decision making highlighted by Cookson and Schnerder (1995:231) is that decisions might not always be implemented. Decisions taken need to be collectively implemented.

Cookson and Schnerder (1995: 232) identify another obstacle as the lack of skills and understanding in the decision making process. In early stage of participation people need time to work out their confusion and mistrust of one another. Meeting these needs can be time consuming.

Duke et al (1980.96 (1) : 96) identify five potential costs of shared decision making. These include, increased demands, loss of autonomy, risk of collegial disfavour, subversion of the collective bargaining process, and threats to career advancement.

Duke et al (1980: 97) cite an example of an individual teacher, long accustomed to self-determination in his/her classroom threatened by group decisions undermining his autonomy.

Katz and Lawyer (1994: 61) identify the following shortcoming of participative decision making.
- It is time consuming
- It allows less control for those in authority positions.
- Indecision likely to involve costs
- Subtle intimation by some group members could reduce the number of wise decisions.

Participative decision making poses a demand for principals to review their role in the school management. A different kind of relationship with teachers has to be established.

Keith and Girling (1991: 43) argue that involving others in decision making takes more time than unilateral decisions demand. Therefore, to make better decisions costs time.

2.6 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Conflict is endemic to organisational life and schools are no exception to this rule. The very existence of schools as public institutions seeking to serve and accommodate various people appears to create fertile ground for emergence of conflict (Milstein 1980 : 25). According to Zuelke and Willerman (1987 : 43) poor professional staff relations undermine support for the school and create hard feeling among significant others in the school's community. Usually poor staff relations are associated with inadequate supervision, ineffective instructional practices and classroom procedures, conflicting ethical conduct and unclear division of responsibilities.

Zuelke and Willerman (1987: 22) further assert that principals who administer their schools with an autocratic or authoritarian leadership style usually make decisions unilaterally. They may therefore find themselves in the unenviable position of making serious decision errors, than participatory principals. A principal may have made a decision with a high level of personal confidence but the decision may not be viewed as satisfactory by teachers. This could result in the principal being in conflict with the teachers.

Burton (1990 : 126) alludes to the fact that conflict arises because certain individual needs are systematically frustrated or prevented from becoming manifested. Suppression or frustration of needs leads to attitudinal and behavioural distortions. These which in turn create conditions for conflicts.

In schools, as in other work organizations, there has always been underlying conflict between teachers and management. The rights of teachers to organise and engage in collective bargaining has appropriately acknowledged, legitimised and made public these

conflict (Zuelke and Willerman 1987 : 43).

Milstein (1980: 32) holds the view that this conflict signals whether status quo will be preserved or altered, and whether access to social resources will be reallocated to various groups.

Milstein (1980: 283) argues that role of principals of schools is to help teachers improve instruction and to evaluate purposes of retention and the awarding of tenure. The two expectations for the principal are in direct opposition. One expectation is to help, while the second is to evaluate and could possibly threaten personal security. The conflicting role expectations can result in interpersonal conflict between principal and staff.

Katz and Lawyer (1994 : 1) attribute the cause of a significant amount of conflict to the lack of clear agreement or lack of follow-through on agreement.

2.7 HOW CONFLICT CAN BE MANAGED

Katz and Lawyer (1994: 47) advocate for prevention of conflict by the school creating a system in which everyone has the opportunity to influence decisions. Participative decision making promotes decisions that lead to co-operation rather than alienation and conflict.

Further to the above Katz and Lawyer (1994) suggest that much of the conflict that emerges can be eliminated when people set up and manage agreements well. They subsequently suggest the following methods of handling conflict:

- **Agreement management:** This is the process of holding another accountable for an agreement. This includes monitoring the agreement and asserting if the agreement is broken.

- **Facilitation:** The ability of administrators to work with groups effectively, contributes to the efficient and successful functioning of the school. The process of assisting a group to achieve its outcomes is called facilitation. High quality facilitation produces high quality results. It prevents conflict escalating from

19

differences. Differences emerge naturally in group work. In well-facilitated groups, these differences are handled by using planning, a clear structure and an attention to the process of the group as it unfolds.

Katz and Lawyer (1994 : 17) further allege that facilitation is a function performed by an individual that assists a group in meeting the group's outcomes. As a function, facilitation is acting on behalf of the group to enable the group to accomplish the results decided and agreed on by its members.

Zuelke and Willerman (1987 : 23) favour collaborative decision making as the best way of handling difficult situations. They suggest that the principal should be aware of certain decision rules as propagated by Cartwright (1971). The majority rule, coalition rule and mean rule.

- **The majority rule** : The team that obtains a majority on an issue will use majority rule to come to action a decision.

- **Coalition rule** : This is attained where a majority view does not exist, but there is a plurality. Approximately 80 percent of all groups that obtain a coalition will use coalition rule.

- **Mean rule** : This occurs when there is no favoured position, by either majority or coalition. The group will usually follow a mean rule.

Milstein (1980 : 280) suggests that as the leader of an organization faces an emerging problem or conflict, he or she needs to consider the nature of the conflict and decide what position to take. There are four possibilities from which to choose:

- to ignore the conflict until it passes.

- to tolerate the conflict and help the organization deal with it.

- decrease the conflict and its effects.

- to increase the intensity of the conflict.

The principal needs to understand the conflict fully in order to be able to act appropriately using the suggested possibilities above.

20

If the principal decides to solve the conflict, Milstein (1980 : 260) suggests the contingency theory of conflict management approaches: collaboration, bargaining, and power.

- **The collaborative approach:** This assumes that people can surface their differences and work at them until mutually satisfactory solutions are found. This implies that people will be motivated to spend time and energy solving the problem. It exploits the possibilities of conflict as a creative force pushing parties towards mutual gains to which all are fully committed.

- **Bargaining:** This assumes that neither party will emerge satisfied from the confrontation but rather through negotiation, both get something they need, usually by giving up something of lesser importance. One party generally wins more than the other. By skilful trading he or she, can wrest the maximum possible from the other side. When an agreement is reached it is usually enforced by a written contract.

- **Power strategy :** This differs from the above approaches in that its emphasis is on self-interest. Whereas in collaboration and bargaining two sides come together to resolve their problems, when power is the dominant mode, the actions are unilateral or in coalitions acting unilaterally. All of the power technician's resources are unleashed against the opponent to win on a given issue or long range program. They promise no internal commitment to joint decisions or agreement to external sanctions guaranteeing compliance.

Milstein (1980 : 261) prefers collaboration strategy because it promotes authentic interpersonal relations; is a creative force for innovation and improvement, enhances openness, trust, risk and integrity within the organization.

21

Zuelke and Willerman (1987 : 37) cite **human relations** as an approach to make members feel a useful and important part an organization. This approach seeks to develop a co-operative and cohesive workforce. The principal gives up some control in order to "buy" the support of teachers by allowing them to participate in the decision making process. The human resource model views all members of the organization as 'reservoirs of untapped resources. The goal of participation is to improve decision making.

Zuelke and Willerman (1987) further quote Mc Gregor's (1960) Theory X and Theory Y as relevant in understanding human behaviour at work. Theory X describes the traditional way of viewing people at work, i.e. basically being disinterested in work, needing to be controlled if not coerced, and irresponsible and incapable of much creativity. Theory Y contrasts Theory X. It holds that people desire to find intrinsic interest and worth in their work, are self-directing and strive to be responsible.

Looking at the two scenarios as put forward by Mc Gregor it is abundantly clear that a principal using Theory Y would have a participative approach, thus minimising chances of conflict in his or her school.

2.8 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Mc Gregor (1960 : 124) argues that some proponents of participation give the impression that it is a magic formula. They propose that it will eliminate conflict and disagreement and come close to solving all management problems.

Without the degree of participation in the decisions, which are of immediate importance to them, workers seldom develop a sense of loyalty and attachment to an organization, its function and purposes. When workers feel a sense of alienation they often respond to their situation by adopting an aggressive and hostile attitude to the exercise of managerial authority (Clarke et al. 1972 : 42).

22

Clarke et al (1972) further argue that the more a worker is enabled to exercise over his task, the more lightly he is to adopt a co-operative attitude and a positive commitment to achieving the goals of the enterprise without conflict and breakdown of normative pattern of relations between management and workers.

Adams (1979 : 9) points out that participation is seen as a way to enhance effectiveness and to increase (or regain) status to a socially just and satisfying relationship. This is more enjoyable and has less stress and strain.

The principal will involve staff prior to setting standards for:

- mutual standards for acceptable teaching or joint idea sharing
- pool of human and material resources in consultation with the staff
- collegially define and establish good school goals and co-ordinate services in the school.

Disunity, rivalry and petty differences are more likely to be moderate or dissipate. When the principal works with and through the professional staff to accomplish the school's instructional goals (Zeulke and Willerman 1987 : 43).

According to Milstein (1980 : 204) the purpose of participation is not to provide people opportunity to help make decisions, rather to provide those affected by decisions opportunities to influence decision.

However Milstein (1980) sounds a word of caution that participation is not successful unless it is built on respect. Respect for people when their ideas and suggestions are honestly sought to avoid unnecessary mistakes (which can lead to conflict). This type of participation reflects and produces healthy organizations.

Zeulke and Willerman (1987 : 34) assert principals would do well to examine their own school culture to assess how it either enhances or deters the quality of their school. They then ask the questions : Does the school's culture indicate values of caring and

belonging? Are those values evident throughout the school? Does everyone experience a sense of pride in the school and their work?

2.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter had reviewed literature about participative decision making and conflict management. The following chapter looked at the method used to collect data on participative decision making and conflict management in schools. Data was thereafter interpreted and analysed.

Umlazi some probability of being selected.

Bailey (1987 : 87) argues favourably towards random sampling saying it is the best-known form of probability sampling. Each person has equal probability of being chosen for the sample.

Sax (1979 : 192) contends that it may be easier and less expensive to randomly select a number of schools, then randomly select respondents within these schools.

3.4 CHOICE AND SIZE OF SAMPLE POPULATION

According to Tuckman (1978 : 231) the primary issue in choosing a sample size is that it be sufficient and representative of the population from which it is drawn. Van Dalen (1979 : 128) argues that in order to obtain a representative sample one systematically follows several steps involved in the process. These are :

- define the population
- procure an accurate and complete list of units in the population
- draw representative units from the list
- obtain a sufficiently large sample to represent the characteristics of the population

The population for this research comprises of both primary and secondary school educators in Umlazi. Respondents were drawn from both Umlazi South and North Districts of Durban South Region in KwaZulu Natal. The researcher used the cluster sampling to choose the districts.

The list of schools in Umlazi district was obtained. Six primary schools and secondary schools were chosen from each district. Educators were chosen at random and the principals assisted in choosing respondents. Questionnaires were given to respondents after explaining the purpose of the study. They were instructed to answer questions.

The below table shows the number of schools selected per district, and the number of respondents who answered questionnaires.

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS PER DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS SELECTED	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Umlazi North	55	06	60
Umlazi South	63	07	70

3.5 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

According to Schumacher and Mc Millian (1993 : 153) there are various approaches used to gather quantitative information. These are:

- questionnaires
- interviews
- tests
- observations
- inventories
- rating scales
- unobtrusive measures

The researcher chose the questionnaire as a research instrument in this study because questions can be used with a large population at the same time.

27

3.5.1   ADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaire is widely used by researchers for a number of reasons (Turney and Robb (1971:130).

- it can be used conveniently when large numbers of respondents must be reached.
- it requires less time to administer than an interview.
- it permits respondents to remain anonymous.

Moser and Kalton (1971 :238) clearly state that a questionnaire allows respondents to collect information from their documents, this offers accurate information.

The advantage of using questionnaires in this study was that data provided was easy to analyse and the anonymity of respondents was maintained.

3.5.2   DISADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

One rather obvious shortcoming of a questionnaire is that if it is mailed the number of returns may be small. Another limitation is that the respondents may not answer all the questions. Careless, faulty memory, faulty perception, and lack of interest may adversely affect the quality of responses. Furthermore, there can be little assurance that all of the respondents will be truthful (Turney and Robb 1971 : 131). However before administering the questionnaires, the researcher explained to the respondents the need to answer all questionnaire items.

3.5.3   DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Bailey (1987 : 107) asserts that in designing the questionnaire the researcher must make sure that the questions measure the theoretical concepts adequately, and that the sample of respondents answer the questions adequately. The key work in questionnaire construction is relevance. The word relevance has three different facets here:

28

- relevance of the study's goals
- relevance of questions to the goals of the study
- relevance of the questions to individual respondent.

Turney and Robb (1971 : 131) agree with the above assertion when they say that by following certain rules and procedures the researcher should be able to construct a questionnaire that will provide acceptable results and a sufficient number of reasons. The following criteria are useful:

- Each question should be relevant and useful.
- Each question or statement should be written as clearly and as concisely as possible.

The investigator considered the following factors in formulating the questionnaire:

- Question 1: Biographical information.
- Question 2: Focused on involvement of educators in decision making.
- Question 3: Focused on the implications of educator involvement in decision making.
- Question 4: Focused on the specific steps a principal could take to enlist the support of educators in decision making.

3.5.4 TYPES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Van Dalen (1979 : 154) argues that a researcher may cast questions in a closed, an open or a pictorial form or any combination. In this study both types of questionnaires were used.

3.5.4.1 Open- ended

According to Bailey (1987 : 120) open-ended questions can be used when all of the possible answer categories are not known or when the investigator wishes to see what the respondents views as an appropriate answer. They allow respondents to answer adequately

in all the detail. They also allow more opportunity for creativity or self expression by the respondents. The researcher used open ended questions to allow for original responses.

The following are disadvantages of open-ended questions as cited by Bailey (1987:120).

- they may lead to collection of worthless and irrelevant information.
- data is often not standardised from person to person.
- coding is often a very difficult and subjective way to express one's feelings verbally and generally pitches at higher educational level
- require much more of respondent's time and effort
- require more paper and make the questionnaire longer, possibly discouraging respondents who do not wish to answer a lengthy questionnaire.

3.5.4.2   Closed-ended

Van Dalen (1979 : 154) asserts that a closed form or structured, questionnaires consists of a prepared list of concrete questions with a choice of possible answers. To indicate their replies respondents mark "yes" or "no", check, circle or underscore one of the items from a list of answers.

- Closed form questionnaires are easy to administer to large number of people. They keep the respondent's mind directed on the subject and questions. They are often easier for the respondent to answer.

The following are the shortcomings of closed-ended questionnaires:

- It is easy for the respondent who does not know the answer to guess the appropriate answer or even to answer at random.
- The respondent may feel frustrated because the appropriate category for his or her answer is either not provided or is not sufficiently detailed.
- There is no opportunity for the respondent to clarify or qualify his or her answer.

30

- There may be too many answer categories to print on the questionnaire (Bailey 1987:119).

The researcher used closed-ended questions and respondents answered the questions.

3.5.5 VALIDITY

Turney and Bobb (1971 :154) state that a measurement instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure.

Van Dalen (1979 : 136-137) cites three different types of validity, viz : content, criterion and construct.

- Content Validity: Is where the test conductor analyses the content of the area to tested. It appraises and structures a representative instrument to measure the various aspects of that content.

- Criteria Related Validity: Explains that validity, is demonstrated by comparing test scores with one or more external variables or criteria . These provide a direct measure of the behaviour or attitude under study.

- Construct Validity: Refers to a construct designed to check validity and explain some aspects of human behaviour, e.g. mechanical ability, intelligence or introversion. The researcher attempted to check the validity of questions by comparing responses, pilot study and that of the sample.

3.5.6 RELIABILITY

A test or scale is reliable if it consistently yields the same result when repeated measurements of a property are taken of the same entities under the same conditions (Van Dalen(1979 : 138).

measuring what it is designed to measure, its accuracy is impaired.

3.6   PILOT STUDY

Slavin (1984 : 133) argues that under ideal conditions it is very helpful to pilot test experimental treatment or other procedures before assessing them formally in a large study. A pilot study gives the researcher an idea of what the method will actually look like in operation. It will indicate the likeliness of effects. It is usually highly desirable to run a pilot test on a questionnaire and to revise it based on the results. A pilot test which uses a group of respondents who are part of the intended test population but will not be part of the sample, to determine whether questionnaire items possess the desired qualities of measurement.

The researcher conducted the pilot study at his school with twelve educators as respondents. The purpose of this study was to check that items were clearly stated and valid.

3.7   ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

After all the necessary arrangements had been made, all questionnaires were delivered to the samples at the schools. Letters explaining the study and assuring principals of the permission granted by the Chief Superintendents of Education Management (CSEMs) were delivered.

3.8   ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data collected through questionnaires was analysed using frequency tables.

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter gave a description of the research instruments which were used to collect data. This chapter also outlined the sampling procedure that was followed and describes how questionnaires were administered. The next chapter outlined the analysis and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to analyse and interpret data, which has been collected. Biographical data will be analysed and interpreted in Section 4.2. The remaining data will be analysed in the subsequent sections.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

4.2.1 Gender details of respondents

TABLE 1

Frequency distribution according to gender of educators

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	41	32%
Female	88	68%
TOTAL	129	100%

Table 1 indicated that there were more female educators (68%) as compared to male educators (32%) in the population studied. This could suggest that teaching is still a female dominated career.

4.2.2 Age of respondent s

TABLE 2

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Under 30	14	11%
31 – 40	89	69%
41 – 50	22	17%
Over 50	04	03%

The age of the respondent as reflected in Table 2 showed that 69% of the respondents were in the age category 31 - 40. This indicated that educators in the population studied were relatively young. Only 03% of educators were over 51 years of age.

4.2.3 Academic Qualifications

TABLE 3

QUALIFICATIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Matric	71	55%
BA	41	32%
BA Hons	16	12%
Other	01	01%
TOTAL	129	100%

It was observed that 100% of educators have matric. Thirty two percent of these Educators have University degrees and 13% have post graduate degree. It can be concluded that educators in Umlazi District have necessary academic qualifications to teach in school.

4.2.4 Professional Qualifications

TABLE 4

QUALIFICATIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Primary Dip / Certification	72	56%
Secondary Dip / Certification	36	28%
Prof. Degree	21	16%
TOTAL	129	100%

Data in Table 4 indicated that 56% of educators hold a primary professional qualification, 28% have qualifications in secondary level 16% hold university professional degree. This suggests that educators in the population studied do have appropriate qualification and that these educators receive training on professional matters. They may therefore be expected to be able to deal with professional matters with ease at the level for which they are qualified to operate and to have the necessary expertise to make decisions or be involved in decision making at their work level, in their schools.

4.2.5   Post Held

TABLE 5

POST	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Principal	07	05%
Deputy Principal	07	05%
H O D	10	09%
Level 1 Educator	105	81%
TOTAL	129	100%

Table 5 reflected that 05% of the respondents were principals. 05% were deputy principals. 09% were heads of department. 81% were level one educators. The majority of the respondents were level one educators.

4.3   RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Question 2 Indicate whether you are happy or not with the following statement

TABLE 6 Frequency distribution according to items on the involvement of educators in decision making.

Question item	(a) happy	(b) not happy	TOTAL
with the level of teacher involvement in setting standards at schools	33% (43)	67% (86)	100% (129)
with the level of teacher involvement in determining the school's goal and objectives	31% (40)	69% (89)	100% (129)
with the principal's openness to teachers' ideas on educational matters	27% (35)	73% (94)	100% (129)
with the principal's willingness to share power with teachers	19% (25)	81% (104)	

(A) *I am happy with the level of teacher involvement in setting standards at this school*

Findings from Table six indicated that 67% of respondents were not happy with the level of teacher involvement in setting standards at their schools. It is also worth noting that 33% of respondents were happy with the level of teacher involvement. The large bulk of respondents who were not happy suggest that teachers prefer to be involved in setting standards. Unhappiness as a result of not being involved can create tension between educators and principal.

(B) *I am happy with the level of teacher involvement in determining the school goals and objectives.*

According to data provided in Table six, 69% of the respondents indicate that they were not happy with the level of teacher involvement in determining the school goals and objectives at their schools. However 31% indicated that they were happy with the way teachers were involved in determining school goals and objectives at their schools. Data on this question follows the same pattern as in the previous question.

(C) *I am happy with the principal's openness to teachers' ideas on educational matters*

The findings on this item in Table six indicate that 73% were not happy with their principal's level of openness to teachers' ideas. This may suggest that most of principals are not ready to accept teachers' ideas on educational matters. This may be due to top - down approach that principals might have adopted to run their institutions. Data also indicates that 27% of respondents are happy with the level of their principal's openness to teachers' ideas on educational matters.

The current policy documents in education, such as the South African Schools Act of 1996, encourage educator participation in school management. Openness to reasonable ideas from teachers is thus important.

(D) *I am happy with the principal's willingness to share power with teachers*

In response to this question 81% of the respondents were not happy with the level at which the principal shares power with teachers. 19% of respondents were happy with the principal's willingness to share power with his staff.

39

The issue of power sharing in South African schools in general is a challenge. The country has emerged from a very centralised, top-down education system, managers and principals in the school and the whole educational system are called upon to be consultative and democratic. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 is the framework along which power in schools needs to be shared.

4.4 RESPONSES TO THE LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

Indicate whether you are involved in the following:

TABLE 7   Frequency distribution, items relating to respondents' involvement in decision making

Question item	(a.) involved	(b) not involved	TOTAL
in setting agenda item for staff meetings	11% (14)	89% (115)	100% (129)
in admitting and assigning learners to classes at school	63% (81)	37% (48)	100% (129)
in setting rules of conduct for pupils in the school	23% (30)	77% (99)	100% (129)
in orientation of new learners at school	63.3% (87)	32.7% (42)	100% (129)

in drawing up year programme of the school activities	22% (28)	78% (101)	100% (129)
in drawing up the school budget	13% (17)	87% (112)	100% (129)

(A) *I am involved in setting agenda items for staff meetings.*

The findings in Table seven on this item reflected that 89% of respondents were not involved in setting agenda items for staff meetings. 11% were involved. When staff have an input in agenda it is difficult to see how the meetings respond to their needs. Items for inclusion in the staff meeting agendas should be solicited from staff.

(B) *Educators are involved in admitting and assigning pupils to classes at school.*

According to data in Table seven, 63% of respondents were involved in admitting and assigning learners to classes. They were not involved in establishing admission policy. Only 37% respondents were not involved. It is noteworthy that a large number of educators were involved in admitting and assigning learners to classes, this however is because level one educators were class managers.

(C) *Educators are involved in setting rules of conduct for pupils*

From the findings it is indicated that 23% of the respondents were involved in setting rules of conduct for pupils in their schools. 77% of respondents indicated that they were not involved. The high percentage of respondents who were not involved indicates that teachers are not quite part of determining school conduct rules. If this is so, a problem emerges.

Educators need to be part of rule formulation in order to enforce rules that will ensure that learners develop self discipline. Without educator involvement in setting rules, the process of implementation of discipline is affected.

(D)   *Educators are involved in the orientation of new learners*

Table seven indicated that 67.3% of the respondents were involved in the orientation of the new learners, 32.7% were not involved. The large bulk of respondents was level one educators and therefore were class teachers. In most instances it is the responsibility of class teachers to orientate new learners in a school. Class teachers have the responsibility of unveiling subject packages in schools. They also have a duty of laying down classroom policy, for their learners to remain orderly and disciplined.

(E)   *Educators are involved in drawing up a year programme of the school*

The findings in Table 7 on the above item show that 22% of respondents were involved, and 78% were not involved in drawing up a year programme at their schools. The high percentage of teacher non-involvement in drawing year programme could be attributed to principal's considering planning year programme as an exclusive responsibility of those in management.

(F)   *Educators were involved in drawing up school budget*

Table 7 indicates that only 13% of the level one educators were involved in drawing up school budget and 87% of the respondents were not involved. School financial conditions have always been a sensitive matter with some principals charged for misappropriation of funds. The above finding indicates that most principals do not involve level one educators in the school financial matters.

4.5　IMPLICATIONS OF LEVEL ONE EDUCATOR INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

TABLE 8　Frequency distribution on implications of involvement of educators in decision making

Question 3

Item	Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Total
The involvement of level one educators in decision making reduces conflict	87% (112)	13% (17)		100% (129)
involving educators in decision making improves performance	61.2% (89)	30.8% (39)	08% (10)	100% (129)
involvement of level one educators ensures ownership of decisions	70.1% (90)	29.9% (39)		100% (129)

43

involving educators enhances their capacity to deal with disciplinary problems	78% (101)	12% (15)	10% (13)	100% (129)
principals should be trained to deal with conflict situations	75% (97)	15% (19)	10% (14)	100% (129)

(A)   _Involvement of level one educators in decision making reduces conflict_

Table 8 indicates that 87% of respondents hold the view that involvement of educators in decision making could reduce conflict in schools. However 13% disagree, and did not view involvement of educators as a way of reducing conflict.

(B)   _Involving educators in decision making improves their performance_

This item reveals that 61.2% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement. 30.8% disagreed. 0.8% were unsure. The data shows that the majority of educators believe that involving educators in decision making can enhance their performance in class and this could be of benefit to the learners.

(C)   _Involving educators ensures ownership of decision taken_

Findings on this item indicated that a cumulative percentage of respondents 70.1% agreed that when educators are involved in decision making they tend to own decision. Only 29,9% did not agree. This data is indicative of the fact that involvement of educators in decision making is helpful and that if this could be done, decisions can be respected by all. This could ensure implementation of those decisions. However it is important to note

44

that there is a remarkable 29% who do not necessarily believe that if educators are involved in decision making they own them.

(D) *Involving educators in decision making enhances their capacity to deal with disciplinary problems at school.*

According to the findings in Table 8, 78% of the respondents agreed that involving educators in decision making enhances their capacity to deal with disciplinary problems in schools. 12% disagreed and 19% were not sure. The last two categories of responses reveal that there are educators who do not think involving educators in decision making can help empower educators to deal with disciplinary problem rather than referring them to management.

(E) *Principals should be trained to deal with conflict situations in schools.*

The majority of respondents, that is 75% agreed with the statement. 15% disagreed and 10% were not sure whether principals required training to deal with conflicts in schools. The fact that the majority held the view that principals needed training indicate that principals were perceived as not being able to deal with conflicts in schools. Empowering principals to deal with volatile situations could assist in the smooth running of schools. Schools could focus on teaching and learning.

There is no conclusive evidence that involving educators in decision making reduced conflict in spite of the majority view for educator involvement in decision making.

4.6 STEPS PRINCIPALS COULD TAKE TO ENLIST SUPPORT OF STAFF IN DECISION MAKING

TABLE 9   Question 4.1 What steps could principals take to gain support of staff in decision making?

Item	Frequency
Organise strategic meetings	63% (81)
Create atmosphere conducive to participative decision making	58% (75)
Motivate staff to participate in decision making	55% (71)
Build capacity of educators to take informed decisions	50% (65)
Delegate duties according to capabilities	49,8% (64)
Provide guidelines to delegated duties	45,6% (59)

Implement agreements taken collectively	43%
	(55)

(A) _Organising strategic meetings_

Table 9 indicated that 63% of the respondents held the view that the principal could organise staff meeting to solicit the opinions of all members of staff . Some principals however may think that involving level one educators in strategic planning can undermine their authority. In cases where educators are involved in strategic meetings, morale can be boosted and full participation in school activities can be ensured at all times.

(B) _Principals create atmosphere conducive to participative decision making_

Fifty eight percent of the respondents argued that principals must ensure that staff members are given chance to participate in decision making. All barriers that might deter teachers from participating need to be removed. Teachers should be assured of fair treatment even if their views differ with that of the principal. Honest and fair participation of teachers in decision making should be encouraged at all times. Principals can create atmosphere conducive to participation by not threatening teachers with victimisation if they express contrary views.

(C) _Principal to motivate educators to take part in decision making_

Findings on this item indicated that 55% of respondents held the view that the principal must encourage educators to take part in decision making . This can be done by involving educators in deliberations regarding decisions to be taken at school.

If educators realize that their views are valued by the principal, they could be empowered to contribute meaningfully to the decision making processes at school. This could assist by ensuring that decisions taken are based on the views of staff and reflect their professional needs.

(D)   *Builds capacity of educators to take informed decisions*

50% of respondents argued that the principal needs to build capacity of educators for them to take informed decisions . Capacity building can take form of workshops, seminars and staff development programmes which the principals could organise. Campbell and Gregg (1957:278) assert that through participation in the decision making process the professionalism of principals and the teachers can be enhanced. The quality of decisions may be improved.

(E)   *Delegate duties according to capabilities*

Almost fifty percent (49,8) of the respondents indicated that the principal ought to delegate some of his responsibilities to staff members . Before assigning duties the principal needs to know who is best suited for a particular task. It is therefore important for principals to know the potential of the staff under their supervision.

(F)   *Provides clear guidelines to delegated duties*

Steyn (1998.18(3) : 132) argued that principals can save themselves a lot of time and create a tremendous culture of delegation which could be seen as a compliment to the teacher involvement. When delegating, principals must ensure that they provide clear guidelines as to how tasks should be carried out.

(G)   *Implementation of decisions*

The study indicates that 43% of the respondents held the view that principals should ensure that decisions taken at staff level were implemented. It implies therefore that in some instances these decisions were not implemented. Implementation of these decisions can make staff feel part of the establishment and therefore derive a sense of contributing towards the growth of the school.

4.7 HOW TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING CAN CREATE CONFLICT

TABLE 10 Question 4.2(a)

ITEM	FREQUENCY
When there is intolerance of other's opinions	62% (80)
Unwillingness to accept change	60% (77)
Hidden agendas	58,3% (75)
Absence of framework or policy on decision making	55% (71)

(A) *Intolerance of other people's opinions*

The majority, 62% of the respondents, viewed intolerance of others opinions, as the main cause of conflict when level one educators are involved in decision making processes. Intolerance manifests itself when certain members dominate the decision making process only pushing for their ideas to be considered. This may be a serious recipe for conflict as some members might feel left out and therefore never participate meaningfully in the decision making process.

(B) *Unwillingness to accept change*

The study revealed that 60% of the respondents hold the view that the unwillingness of some members of staff to participate in the process may result in conflict. Openness to accept change is essential and particularly this period when the South African education system is undergoing transformation.

(C)   *Hidden agendas*

Well above fifty percent (58,3%) respondents felt that members who go to decision making forums to fulfil their own aspirations tend to create conflict. This may be witnessed in situations where influential individuals who want to advance a certain point of view, lobby support prior to a meeting. If this behaviour is recognised by others, it can lead to a conflict.

(D)   *Absence of framework / policy on decision making*

From this study 55% of the respondents argued in favour of framework or policy on decision making. Coupled with the framework, was the need for all to be empowered to take decisions in a constructive manner. The absence of a policy for decision making can create conflict in that people might not be in a position of knowing clearly how to go about arriving at particular decisions in relation to their work.
It is worth mentioning that 10% of the respondents expressed the view that involvement of level one educators in decision making does not create conflict. Instead it serves to solve or defuse conflict.

Eight percent of the respondents warned that conflict could be created by principals who show favouritism. These principals only take suggestions from certain individuals and ignore others. This may be viewed as a recipe for conflict in schools, and might see participants making decisions that result in divisions.

4.8   HOW INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING REDUCES CONFLICTS

TABLE 11 Question 4.2(b)

ITEM	FREQUENCY
Decisions enjoy majority support	83% (107)
Encourage team work	80% (103)
Maintenance of order and discipline	78% (101)
Empowers members to take informed decisions	76% (98)
Empowers members to take informed decisions	69% (89)
Implementation of decisions taken collectively	65% (84)

(A)   *Decisions enjoy majority support*

The majority 83% of the respondents believed that involvement of educators in decision making helps to reduce conflict in that decisions arrived at and enjoys the support of the majority members .

(B)   *Encourages team work*

Table 11 indicates that 80% of the respondents held the view that involving level one educators in decision making allow staff and management to work as a team.   Team building is a challenge for all leadership positions.   If schools were to adopt a policy of team work, there could be less tension among staff members high quality work could be

the result.

(C) *Maintenance of order and discipline*

Seventy eight percent of the respondents believed that involvement of educators in decision making assist in the maintenance of order and discipline in schools. Teachers may want to ensure that rules pertaining to order and discipline are adhered to by learners. If teachers are part of the decision making process, they are likely to be more than willing to enforce the school rules.

(D) *Empowers staff members to informed decisions*

Data on this item revealed that 76% of the respondents held the view that if teachers were involved in decision making, they could make decisions that would ensure efficiency in the school. However some of the respondents felt that teachers need to be empowered to make informed decisions. The empowerment of educators can take a variety of forms. Workshops on decision making seem to enjoy the support of majority respondents.

(E) *Engages staff in constructive discussions*

From this study 60% of the respondents believed that involvement of level one educators allow the entire staff opportunities to engage in constructive discussion based on educational matters. Some respondents viewed involvement of staff as an ideal way of responding to challenges facing schools in a collective manner. If this is done constructively it may yield positive results.

(F) *Implementation of decision taken collectively*

Data on this item showed that 65% of the respondents agreed that if level one educators were to be involved in decision making, there would be collective responsibility on the implementation of those decisions.

4.9 ASSUMPTIONS RESTATED

4.9.1 Assumption No.1

Some principals do not involve teachers in decision making, despite the prescription of the South African Act of 1996.

Regarding assumption No.1 the majority of respondents, 77% indicated that they were not involved in setting school rules concerning conduct for the learners. This study indicates clearly that most principals do not involve teachers in decision making.

4.9.2 Assumption No.2

Assumption No.2 was the non-involvement of teachers in decision making often results in conflict.

Regarding this assumption there is no conclusive evidence from the respondents view that involving staff reduces conflict. However as shown in item 4.5.2, 61,2% of respondents held the view that involving educators in decision making improves their performance.

4.9.3 Assumption No.3

Principals are not adequately trained to deal with transformation.

Regarding assumption No.3 majority of respondents 75%, (item4.5.5) argued that principals need training to deal with new challenges in education.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed and interpreted data on whether participative decision making reduces conflict in schools.The responses from the respondents indicated that some principals do not involve educators in decision making processes in schools. Indications from the study are that non-involvement of teachers in decision making results in conflict.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data done in the previous chapter the researcher draws conclusions and presents recommendations to principals, level one educators and teacher organisations.

5.2   CONCLUSIONS

Findings from this study indicate the following:

5.2.1   Level one educators are generally not involved in decision making process in some schools.

Findings from the study show that there is general non-involvement of educators in decision making. Table six indicates clearly that sixty seven percent of the respondents were not happy with the level of teacher involvement in setting standards at school, sixty nine percent of the respondents were not happy with the level of teacher involvement in determining school goals and objectives.

Clearly such decisions are still taken by the principal or by principal and management team. This is an indication that some principals still hold the view that they possesses all the powers to make decisions. They insist teachers should only implement what they (principals) have decided.

5.2.2 Principals are not willing to share power with teachers.

The findings on Table six reflect that seventy three percent of the respondents stated that they were not happy with the level of principals' openness to teachers ideas on educational matters. Eighty one percent of the respondents indicated that principals were not willing to share power with teachers.

The unwillingness of principals to involve teachers in decision making is evident in situations where principals do not establish situations or structures for teachers to make suggestions on matters that affect their work. In these instances teachers' scope of operation is limited to classroom activities. Decision making is still perceived by some principals as only a management function.

5.2.3 The non-involvement of teachers in decision making can create tensions between teachers and principals.

Teachers who are not informed about decisions develop misconceptions about management. This creates tension. In spite of the fact that the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 prescribes that all stakeholders participate in decision making, there are clear indications that some principals ignore this.

Keith and Girling (1991:43) argue that participatory decision making is effective in conflict resolution. Goals agreed upon by all participants provide a mechanism for resolving the inevitable conflict that occurs between organisational units and or individuals.

Teachers are aware of the requirement of legislation such as the South African Schools Act of 1996 regarding participatory type of decision making mechanisms which should be in place in schools Principals who still follow authoritative style of leadership, invite confrontation with teachers, as they seek participation in decision making processes at school.

5.2.4 <u>Principals are perceived to lack training to deal with conflict situations in schools.</u>

From the findings seventy five percent of the respondents held the view that principals should be trained to be better able to deal with conflict situations in schools.

5.2.5 <u>Participative decision making builds commitment to decisions taken collectively.</u>

When decisions are taken collaboratively by teachers and management team, the scope for tension is minimised. Furthermore, team spirit is enhanced. Findings in this study reveal that seventy percent of the respondents argued that involving educators in the process make them own their decisions. Milstein (1980:251) argues that one of the advantages of participative decision making is the increased ownership that the group members feel concerning decisions that they helped to make, thus deepening the commitment to make decisions work.

5.3 <u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>

5.3.1 <u>RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRINCIPALS</u>

5.3.1.1 <u>Principals must consider involving teachers in decision making processes.</u>

Principals as facilitators of change in schools should involve teachers in decision making. By doing so there will be power sharing and possibly a reduction in the level of conflict. Teachers should be recognised by principals as valuable partners in the education process. They need to be allowed to gain hands – on experience in all functions of the school.

In accordance with the South African Schools Act of 1996, principals should involve teachers in decision making and should guide them in making decisions.

5.3.1.2 <u>Principals should establish whole school development programmes.</u>

From the study it became clear that some principals did not involve educators in decision making because they feared that teachers were not ready to play a significant role in

decision making process. Teachers should not just be limited to classroom work. Principals must facilitate teacher development in decision making , just as they should facilitate the development of other stakeholders such as governors.

Whole school development is development of all stakeholders that are part of the school system. It is through whole school development that principals can empower educators to play a meaningful role in decision making. Development of skills on decision making should be viewed by principals as an integral part of the process of professional development of educators. If this is done principals can be assured of helpful decisions that teachers may take.

5.3.1.3 Principals must undergo training on power sharing and democratic management

Some principals still believe in absolute power. They fear that sharing decisions with teachers may leave them with little or no power at all. There is an urgent need for principals to undergo training on power sharing and involvement of others in decision making.

This, if done well, can raise the level of trust between the principal and the teachers. Principals need to acquire skills on how to go about involving others in decision making.

5.3.1.4 Principals need to give guidance and support to teachers in performing delegated duties.

From the study it became clear that some principals delegate certain duties to level one educators. However clear guidance and support is lacking. Teachers need clearly articulated instructions regarding tasks they are required to execute. They also need to be supported whilst performing delegated tasks. If principals provide necessary guidance and support, teachers may enjoy involvement in tasks without fear of failure.
It is the responsibility of the principal to motivate educators under his supervision to participate in activities that require a certain degree of decision making. If this is done with two things in mind, namely the accomplishment of the task and the empowerment of

educators to make informed decision, educators can always be motivated to take part in activities given to them by their superiors.

Principals when delegating duties, should ensure that this takes place in rotational form to allow a larger number of people to gain from this experience.

5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO LEVEL ONE EDUCATORS

5.3.2.1 Educators must meaningfully take part in decision making processes.
Educators as indicated in the South African Schools Act of 1996 should take part in decision making . In spite of this, educators still do not play a meaningful role in decision making in schools. Experience in this process will develop their abilities to make well informed decisions.

Findings in Table six indicated that educators are not involved in decision making processes. Respondents indicated that a possibility existed that educators lacked the necessary skills to make informed decisions. Hence their inability to play a meaningful role in decision making structures, such as governing bodies.

It is through getting involved that educators can gain relevant exposure in decision making. Steyn (1998.18 (3): 36) argues that by getting involved in decision making, teachers develop their abilities to make a meaningful contribution.

5.3.2.2 Level one educators should participate in developmental programmes in schools.

Educators should participate in developmental programmes as this may enhance their ability to participate in decision making processes. Such involvement would improve their ability to make clear and understandable decisions even around complex matters such as discipline.

Capacity building of teachers is essential if they were to make informed decisions in

Schools. It is important that teachers participate in seminars and workshops to improve quality of their understanding and skills.

5.3.2.3 Educators must learn to work with others

Involvement in decision making is about individuals working collaboratively with a common goal in mind. This is clearly an interactive process which demands that individuals become self motivated to work with others for the school to attain its goals. In their workshops educators must be taught how to collaborate with others.

Teachers should be prepared to accept criticism if things do not go according to plan. If credit is due it has to be shared among all. Working with others demands of all to recognise and value each other's contribution. Teachers should also be prepared to learn from others.

5.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO TEACHER ORGANISATIONS

5.3.3.1 Teacher organisations must organise workshops for their members

The transformation process in education places a huge task on the shoulders of teacher organistions to empower their members to take decisions that are in line with the legislation that regulate their professional activities. This legislation includes Th South African Schools Act of 1996, The South African Council for Educators of 1994,etc. Such legislation should be made available to educators by teacher organisations. The teacher organisations should provide workshops on the implementation.

If teachers were correctly exposed to legislation regulating current education processes, they could be empowered to make a significant in decision making processes at schools. Teachers need to be made aware by teacher organisation that they have a responsibility to contribute towards transformation of the education system.

Rambiyana et al (1996:16(4) assert that participation and co-responsibility is acquired by learning and not inherited genetically. It must therefore be taught to its practitioners.

5.3.3.2   Teachers organisations must stimulate educators' interests to participate in decision making processes in schools.

It is the responsibility of teacher organisations as custodian of transformation of the education system, to encourage their members to realise the need to contribute towards transformation. They should therefore ensure that membership get involved in staff developmental activities.

Teacher organisations have the responsibility to negotiate with the Department of Education for the framework which schools can follow to involve teachers in decision making processes. The framework should be clear to all, and should stimulate teachers to participate responsibly in decision making processes.

5.4   **FURTHER RESEARCH**

The research findings indicate clearly that there is need for teacher involvement in decision making. It is important that more studies should be conducted in order to provide answers to questions as to how best teachers can be involved in decision making. It is also important that further studies be pursued in order to determine under what circumstances participative decision making reduces conflict in schools.

5.5   **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether participative decision making reduces conflict in schools. Findings indicate that where teachers were involved in decision making processes, they took ownership of those decisions. This reduced the level of conflict when compared with cases where management alone take decisions and level one educators were only involved in their implementation.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Strictly confidential

Researcher : BP Mpungose
Supervisor : Prof RP Ngcongo

Dear Colleague
This study is intended to investigate whether educators participate in decision making. It also seeks to determine whether their involvement in decision making helps to minimise conflicts in schools.

The research is part fulfilment of the M Ed. Degree carried out at the University of Zululand (Durban – Umlazi Campus).

The respondents will remain anonymous and the information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality. Kindly give your responses openly and freely to the following questionnaire items:

Question 1
Please answer by indicating with an x next to the appropriate box .

Your biographical details
1.1

SEX	
MALE	
FEMALE	

1.2

AGE	
UNDER 30	
31-40	
41-50	
OVER50	

1.3 ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Matric	
BA	
BA HONS	
OTHER SPECIFY	

1.4 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

PRIMARY DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE	
SECONDARY DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE	
PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	

1.5 POST HELD

PRINCIPAL	
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	
HOD	
EDUCATOR LEVEL 1	

Question 2

answer. Kindly read each statement below and give your response by crossing in the appropriate

Example: I am happy/not happy with the way our school functions.

2.1 I am happy/not happy with the level of teacher involvement setting standards at this school.

2.2 I am happy/not happy with the level of teacher involvement in determining the school's goals and objectives.

2.3 I am happy/not happy with principal's openness to the teachers ideas on educational matters.

2.4 Teachers are involved/not involved in setting agenda items for staff meetings at this school.

2.5 Teachers are involved/not involved in admitting and assigning pupils to classes at this school.

2.6 In your school teachers are involved/not involved in setting rules of conduct for pupils.

2.7 Teachers participate/do not participate in the orientation of new learners in this school.

2.8 Teachers are involved/not involved in drawing up a year programme of this school's activities.

2.9 Teachers are involved/not involved in drawing up school budget.

2.10 I am happy/not happy with the principal's willingness to share power with teachers.

Question 3

State whether you agree, disagree or unsure in relation to the following statements by crossing in the appropriate box.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNSURE
3.1 The involvement of educators in decision making. at your school reduces conflict.			
3.2 Involving educators in decision making iproves their perfomance.			
3.3 Involving educators in decision making makes their own decisions.			
3.4 Principal should be trained to deal with conflict situations.			
3.5 Involving educators in decision making enhances their capacity to deal with disciplinary problems at school.			

Question 4

Please respond in detail to the following questions:

4.1 What specific steps could a principal take to enlist the support of staff members in decision making.

....
....
....
....
....
....
....

4.2 In what ways does teacher involvement in decision making at school:

a) Create conflicts

....
....
....
....
....
....

b) Reduce conflicts

....
....
....
....

....
....

4:3 Conclusion

The researcher wishes to thank you for your time in answering the questions. Your contribution is highly appreciated.

BP Mpungose

APPENDIX B

Private Bag X01
UMLAZI
4031
26 October 1999

The District Manager
UMLAZI NORTH/SOUTH
UMLAZI
4031

Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby request permission to conduct research in selected schools under your jurisdiction. The research is part of my study towards MED degree with the University of Zululand (Durban-Umlazi Campus) under the supervision of Prof. RP Ngcongo.

The topic of my mini-dissertation is: PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS.

The research will be conducted by means of a questionnaire which will be administered to educators.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

BP Mpungose

P/Bag X01
UMLAZI
4031
27 October 1999

The Principal

_____

_____

_____

_____

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby request permission to conduct research with you and some of the educators in your school as respondents. The research is part of my study towards M Ed. Degree with the University of Zululand (Durban-Umlazi Campus) under the supervision of Prof R P Ngcongo.

The topic of my mini-dissertation is: PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS.

The Chief Superintendent of Education Management has already granted me permission to conduct this study.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

P B Mpungose

PROVIINCE OF	ISIFUNDAZWE	PROVINSIE
KWAZULU NATAL	SAKWAZULU NATALI	KWAZULU NATAL

DEPARTMNT OF EDUCATION & CULTURE
UMYANGO WEMFUNDO NAMASIKO
DEPARTMENT VAN ONDERWYS & KULTUUR

Isikhwama Seposi : Umlazi North District
Private Bag   : Private Bag X03
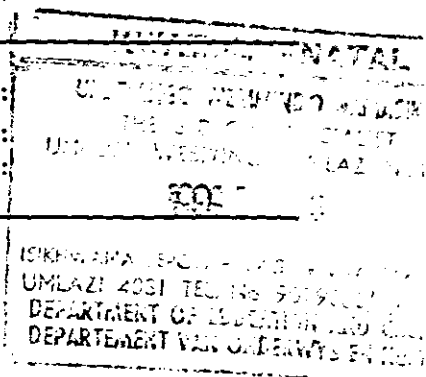Privaatsak   : UMLAZI 4031

Fax. No	: 031 – 9066183	Imibuzo	:
Ucingo	: 031 – 9079082/3/4/5/6/7	Enquiries	: M.A. DHLOMO
Telephone	:	Navrae	:

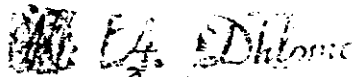|			
Usuku	:	Inkomba	:
Date	: 03.11.99	Reference	:
Datum	:	Verwyning	:

The Principal

Kindly allow Mr B.P. Mpungose to conduct research in your school. The data he will come up with will be of use to our schools and to the entire Department of Education and Culture.

Please help where you can.

DISTRICT MANAGER
UMLAZI NORTH

PROVINCE OF   ISIFUNDAZWE   PROVINSIE
KWAZULU-NATAL   SAKWAZULU-NATAL   KWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & CULTURE
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO NAMASIKO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS & KULTUUR

Fax. No.	:	031 – 906 6183	Isikhwama Seposi	:	UMLAZI SOUTH DISTRICT
Telephone No.	:	031 – 907 9088/ 2/3/5	Private Bag	:	X02
			Privaat Sak	:	UMLAZI, 4031
Usuku	:		Imibuzo	:	
Date	:	28 OCTOBER 99	Enquiries	:	B.L. NGWANE
Date	:		Navrae	:	

MR B.P. MPUNGOSE
Private Bag X01
UMLAZI
4031

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – UMLAZI SOUTH.
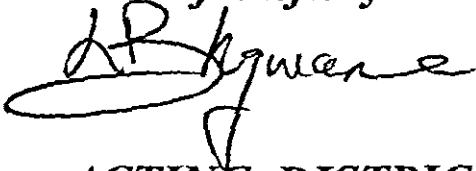
Your letter dated 26 October 1999 refers.

I   On behalf of the *Department of Education & Culture (Umlazi South District)* I wish to congratulate you on the steps that you have taken by Way of upgrading your academic qualifications.

II   It is therefore, my privilege to officially grant you permission to conduct a research in some of our high schools (though you did not mention them specifically) towards your *M. Ed. Studies.*

P.T.O.

III I sincerely hope that your research and findings, will in future, make a contribution towards the improvement of education in our region.

Good Luck with your studies.

Yours faithfully

ACTING DISTRICT MANAGER: UMLAZI SOUTH

BLN/gjbh

4.3   RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Question 2 Indicate whether you are happy or not with the following statement

TABLE 6 Frequency distribution according to items on the involvement of educators in decision making.

Question item	(a) happy	(b) not happy	TOTAL
with the level of teacher involvement in setting standards at schools	33% (43)	67% (86)	(100%) (129)
with the level of teacher involvement in determining the school's goal and objectives	31% (40)	69% (89)	100% (129)
with the principal's openness to teachers' ideas on educational matters	27% (32)	73% (94)	100% (129)
with the principal's willingness to share power with teachers	19% (25)	81% (104)	

(A) *I am happy with the level of teacher involvement in setting standards at this school*

Finding from Table six indicate that 67% of respondents were not happy with the level