



## Research Article

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# Enhancing Participative Management Practices among Secondary Schools in Patriarchal South Africa

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## Abstract

*The aim and scope of this study are to explore strategies for the encouragement of participative management at secondary schools in patriarchal South Africa. The study adopted the positivism paradigm to explore this empirical investigation, with the use of questionnaires as the data collection instrument. The school principals were the target of the target population. A total of 200 public high schools were selected across the King Cetshwayo district of KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. The sampled schools were randomly selected for the study. Findings reveal that principals, deputy principals, and departmental heads in patriarchal South Africa used management and leadership strategies that did not align with the twenty-first century. The adoption of ubuntu (humanness) and lekgotla (Sesotho term for "an African participatory approach to decision-making") was advocated for, in making various decisions at secondary schools in South Africa. The study also established that the teaching responsibilities of the principals should be reduced or removed to enhance administrative functions through effective implementation of participative management practices at secondary schools in patriarchal South Africa.*

**Keywords:** patriarchal, transformational leadership, democratic leadership, distributed leadership, workplace democracy

## 1. Introduction

The quality of school management is critical to the success and attainment of educational goals of the school system. The management of any school is largely driven by the school principal as the accounting officer. Participative management is a managerial technique that involves key stakeholders actively involved in school management. Participative management is rooted in *Ubuntu* (humanness), *lekgotla* (Sesotho term for "an African participatory approach to decision-making") and other democratic principles which have become cornerstones of the current dispensation in South Africa. This view is attributed to the belief that employees should be able to decide on issues that affect them in the decision-making process. Participative management argues for employees' abilities or potential to actively and intelligently demonstrate commitment to matters that affect them at

work. Somech (2002:346) argues that “the rationale for school management team members, namely principals, deputy principals and departmental heads to increase teachers’ involvement in school decision making has ranged from the pragmatic argument that educational innovation is unlikely to succeed without teachers’ support to the philosophical view that teachers have a right to be involved in decision making regardless of their gender orientation”. Seemingly, Sagnak (2016) asserts that it is vital for schools to apply innovations to be effective. Hence, school management team members must take into consideration the readiness levels of teachers, regardless of the outcome being pursued. Teachers’ self-esteem and status, as well as school improvement, can be enhanced through participative management initiatives. This implies that every employee in a school system has a voice in matters relating to work as their statutory right or an obligation in any workplace environment.

Somech (2002) posits that participative management is further rooted in the management style which focuses on decentralisation of decision-making and power-sharing to achieve organisational goals. This is further advanced by Cho and Kim (2014), Schrum and Levin (2014), who contend that there is a need for school management teams to delegate managerial authority to their subordinates, to attain the school goals. Ibrahim and Bahyaye (2019) opine that participative management behaviour affects change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviour. Thus, decentralisation of decision making, *ubuntu* (humanness), *lekgotla* (Sesotho term for “an African participatory approach to decision-making”), gender parity, and power or role sharing to achieve set goals are very ideal management and leadership practices for any successful school in South Africa.

## 2. Participative Management Practices in the South African Context

South Africa is a post-apartheid country where many wrongs or abnormalities during the apartheid era had to be corrected after the post-independence in 1994. Political transformation, *ubuntu* (humanness), and *lekgotla* (Sesotho term for “an African participatory approach to decision-making”) have guided the development of participative management in post-apartheid South Africa after the years of liberation. South Africa experienced and still experiencing globalization, which greatly influences the country, by putting the country on a democratic track after apartheid. However, Afrocentric practices in the workplaces have not yet been adequately established compared to Western standards and practices. Muwanga-Zake (2009) argues that lack of documentation, patriarchy, clear ownership and development continue in various systems. The Western curricula in educational institutions further maintain the dominance of Afrocentric practices by Western culture. Muwanga-Zake (2009) agrees that influence of imported education systems with the paradigm shift that pushes socialised and educated Africans away from their indigenous knowledge systems to adopt foreign-based or Western “global view” or worldview of themselves, which can be false. Muwanga-Zake (2009) concurs with Fanon (1970), that the inferiority complex among Africans is influenced significantly by education, and a process to emulate or equate their lifestyles with the Europeans, whose superiority complex seems enviable to them. This assertion indicates that African curricula and world views have been insultingly discounted since Europeans “discovered” Africa and imparted their Western concepts such as participative management and industrial democracy instead of shaping and developing South African concepts such as *Ubuntu* (humanness) and *lekgotla* (Sesotho for “an African participatory approach to decision-making”). It is also probable that a colonial mentality persists among elite Africans as they are Western paradigms entangled with ready-made imported approaches, and their epistemologies, as well as ontologies, are theoretically full of incorrect political and ideological assumptions. Western paradigms offer employment opportunities to black South Africans. Brenton and Largent (2000) in Muwanga-Zake (2009), argue that such paradigms can be perpetuated by employment and certain patriarchal practices in society. Most jobs require a certificate issued according to the same paradigms.

Various extant literature reviewed demonstrates that little has been done to equate *ubuntu* or *lekgotla* with a participative management style. Muwanga-Zake (2009) argues that imperialism successfully implanted the perception that African knowledge systems are worthless or shameful

because they do not fit into the colonial education system, missionary world view and scientific notions. Since an African paradigm of *ubuntu* is not internationally recognized, the educated African is often an accomplice in perpetuating foreign paradigms such as participative management or industrial democracy. This practice may also lead to the extinction of African knowledge systems and the adoption of patriarchal practices in the workplace (Buthelezi & Gamede, 2019).

The concept of *ubuntu* as used in this section means an African characteristic of relationships. *Ubuntu* is found in diverse forms in many African societies. Hence, Africans have different terms for *ubuntu*, but it is fundamentally embedded in the notion that each person exists because the other person exists. Originating in *isiXhosa* and *isiZulu*, the concept indicates a communal way of life that is deep-rooted in participatory practices. South African democracy in all spheres of life is centred on the concepts of *ubuntu* and *lekgotla*. Transformational issues in post-apartheid South Africa require that *Ubuntu*, *lekgotla*, and gender parity should be embraced in all walks of life to promote peace and tolerance. Workplaces such as schools should embrace *Ubuntu*, *lekgotla*, and gender parity in a manner that is conducive to achieving the set goals. For instance, Muwanga-Zake (2009) notes that *ubuntu* is about amicable personal relationships, which accentuate the importance of the collective agreement in pursuit of organisational goals. *Ubuntu* discourages a *mntu* (individual) perspective precedence over the community. This notion aligns very well with participative management in the sense that *ubuntu*, *lekgotla* and participative management regard a consensus-seeking approach as a vehicle to arrive at decision making. *Ubuntu* encourages unity and cooperative initiatives to arrive at organisational goals. Tutu (2004) in Muwanga-Zake (2009:417) asserts that 'we are bound with others in *ubuntu*'.

*Ubuntu* and *lekgotla* are opposed to top-down management styles in the sense that they advocate a two-way approach. In most cases, *ubuntu* requires decision-making to start at the bottom. This is what might be regarded as employee involvement in the decision-making process. Thus *ubuntu* provides a shift from solitary to solidarity, and from independence to interdependence. The shifts provide a basis for *Ubuntu*, participative management, and gender parity.

Muwanga-Zake (2009:422) avows that *ubuntu* and *lekgotla* share "similarities with the Western participative practice in managing teamwork, where every worker is motivated to contribute to the team's attainment of goals". *Ubuntu* brings in communal consensus in pursuit of the set goals. Collective decision-making is at the core of *ubuntu*, *lekgotla*, gender parity, and participative management. Political liberation in South Africa was achieved through *ubuntu*, *lekgotla* and other democratic approaches which were utilized by various political parties. Social transformation in South Africa is both *ubuntu*- and *lekgotla*-driven since all people need to participate in all spheres of life regardless of their gender orientation or racial classification. For the sake of democratising the workplace, all empowerment initiatives need to be *ubuntu*- and *lekgotla*-driven. The country's social transformation on gender parity needs to be taken to the workplace environments such as schools through *ubuntu*, *lekgotla* and other democratic management strategies.

### 2.1 Participative management practices for secondary schools

Targeted staff members need to be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of participative management in the school system. Bedeian (2012:471) states "that this is intended to allay the fears of those who will be affected, and to capitalise on their specialised skills". All activities aimed at both planning, implementation and evaluation of participative management should be characterised by open communication and exchange of ideas by all parties involved in the school system, regardless of their gender orientation. Thus, at all stages, it must be assumed that all the members of a target group are rational, possess the necessary expertise to contribute meaningfully, and are willing to act in good faith.

Hanson (2012:48) suggests that the following participative management strategies should be engaged: the controlled use of non-verbal cues, meeting with teachers in the classroom instead of the principal's office, or greeting a visitor or employee at the door instead of behind the desk". Similarly,

Jones (2005:133) agrees “that team meetings and training days offer excellent opportunities to generate constructive ideas, and to a larger extent for participation in the decision-making process”. This implies that the strategies enable many to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the establishment.

Creating a conducive environment for group participation has been a critical mode of ensuring participation. Strauss and Sayles (2012), and Ibrahim and Bahyaye (2019) affirm that many managers, such as school principals, have discovered that better results can be achieved when every staff member is recognised in the decision-making process for the school. This is done either by consulting them as a group or individual before making and implementing any decision. However, staff members might mistrust participatory gestures such as staff meetings if they are inconsistent with the principal's management and leadership style, and they might perceive such gestures as manipulation rather than genuine power-sharing. Some management scholars consider that the mere act of holding formal meetings is less important than the school manager's willingness to involve staff members when problems arise. Maier and Hayes (2011) assert that holding weekly or biweekly staff meetings enhances school management. Furthermore, Mainer and Hayes (2011) maintain that meetings should be scheduled only for important matters with the employees, to give them adequate opportunity to participate. This means that the purpose of the meeting must be clear before it is convened.

Blasé and Kirby (2011) highlight various strategies to encourage participative management in schools, which include:

- **Manage agreement**

The school principals must assess their own goals before instituting every formal or informal mechanism that will involve staff in planning and decision-making for the school. Also, the concepts of power and responsibilities should be discussed openly before sharing. This will promote understanding and commitment for those with delegated responsibilities. Change can begin when those involved in decision-making risk discovering where agreement exists.

- **Involve individuals**

For school principals to be effective, they must create a climate for participation by delegating responsibilities to willing teachers, who are knowledgeable and experienced.

- **Use every opportunity to involve informally**

Principals must learn how to involve others by asking for suggestions, advice, concerns and problems, which should be expressed freely. Several platforms for soliciting teachers' input are staff meetings, chance encounters, and scheduled meetings with individuals or groups.

- **Encourage formal mechanisms for involvement**

School principals can effectively make use of teachers' formal channels with them for teachers' participation in decision-making. The availability of these formal structures, makes teachers feel more involved and more active in school governance.

- **Know when not to involve**

The school principals need to understand when there is a need to increase staff involvement, especially when they expect positive results for improved morale, better decisions, and increased efficiency. Semianovskyi (2018) posits that participative management is driven by the recognition of individual mutual interests in an organization. Thus, engagement of all employees' efforts, is capable of driving the organizational goals. However, the principals should also understand when they need to make certain decisions alone.

- **Respect the decisions of the team**

Regardless of the existing structure for staff participation in the school system, the school principals must value decisions that are made collectively. Collective decisions make teachers see themselves as members of the team, and are always willing to share responsibilities to attain the decisions.

Blasé and Kirby's (2011) strategies indicate that all parties involved in school decision-making must understand where agreement exists. The onus is now on the school principals and other school management team members to involve willing staff members who are knowledgeable and experienced. The school principals can thus be more effective when others are allowed to freely express ideas, concerns, advice, suggestions and problems. The creation of various formal structures or channels for participation must be clearly described and well communicated to all staff members. Bush (2013:52) describes this as "pseudo collegiality". Hence, the task of when and how to engage teachers in the process of decision-making lies with the school principals, and they also decide which matters must be discussed generally or decided alone by the school management team, or with the whole staff.

Another strategy to encourage participation might be "warm feeling" training or sessions (Huse & Bowditch, 2012). For instance, the warm feeling activities might include company picnics, retreats, and company-sponsored events. While the engagement of staff members in activities such as computer programmes, company journals, suggestion schemes or boxes, promotional videos, school magazines, subject committees, conferences, rituals, ceremonies, quality circles, the Scanlon Plan, social clubs, school assemblies, and communication or comment books provide platforms to interact and discuss issues that relate to their job expectations. As there are several other ways the school principals can adopt to encourage staff participation in the school. Griffin and Ebert (2004:261) postulate that "goal setting, job enrichment and job redesign programmes may be used". Job enrichment needs to be designed in such a way that it brings one or more motivating factors to the attainment of set goals in the school system. Job rotation is a classic example of job enrichment with job redesign programmes, the reporting structure and roles could be altered.

Marland (2011:81) opines "that school principals might use a staff conference, team-building sessions, task or working groups and committees to elicit staff responses in their domains". There is, however, a greater need for staff commitment, honesty, collegiality and focus to embark on such strategies. Team-building initiatives are critical to participative management in schools, as the initiatives will also assist the school principals. Staff members need to be assisted to develop themselves into teams that can work together to achieve the school's common goals. Participative management derives its strengths from the involvement of every staff member in the decision-making process for the school. It is through staff participation that the school principals can harness both individual and organisational objectives. Trewatha and Newport (2012:447) argue "that the team approach is another technique which is based on participative beliefs". Hence, developing team-building skills is highly essential for school management teams.

Seemingly, Thomson (2011:30) concurs that collaborative problem-finding and decision-making simulations are good products of participative management in schools. And these could be attained through seminars, workshops and refresher courses for teachers in schools. Thus, making teachers participate in school decision-making gives them a sense of belongingness. Squelch and Lemmer (1994:184) warn "that school principals must ensure smooth and open channels of communication to create an atmosphere that is conducive to conflict resolution". Discussions during staff meetings or other employee sessions should be structured for all to participate. Weaver and Farrell (2012) point out that teachers can express their minds during discussion sessions. Teachers need to be guided on the purpose of every meeting or forum and the need for everyone's opinion/participation.

Trewatha and Newport (2012:439-451) suggest "strategies like job enrichment, job enlargement, management by objectives, team-building approaches, employee attitude surveys, suggestion systems, committees and grievance procedures" as possible approaches to encourage participation in organisations. Luthans (2012:541) indicates that "strategies like productivity incentives, team incentives, performance sharing incentives, quality circles, and the Scanlon Plan" can also be used to promote participative management. Existing vast literature review shows that these participative management strategies are very common in Japanese companies (Lemmer, 1994; Trewatha & Newport, 2012; Weaver & Farrell, 2012). Multiple management systems are another effective method of encouraging participation, according to Flippo and Munsinger (2011), the multiple management

systems are established on a group advisory basis for multiple participation where the middle management personnel meet periodically to discuss major issues that are critical to the entire organisation. This system could also be adopted by the school management teams to foster the participation of all stakeholders.

Common strategies are needed to conduct staff meetings through staff participation in schools. John (2012:110) asserts that the school principals must compel all staff to attend some staff meetings, where crucial decisions need to be taken. However, extra-cautionary measures should be taken not to schedule staff meetings for late afternoon, as teachers would have been exhausted by the day's classroom activities. Harris and Lambert (2013:32) opine that "management skills are highly essential to implement participative management by the school principals, as the participants can:

- develop a shared sense of purpose with colleagues
- facilitate group processes
- communicate well
- understand transition and change and their effects on each other
- mediate conflict
- develop positive relationships"

The school management teams can acquire or develop these skills through observation, coaching, mentoring, seminars, workshops, courses and training within the school system. Furthermore, Van der Westhuizen (2011:248) points out that "for effective participation to take place, certain requirements should be met:

- Teachers should feel the need to participate in the decision-making process.
- The decisions in which teachers are involved should be closely related to their own work environments.
- The school principal has to share information with the teachers to empower them with enough background to come to a decision.
- Only teachers who are directly involved, or teachers who are knowledgeable about the issue under discussion, should be allowed to participate in the decision-making. Teachers who have nothing to do with the problem will only be frustrated and will not be able to participate in a meaningful manner.
- Teachers will not participate in decision making if the school principal does not encourage them to do so".

The workplace environment which differs in the case of schools, with different teachers, varies from school to school. Thus Blasé and Kirby (2011:53) mention the following suggestions to encourage participative management:

- "Manage agreement.
- Involve individuals.
- Use every opportunity to involve formally.
- Encourage formal mechanisms for involvement.
- Know when not to involve.
- Respect the decisions of the team".

Goldring and Rallis (2012:40) concur that the best practices for encouraging participative management involve:

- "Motivating teachers through establishing a problem-solving climate, consensus building, and goal setting.
- Incorporating participatory decision-making mechanisms.
- Establishing opportunities for collegial peer contacts and communication.
- Providing rewards and incentives for teachers.
- Obtaining information".

The various suggested approaches to encourage participative management for all employees will assist school principals to become effective managers rather than dictators. Desimone, *et al.*, (2002)



agree that coaching is helpful to school principals or departmental heads in creating a partnership between school management and employees. Thus, adopting participative management will enhance school principals' functionalities as coaches to those who report to them. This implies that the school principals are capable of grooming employees for leadership tasks. Leaders and employees in any organisation can learn from one another, where the school principals become more aware of their connections with the staff members. School health is about people's relationships with one another, and not about positions and egos. The interpersonal relationships and interactions towards achieving a common goal and purpose are what the school health concerns itself about. This means, the school principals need to arsenal some resources and pull some strings to get things done. These may include gender sensitivity, interpersonal relationships and the consciousness levels of the team vision and goal orientation, as well as the encouragement of the employees to focus their energy levels on the means of achieving the organisational goals.

The employees also need to further develop trust, dependency and healthy transparency towards each other; all towards the same direction while conscious of the timing, pacing and momentum of the process. Finally, a conscious commitment toward each other, for the attainment of possible project outcomes, and the process of being honest and transparent are all required by the employees. Thus the school can function like a well-oiled machine if all staff members are enthused with the responsibilities to participate in the decision-making areas of the school. The school management teams should tap into staff abilities to enhance all-around school success, as there will always be the need to create new ideas for the decision-making process. This will be driven by various participative management strategies to get the best out of the targeted audience. Staff members differ from one another and their differences should be maximised for the participative management strategies.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study is underpinned by the positivism paradigm, as it explored social reality on the idea of understanding human behaviour through observation and reasons. Thus, the researchers employed a quantitative approach to collect data on the phenomenon. This approach was appropriate to collect adequate and relevant information for the research problem (Creswell, 2012).

#### *3.1 Population and sampling*

At the time of data collection, there were two hundred and fifty (250) public secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo district of KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa which formed the target population. The public secondary schools were stratified into Umlalazi, Nkandla, Mthonjaneni, Umhlathuze, Richards Bay and Umhlathuze (5 circuits). The researchers selected secondary schools randomly from each of the education circuits. Hence, the sample consisted of the principals from these selected public schools. The Deputy principals were excluded from the investigation since their roles tended to be similar in nature and context to the ones for principals. This study focused on three education circuits out of the five, namely Nkandla, Richards Bay and Umhlathuze, which covered comprehensively large schools in urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

The quantitative research data for the study was simple and unbiased to fulfil the probability of assumptions in each of the elements in the population, representing the chance of equal selection (Kumar, 2014). The validity and reliability of the study were significantly considered by the researchers in the selection of participants, while the instrument was also validated by senior researchers. Questionnaires were administered to two hundred (200) principals from the randomly selected secondary schools.

#### *3.2 Instrumentation*

This quantitative research investigation employed a questionnaire as the research instrument. The quantitative research was chosen based on the research objectives, the kind of information that was

required, and available resources. Kumar (2014) argues that in some situations where sensitive questions are asked the questionnaire helps to increase the likelihood of obtaining accurate information. Analysis of data from questionnaires is assumed easily analyzed and interpreted than from interviews. The questionnaires provided needed information than other instruments in this study. Thus, the researchers were able to gather some truthful information, to provide strategies for encouraging participative and active management of schools in the King Cetshwayo district of KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. Data gathered from literature was compared with the findings so that generalisations could be made about strategies for encouraging participative management at secondary schools in post-apartheid South Africa.

### 3.3 Administration of the research instrument

The researchers piloted the research instrument in five (5) secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal province of the Republic of South Africa. The secondary schools that took part in the pilot investigation were not included in the real investigation. The pilot investigation aimed to check the appropriateness of the instrument for the study. The pilot exercise enabled the researchers to make the necessary adjustment in the instrument, where required. The questionnaire was then administered to sampled schools to elicit information from the respondents. Three education circuits, namely Nkandla, Richards Bay and Umhlathuze were used by the researchers to collect data. The chosen education circuits were made up of rural, semi-urban and rural schools. Thus, a total of two (200) hundred principals selected randomly from the 3 circuits were given questionnaires.

### 3.4 Data analysis, interpretation and presentation

The researchers coded the responses generated from the questionnaires appropriately to develop frequencies, which establish choices and prevalent strategies for encouraging participative management at secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District. Data were presented, interpreted and analysed by the researchers to fulfil the aims of this investigation and to answer the research questions. Verification of data gathered was conducted with experienced researchers in Education Management. This process was to ascertain the reliability and validity requirements of the investigation. According to Newman (2014:21), "reliability and validity are central concerns in all measurement". Reliability ensures that there is consistency or repeated cases of similar conditions, whereas validity addresses the question of how well we measure social reality using our constructs.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Analysis of the data instrument was descriptive to establish findings for the study. The following findings emanated from the systemic data analysis.

### 4.1 Involvement in teaching tasks by principals

**Table 1:** Involvement in teaching tasks by principals

Involvement in Teaching	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	179	99
No	01	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table above, it was revealed that 99% of the respondents were involved in teaching tasks, or had some teaching periods per week in their schools. However, the number of periods per week for each



of the principals varies from school to school. The involvement of principals in classroom practices indicates that most school principals were faced with the daunting tasks of combining teaching tasks with their leadership and management functions in various secondary schools (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021). Moonsammy-Koopasammy (2012) asserts that a principal is required to engage in-class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level while also performing managerial functions. The researchers contend that classroom practices of the current positional authority of school principals do not allow them to manage effectively as executive officers, as they have divided attention with teaching. Thus, involvement in both teaching and management could negatively affect school management functions such as the encouragement of participative management strategies.

4.2 Principals’ views on strategies for encouraging participative management

Table 2: Principals’ views on strategies for encouraging participative management

ITEMS		Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Of little importance	Of no importance	Total
a.Principals should possess professional expertise to facilitate participative management in the school.	N	65	100	10	5		180
	%	36	55	6	3		100
b.Principals should share information with the staff about issues affecting their work.	N	85	90	5			180
	%	47	50	3			100
c.Principals should enlist the services of senior staff members in decision-making processes.	N	35	110	30	5		180
	%	19	61	17	3		100
d.Principals should be afforded guidance to enhance their participative management skills.	N	70	100	10			180
	%	39	55	6			100
e.Principals should invite officials in the district/circuit to share information with staff members.	N	20	80	70	10		180
	%	11	44	39	6		100
f.Principals should conduct training sessions on how staff members need to participate in decision-making.	N	50	100	20	10		180
	%	28	55	11	6		100
g.Principals should embrace the concept of ubuntu (humanness) in their management and leadership styles.	N	100	70	10			180
	%	55	39	6			100

a. Possession of professional expertise by the principals to encourage participative management in the school

Table 2 shows that 97% of the respondents regarded professional expertise as important to school management while 3% of the respondents rated it as of little importance. John (2012) states that the school principal management style must professionally match the management tasks. This implies the need for management development programmes to be designed for school principals, with conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of their job functions in schools (Bush & Glover, 2021). Ajani (2019, 2020, 2021) posits that professional development is necessary for practitioners in education to be engaged in a series of activities that can enhance the educational system.

Thus, workshops, meetings and other professional activities are capable of improving influencing curriculum delivery and implementation by all the stakeholders in the school system (Ajani, 2018; 2022).

b. Sharing of vital information with the school staff members by principals

Table 2 reveals that 100% of the respondents agreed that the school principals needed to share information with staff members. This process of involving staff members requires

trust and confidence from school principals. Lichtenstein (2008) concurs that any participatory initiative in the school demonstrates school principals' trust in staff members. Seemingly, Somech (2002) asserts that school principals must let go of traditional roles, to accommodate teachers' voices in school matters. Engaging staff members help school principals to prepare staff members for adequate support and establish an environment of trust in the school, where they can share information about operational procedures and processes (Buthelezi & Gamede, 2019).

**c. Enlisting the services of senior staff members in decision-making processes by the school principals**

Table 2 shows that there was overwhelming support for principals to enlist the services of senior staff members in decision-making for the schools. 95 % of the respondents endorsed the idea that delegation of responsibilities to senior staff members is central to participative management. Thus, Sloof and von Siemens (2021) opine that delegation of power/responsibilities can be an effective leadership behaviour to motivate followers. However, Waldron, *et al.*, (1996) aver that school principals need to obtain recent and relevant information from books, journals, and people to create a needed environment within and outside the organization. School management and leadership in post-apartheid South Africa necessitates the process of enlisting the services of senior staff members as an expression of taking pride in what they do (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021).

**d. Principals should be afforded guidance to enhance their participative management skills**

Table 2 reflects that 100% of the respondents rated the need for guidance to enhance participative management skills as important. Capacity-building initiatives are essential for all employees to enhance their skills. Management practice without theory tends to be blind, as Hodder and Stoughton (2012) argue that it is essential to develop employee skills to enhance the handling of several problems in the organisation and also to assist staff members who will eventually move into administrative positions, to test the presence of these skills. There is probably an increasing need for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education to organise management development programmes that could assist practising principals and other school management team members in participative management of secondary schools.

**e. Invitation of district/circuit officials to schools by principals to share information with staff members**

Findings show from table 2 that there was overwhelming support for inviting officials from the district or circuit offices of the Basic Education Department to share information with staff members. 94 % of the respondents regarded such invitations as important, with 83% of the respondents regarding this as extremely important for the school system. It is believed that critical information needs to be cascaded and shared at various operational levels in the school system. The employees who receive information from district/circuit officials believe in the critical nature of such information in the management of the organisation, of which they are part. However, Kreitner (2011) cautions that school managers, such as principals must learn when to step back and let the forces of participation work, and also when to step in to take decisive action. Unfortunately, only 6 % of the respondents in table 2 regarded the process of inviting officials in the district or circuit as of little importance.

**f. Principals should conduct training sessions on how staff members need to participate in decision-making**

Table 2 reveals that 94% of the respondents regarded the process of conducting training sessions on how staff members should participate in the management of schools is important. 83 % of the respondents regarded the matter as extremely important or very important. Thus, it validates the necessity for training sessions to improve staff members on contribution to participative management as highly important. This agrees with Marland (2011) that opines that school

principals might use platforms such as staff conferences, team-building sessions, working groups or committees to elicit staff responses in their areas of competence. On the other hand, Desimone, *et al.*, (2002) suggest that coaching is one of the most important functions of the school principals as managers, as it creates a partnership between school management and staff to attain educational goals. Thus, school principals must become coaches rather than controllers when encouraging participative management in schools (Bush & Glover, 2021). 6 % of the respondents agreed that it was not important for principals to be coaches.

**g. Principals should embed *ubuntu* (humanness) in their management and leadership styles**

Information in table 2 reveals that 100% of the respondents agreed that principals should embed *ubuntu* (humanness) in their management and leadership styles. This shows that participative management is well understood and essential for principals to regard *ubuntu* (humanness) as one of the strategies which might augur well for participative management initiatives in schools. This concurs with Nkondo (2007), who asserts that policy development and implementation in South Africa should be characterised by basic tenets of *ubuntu* (humanness). This implies that *Ubuntu* (humanness) in participative management at secondary schools encourage better managerial skills in school management (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021).

## 5. Conclusion

School management is critical to the success of the whole school performance. Principals are the accounting officers who manage all the available resources in the school system, to achieve the stated educational goals. Participative management of schools by principals has been explored and established to be critical to engaging teachers and other stakeholders in effective school management tasks. School principals are not only administrative managers but also combine managerial functions with teaching tasks, as they have teaching periods that vary from school. An empirical investigation of the strategies for encouraging participative management at secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo district of KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa has been provided in this study. Findings from this study were integrated with the extant findings from the literature. It is observed that various strategies exist to encourage participative management in secondary schools. Thus, the researchers admonish the adoption of diverse strategies as established in this study, for effective implementation of participative management by education authorities.

## 6. Recommendations

Therefore, based on this systemic quantitative investigation, the study recommends the following for effective participative management of secondary schools across South Africa:

- Reduction of teaching tasks of school principals to concentrate on administrative functions for effective implementation of participative management in secondary schools.
- Principals should embed *ubuntu* (humanness) principles in their management and leadership styles.
- The *lekgotla* (Sesotho term for "an African participatory approach to decision-making") should become more prominent in consensus-seeking decision-making processes at secondary schools.
- Consideration of gender parity might auger well for participative management practices at secondary schools.
- On-going capacity-building initiatives should be arranged for secondary school principals to fine-tune school management and leadership philosophies with the imperatives of managing and leading public institutions in the twenty-first century.

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