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An investigation into perceptions of participative management in a Namibian
secondary school.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions and experiences of school stakeholders about the practices of participative management in a Namibian Secondary School. Data was collected by using interviews, observation and document analysis. The study revealed that participative management has some benefits for the school such as it promotes democracy in school management, school as an open system, sharing of ideas and skills, teamwork and that ownership and commitment enhance the chances for organization change. Participatory decision making and shared leadership are the practices of PM that emerged from this study. However the school does experience challenges such as lack of knowledge on the practice and potential of PM in school management and leadership, illiteracy among parents that prevent them from participation in management and autocratic management practices from some members in formal leadership. The study suggests that trust, relationships and openness are good interpersonal skills that can help enhance the practices of PM in the school. Other strategies were to sensitize stakeholders on the practices of PM.

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Finally, I have been inspired by the principal of Namupa Secondary School at the time of the study and appreciate wholeheartedly the interest she has shown in my work. She has been open, candid and insightful. She is indeed an educational leader whom many would seek to emulate.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my three children, Naita, Allen and Gelly. Believe in God to fulfill what He has planned for you.

ACRONYMS

PM Participative Management
SMT Principal and Head of Department
SBP School Board Parent
PNSB Parent Not in School Board
T Teacher
C Community

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

I was a principal for three years before I joined the Regional Office of Education. I underwent hardship in terms of stakeholders' participation in school leadership and management. In my master's course, we studied leadership and management, and I happened to show interest in studying how to involve stakeholders in schools. One of the leadership and management theories that were in line with my interest was participative management (PM). Proponents contend that PM in an organisation leads to empowerment and creation of conditions that are conducive to the realisation of members' intrinsic potential. I asked myself questions as to whether conditions were available at schools for stakeholders like teachers, parents and other communities of the school, to participate in school leadership and management. The answer lies in the hands of those stakeholders, and so I conducted a case study to find out stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of PM in the Namibian secondary school.

As Namibia is a democratic society, its schools should also promote and nurture democracy. PM fits very well as one of the concepts that can be practised in a Namibian democratic school to ensure that stakeholders are given the power to take leadership and management roles. It is only when power is given and taken that participation in school leadership and management can be a success.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

In Namibia, before independence, hierarchical “authoritarian government” characterised management of education, but that has been abolished and “our education system as a whole must practice democracy” (Namibia, Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 41). A hierarchical authority structure is in line with the bureaucratic management model, whereby authority is vested “in the officers who hold places in the chain of command” (Bush, 2003, p. 44). Sergiovanni (1996) also pointed out that bureaucratic management emphasised “Follow me because of my position in the school and the system of bureaucratic roles, rules, and expectations that I represent” (p. 83).

With the advent of Namibia’s independence in 1990, a policy statement of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport outlined the basic framework for education management and policy evolution (Namibia.MEC, 1993, p. 22). Building on that policy, the Ministry of Education and Culture committed “the highest priority over the four major goals and to those activities essential to reaching them: access, equity, quality and democracy” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 32). The responsibility for education is shared widely and the Ministry of Education and Culture relies on the active participation and co-operation of many others... individuals and organisations, public and private to develop and support a sound education system (p. 176). Further, it is stated that, “We must stop thinking of education as something that the government does and start thinking of education as something that belongs to all of us” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 176).

Participative management is rooted in democratic principles “organised around broad participation in decision making” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 41). PM is about developing other leaders in the school community who can manage the school. Wheeler, Nedra, Agruso & Ramona, (1996) stated:

Decisions that, traditionally, have been made solely by principals or central office administration (e.g. scheduling, staffing needs, instructional strategies, etc.) are now being made in concert with

teachers, parents, students, and administrators of school improvement teams. (p. 4)

PM is one of the collegial model theories which “emphasise that power and decision making should be shared among some or all members of the organisation” (Bush, 2003, p. 64). Wheeler *et al.*, (1996) maintain that when principals include students, teachers, parents, staff, business, and community partners in a collaborative decision-making process, they have shifted their traditional role of primary decision-maker to that of facilitator (p. 6).

PM is associated closely with the notion of collegial models “as the most appropriate way to run schools in the 1980s and 1990s and it was also associated closely with school effectiveness and school improvement and was then regarded as the official model of good practice (Campbell & Southworth, Wallace, as cited by Bush, 2003, p. 64). Proponents of participatory management contend that, “practising participatory management has been long acknowledged as an essential ingredient in the quest for better schools” (Gamage & San Antonio, 2006, p. 2). A study conducted in the Philippines by San Antonio (2006) concluded that, “the implementation of participatory school administration, leadership and management (PSALM) has, to a certain extent, been able to contribute towards the creation of better public secondary schools in the Philippines” (p. 234).

In a study conducted in a South African school about participative management it surfaced in many of the participants’ comments that involving members, and delegating duties and responsibilities to subordinates, was the core meaning of participation ((Stofile, 2005, p. 93). Similarly, in Namibia, in a study conducted by Mungunda (2003) it was evident from data collected that the notion of involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process was seen as a fundamental aspect of participative management (p. 65).

I was interested in finding out from role players in a school their experience and perceptions of participative management. The study has potential value for policy makers as to the challenges which school management experience in the implementation and practice of participative management.

1.3 RESEARCH GOAL

The research goal was to explore the experience and perceptions of participants in participative management. This included:

- the nature of participative management processes in the school
- the challenges experienced by the participants in participative management
- eliciting ideas and strategies to overcome the challenges.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

In this study, I intended to explore the participants' experience and perceptions of participative management. The research was conducted in the interpretive paradigm. Cohen and Manion (2000) explained that, "the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience" (p. 36).

Cantrell (1993) contended that interpretive researchers are keen to understand the meaning people make of daily occurrences, and how they interpret them within the contextual social and natural setting. The epistemological assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that events are understood through individuals' mental processes of interpretation, which are influenced by, and interact with, their social context (p. 83).

The method of this research was a case study. According to Yin (2003):

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (p 13)

My chosen case was a secondary school in Kavango Education Region. Purposeful sampling was used to select the case. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2005)

stated that, “in purposive sampling a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study” (p. 328).

My data collection methods consisted of interviews, observation and document analysis. Patton (1990) stated that, “a multi-method, triangulation approach increases both the validity and the reliability of ... data” (p. 245).

Interviews were used to ask participants about the benefits, strategies to practise PM, challenges encountered, and strategies to improve PM. Patton (1990) stated that, “we cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions ... we have to ask people questions about these things” (p. 278). Interviews are a popular method for data gathering, especially if a researcher intends to obtain information aimed at providing knowledge that is exploratory and that gives in-depth and holistic descriptions.

I used semi-structured interviews, as they offer the possibility of responding to the situation at hand. According to Mayan as cited by San Antonio (2006):

Semi-structured interviewing is used when the researcher knows something about the area of interest, for example from a literature review, but not enough to know the answers to the questions that are to be asked. (p. 115)

Participants for the interviews comprised the principal, two heads of departments, four teachers, two community members, three parents who are serving in the school board and the other four non school board parents but do have children in the school I studied. I selected the participants using purposive sampling. These participants were my key informants as they did have some knowledge and information about the phenomena I was going to investigate.

My literature review on participative management provided me with entry points for my questioning.

Observation was another major means of collecting data in qualitative research. Marshall & Rossman (1995) defined observation as “systematic description of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for the study” (p. 79). It offers a

first-hand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, observation allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomena being investigated. The school was within walking distance, and I observed a school board meeting, staff meeting, parents' meeting and departmental briefing to get a view of how the staff in particular are involved in school leadership and management, such as in meetings and other decision-making processes.

Document analysis provided me with secondary data. These included minutes of meetings, agendas, internal office memos and invitation letters. According to de Vos *et al.* (2005), documents are written with a view to the continual functioning of an organisation or for the execution of a particular matter (p. 315), and can give an indication of organisation processes, such as decision making.

Stake (1995) described data analysis as the process of unlocking information hidden in the data that the researcher transforms into meaningful and useful information (p.71). I looked for patterns across the three sets of data (interviews, observation and document analysis), looking for "meaning regularities" (Patton, 1990, p. 403). These regularities were then sorted into different categories.

Van Rensburg (2001) stated that validity "refers to the degree of fit between reality and research conclusions, which are seen as corresponding with reality" (p.7). By remaining true to the participants' perspective, my conclusions were grounded in the participants' reality. Interviews were audio taped with the participants' approval, in order to capture all spoken words. The audiotapes were transcribed verbatim and crosschecked with the participants for accuracy. I have already referred to the triangulation of data-gathering tools above.

Ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also addressed in this study. Participants were informed of the objectives of the research and their privacy was protected by guaranteeing them confidentiality. O'Leary (2004) puts it that confidentiality involves protecting the identity of those providing research data (p. 54). Anonymity was addressed by abiding by the policy of not divulging the school's and participants' names. Glesne (1999) stated that, "participants have a right to expect that when they give you permission to observe and interview, you will protect their

confidence and preserve their anonymity” (p. 122). Audiotapes will be kept in a safe place for a period deemed necessary for reference and will not be made available to anyone who is not involved directly in the study.

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

In the next chapter, I will present a literature review of my study on participative management. I will firstly present a review of PM in general. Thereafter, school-based management (SBM) will be discussed, and will be followed by theories that inform PM. Participative leadership theories and the role of parents and teachers in school management and leadership will conclude the literature review chapter.

In chapter three, presentation of the methodology for this study is discussed. The research paradigm, in which this study fits, will be discussed. Other important components of the methodology chapter: case study, sampling, data-gathering tools, data analysis, research validity, limitations and ethical issues, are also discussed.

In chapter four, I have combined the findings and data discussion.

The last chapter five will summarise the findings of the study. Thereafter, I provide the potential value of my study, recommendations, suggestions for future research, and limitations of the study.

1.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has placed the research problem in context, and has discussed the need to study the research problem. The goals which were to be achieved in this research, have been stated. The methodology of the study has been described, as has the outline of the thesis.

The next chapter describes the literature review on participative management.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

To be a democrat is not to decide on a certain form of human association, it is to learn how to live with other men ... The group process contains the secret of collective life, it is the key to democracy, and it is the master lesson for every individual to learn. (Smith, 2002, p. 1)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Scholars interested in democratic participation in school management promote participative management (PM) as a paradigm best suited for participation of all in school management. PM is a paradigm shift in education leadership and management, being a change from authoritarian and hierarchical organisation management to one of diversity, collaboration and inclusion. The shift calls for increased parental and community participation in education, increased efforts at inclusion of all students and a drive toward participative management (Isaacs, 1995, p. 8).

In Namibia, communities and parents are regarded as active participants and contributors to discussions of school management (Namibia. MEC, 1993, pp. 41-42). My interest in this study is to research how role-players (community, parents, school board, teachers, heads of departments and principal) participate in school management and leadership. PM is looked at through a management and leadership lens. I review literature, therefore, dealing with both participative management and participative leadership.

I begin by reviewing PM in general. Then I look at school-based management as a model that promotes PM in schools. Thereafter, in the third section, I discuss theories that inform PM, followed by a discussion of theories of leadership that promote participation in organisations. In the last section, I review literature concerning the participation of various role-players such as parents and teachers in school management

2.2 PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IN GENERAL

PM is one of the collegial model theories which “emphasise that power ... should be shared among some or all members of the organisation” (Bush, 2003 p. 64). This practice emerged from the human relation movement, and is based on some of the principles discovered by scholars conducting research in management and organisation studies, such as the Hawthorne Effect (Barle, 2006, p. 1). Dr W Edwards Deming made the concept popular in Japan around the 1950s (Sheane, 1993, p. 2). In the 1990s, PM was revived in a different form through advocacy of organisational learning practices (Barle, 2006, p. 10).

Another scholar who promoted PM was Kurt Lewin according to Weisbord, as cited by Smith (2003). Kurt Lewin further wed scientific thinking to democratic values and gave birth to participative management and democratic social change (p. 24). Democratic values are humanistic in the sense that they respect the whole person, treat people with dignity and encourage everyone to grow and develop. Further, such values are democratic in that members in an organisation are treated with fairness and equality (French & Bell, 1995, p. 69). This is achieved through participation so that people may appreciate, become committed to, and take ownership of, the organisation.

There are a number of benefits of PM to the school. Barle (2006) stated that PM is the practice of empowering employees to participate in organisational decision making (p. 1). Empowerment refers to creation of conditions that are conducive to the realisation of members’ intrinsic potential. Empowerment is also described by Short, Greer and Melvin (1994) as a process whereby the participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems (p. 38). Bechtold (1997) contend that:

Empowerment is having the competence to recognise problems, the authority and willingness to take action, and the power to get something done and accept responsibility for the result. (p. 9)

Without empowerment, members of an organisation often feel disconnected and undervalued, and ultimately will not be engaged in their work (Davidoff & Lazarus,

as cited by Stofile, 2005, p. 14). Empowerment involves the ability of leaders to entrust workers with authority and responsibility. The purpose of empowerment is to create many leaders at all levels of the organisation. This is achieved by sharing responsibility and authority with others in order to meet a greater need. Power is shared by involving followers, right from the start, in planning and decision making.

Leonard, as cited by Mungunda (2003), argued that, “the assumptions underlying PM ...are that greater ownership, morale and commitment among stakeholders will result...” (p. 24). Stevenson (2001) added that “greater ownership, morale and commitment among stakeholders will result ... and that decisions made at the local level are likely to be more responsive to the specific, individual school contexts” (p. 103). Bishop and Mulford, as cited by Johns, Kilpatrick, Falk & Mulford (2000) contend that, “failure to involve stakeholders results in lack of ownership of the school by the community ...” (p. 10). The idea of ownership is also supported by Triska (2007) who noted that, “ownership of decisions, initiation, and risk-taking contributes to positive change in an organisation (p. 11).

Advocates of PM frequently argue that it (PM) “will minimise resistance by teachers [sic] to organisational change (Benson & Malone; Blasé; Cistone; Fernandez & Tornillo, as cited by Haskin, 1995, p. 5).

Naisbitt as cited by Davidoff, Kaplan & Lazarus (1994) noted that:

Change that bubbles up from the grassroots has staying power ... For the best results, the people in the institution must have ownership ...decisions will be made from the bottom up in a participatory fashion, rather than top down. (p. 21)

Smith (2003) noted that all those groups and individuals who are likely to be affected directly by the outcome of a change process should participate actively in that process from the beginning. Weisbord, as cited by Smith (2003), argued that, “people will commit to plans they have helped to develop” (p. 4). Smith (2003) stated further that:

It is only when stakeholders and role-players come together that we can begin to appreciate the wealth of experience, knowledge, expertise, skill, leadership and vision that exists in our groups and organizations. (p. 5)

Participation is good for members of an organisation because it is a powerful elixir and it is also good for people because it improves individual and organisational performance (French & Bell, 1995, p. 19).

Sergiovanni, as cited by Bush (2003), pointed to the importance of a participative approach in that it (participative approach) will succeed in 'bonding' staff together and in easing the pressures on school principals (p. 78). Oosthuizen and du Toit (1999) share the same sentiment that:

In a participative environment, most teachers are self-managing. They direct their own workflow. In the participative enterprise, performance focuses on the students, on the adding of value, on beneficiation and on the ability to replenish. People everywhere in the system are equally responsible. (p. 214)

Gamage & San Antonio (2006) also noted that, "... participative management practices are also known to yield the following benefits: heads cannot easily manipulate people... teachers are given a sense of control over their own working lives... power inequities are balanced" and "additional resources become available to the organisation" (p. 2).

Another theory that leads to a more PM approach in decision making is school-based management (SBM). The next discussion will centre on SBM.

2.3 SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT AS A MODEL THAT PROMOTES PM

School-based management (SBM) is generally the agreed-upon organisational model for delivery of education in many education systems around the world (Cranston, 2001, p. 2).

Haskin (1995) defined SBM as:

Any arrangement in which management of school affairs (e.g., budget, curriculum, discipline policies, personnel) are conducted at local school sites, rather than by central district offices. (p. 5)

SBM is the moving of a school from a structured, centralised system to school-based participative management designed to influence student achievement and school performance. Likewise, Johnson and Ledbetter, as cited by Mungunda (2003), contended that PM “has been widely promoted as a means of formalising a new conceptualisation of management to bring about school improvement” (p. 24).

A major element of the SBM model was enhanced devolution of decision making to the local school level (Cranston, 2001, p. 2). Stevenson (2001) stated that, “... shared decision-making represents a horizontal devolution of authority within the school from the principal to a collective of members of the school community” (p.103).

In a joint decision, some formal authority is delegated and redistributed to principals, teachers and parents (and sometimes students) at the school site, to make or influence decisions related to such core areas as budget, staffing and programmes.

Stevenson (2001) maintained further that:

In a participatory democratic organisation ...authority is decentralised and resides not in the individual, but in the organisational collective as a whole. Decision making, rather than subscribing to formal rules and procedures, is based on a consensus process in which all members participate in the collective formulation of problems and negotiation of decisions. (p. 104)

It should be noted, however, that attempts to involve stakeholders should be geared beyond mere participation, but also towards meaningful involvement (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, as cited by Gamage & San Antonio, 2006, p. 2). Weisbord, as cited by Smith (2003) noted that mere participation was not a panacea for all the issues of group-in-organisation life. It is a principle, a value or conviction, to be applied uniquely in each situation, where all 'gatekeepers' – those who directly control a situation – and role-players and stakeholders, actively and directly participate from the beginning of the process. This includes participation in all aspects of the process, from conceptualisation of the issues to being part of the planning, implementation and review (p. 5).

Gamage and San Antonio (2006) noted that, "allowing teachers and stakeholders to take part in decision making yields salutary results. Better decisions and greater efficiency are reached since issues are discussed extensively via open communication among people having varying viewpoints involved in participative set-ups" (p. 2). Sergiovanni, as cited by Bush (2003), concluded that, "people are more likely to accept and implement decisions in which they have participated, particularly where these decisions relate directly to the individual's own job" (p. 79).

Megan (2001) noted that collaboration is extolled increasingly as an important feature in the management of excellent schools. Recent calls for collaboration seem to be pressing for a more genuine sharing of decision-making authority, where principals and teachers make decisions jointly, and teachers and parents are viewed as having valuable knowledge and insights into the outcome of decisions. Collaboration has the potential benefits of higher-quality decisions and greater ownership in the implementation of decisions (p. 309).

The study conducted by Cranston (2001) on collaborative decision making in Queensland, in Australia, revealed that one of the schools created a number of formal structures. In brief, the main bodies were:

School Council – the strategic planning and monitoring body that has members which are elected by both teachers and parents. This group holds considerable responsibilities for setting the broad directions in the school, allocating resources to support priorities and monitoring progress.

Management Committee – comprised the principal, deputies and year-level co-ordinators (teachers), it manages the operational (day-to-day) matters in the school.

Parent and Citizens Association – comprised the parent body of the school. It has a major brief of fundraising and general support for the school.

Programme managers – teachers identified for each key curriculum area that hold responsibility for developing an annual operational plan (including a budget). The School Council approves these plans.

Class Parent Forum – comprised the parent representatives identified from each class. Collectively, members meet fortnightly with the principal or one of the deputies. The forum provides the opportunity for informal exchange of ideas and information and for raising issues.

Community Review Forum – comprised 20 randomly chosen parents usually not represented on the bodies above. This group meets once a year with the aim of providing additional opportunities for parental input, particularly to programme managers.

Curriculum Committees – comprised teachers, these work with programme managers.

(p. 11)

In these structures both teachers and parents became involved in the school and participation in its decision-making processes.

PM is informed by numerous disciplines, theories, assumptions and concepts. In the next discussion, I have selected three core theories that are relevant to participative management.

2.4 THEORIES THAT INFORM PM

2.4.1 SYSTEMS THEORY

Brown and Harvey (2006) described a system as:

An organised unitary whole composed of two or more interdependent parts, components, or subsystems and delineated by identifiable boundaries from its environment. (p. 40)

Organisation such as a school is a social system which depends on the interactions with the environment. Such interaction is important in order for the organisation to involve stakeholders (French & Bell, 1995, p. 6).

The environment includes stakeholders who form part of the field of forces that keep an organisation in a steady state or a state of equilibrium or balance (Smith, 2003, p. 10). French and Bell (1995) noted further that stakeholders are an important group to an organisation like a school (p. 7). In the study conducted by Mungunda (2003), respondents revealed that, in implementing participative management, (they) “see the school as an organisation within systems and, in order to allow the systems to function effectively, one has to involve other members of the system” (p. 46).

Stakeholders have an influence on open systems. It is crucial, therefore, that an organisation understands the influence of the environment and harnesses it in the interest of the organisation. An organisation that disregards its environment will likely stagnate and die (Smith, 2003, p. 9).

The next discussion will be about the school as a learning organisation.

2.4.2 LEARNING ORGANISATION

The idea that organisations can learn has evolved slowly over the past several decades (Worrell, 1995, p. 351). It was Kurt Lewin who first coined the idea of learning organisation (Weisbord, as cited by Smith, 2003, p. 12). According to Worrell, (1995), “Argyris and Schön, in *Organisational Learning*, were among the first scholars to examine learning organisations” (p. 351). It was expanded recently and made popular by Peter M Senge, management consultant and author of *The Fifth Discipline* (Worrell, 1995, p. 351). Senge’s theory represents the thought on participative management. Senge, as cited by Johnston and Caldwell (2001) defined a learning organisation as:

Where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together. (p. 94)

For an organisation to use its human resources effectively, all individuals have to be given an opportunity to participate. Sillins and Mulford (2004) put it that learning organisations are schools where leaders include staff in leadership development and decision making; where decisions are based on evidence from existing sources or gathered data; where the school has a clear purpose; where staff, parents, and students are informed and provided with the opportunity to discuss and refine ideas before decisions are made, and are schools that have high leadership capacity and broad-based participation (p. 448).

Johnston and Caldwell (2001) maintained further that an organisation succeeds when it taps commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in the organisation.

Schools as learning organisations foster a culture which provides opportunities for change and learning from each other and for collaborative activities. This idea has become increasingly prominent over the last decade. Senge *et al.*, as cited by Sarkar Arani, Shibata & Matoba (2007), argue that:

Schools can be re-created, made vital, and sustainably renewed not by fiat or command, and not by regulation, but by taking a 'learning orientation', [which] means involving everyone in the system in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness, and developing their capabilities together. (p. 1)

Teachers who work together and share experiences become able to think more deeply about their educational experiences and efforts through exchange and understanding with other teachers.

Building a learning organisation is more about changing the way work is organised in order to make it more conducive to learning. This is necessary because when people are motivated to co-operate with each other across the organisation, sharing their knowledge and engaging in collaborative problem solving, they are building a learning organisation.

Collaboration can be fostered if people work as a team.

2.4.3 TEAMING

In order to keep pace with multiple initiatives and changes in education, schools need to be able to respond to their environment and take decisions. This can be done by devolving true decision making accountability to teams. Smith (2003) put it that:

Teams may include teachers, learners, Governing Body members, community members and parents, depending on its function and who the role-players are. (p. 14)

Teams are being promoted, in many cases, as the way to make schools "collaborative" and "responsive" (Walker, 1994, p. 38). Teamwork will promote a sense of camaraderie within the organisation. Twomey & Kleiner (1996) stated that:

With a group of people pooling their skills, talents, and knowledge...teams can often tackle complex and chronic problems and come up with effective, permanent solutions. (p. 8)

For teams to operate productively, they must be enveloped in a compatible whole-school structure. Schools offering structural support to teams should, at least, show clearly the intended linkages between teams and between teams and senior management. In a team-driven school, the flow of information should not be obstructed by hierarchical constraints but to provide for a free horizontal and vertical flow of information and to facilitate broader involvement in the decision-making process. Bureaucratic procedures do not encourage true participation, and may actually be counterproductive. For example, forcing teachers to take on extra duties may be doomed to failure and will not sustain team-supportive climates (Stott & Walker, 1999, pp. 53-54).

Openness is necessary in teamwork (Smith, 2003, p. 17). Openness is the extent to which relevant information is shared (Hoy & Tarter, 2004, p. 254). Gill, as cited by Kinkead, 2006, contends that openness within an organisation increases when people believe that their thoughts and feelings are appreciated and understood. This openness creates the potential for an inter-dependent relationship between leaders and followers (p. 3). Hoy & Tarter (2004) concluded that openness breeds trust, just as trust creates openness (p. 254). A friendly communication climate in an organisation encourages members to communicate with colleagues in an open, relaxed and convivial manner, since good interpersonal relationships depend upon open communication (Amushigamo, 2006, p. 32).

Meetings are platforms where teams come together to bring about change in schools. Schmuck & Runkel (1994) stated that present trends in organising education, "such as team teaching, curriculum committees, site-based management, and direct involvement with instructors, will bring about a greater need for effective problem solving and decision making in groups. Face-to-face meeting is the only setting in which this function can take place" (pp. 184-185). Schmuck & Runkel (1994) argued further that regular meetings between management and staff members provide a forum for broader involvement and a communicative link between members of the organisation (p. 275).

Teamwork is an important aspect of organisational success (Mungunda, 2003, p. 50). One respondent stated that PM contributes to teambuilding and teamwork, encapsulated as:

Responsible people are involved in the planning, organising, solving problems, and to ensure that work is done effectively. A sense of teamwork is enhanced which ultimately results in success in the long run. (p. 51)

According to Ngcongco, as cited by Mungunda (2003) the advantage of teamwork is that group members give one another support, and that the joint energy of group members is likely to bring about success more quickly than that of individual members (p. 50). Smith (2003) concluded that people working together can achieve more than a group of individuals alone and it goes without saying that some tasks are too complex for individuals alone to cope with (p. 13).

PM requires leadership that acknowledges that leadership resides in many people, and shows itself in a number of ways. Walker (1994) stated that “the facilitator (principal) in schools would ease the way for others in the school community to emerge as leaders within a participatory environment” (p. 39).

The next discussion is about literature on participative leadership.

3. LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Current leadership writing also embraces the concept of participation. In places there may be some overlap with what I have written so far in this chapter about PM. I have tried to keep this to a minimum.

According to Johns and Moser (2001) participative leadership, espoused by the human relationists and organisational humanists, was a movement which aimed to reduce power and status differences that prevailed between the superior and the subordinate (p. 117). Participative leadership assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, as cited by Bush, 2003, p. 78).

Participatory approach is in line with the collegial models that emphasise that, "power and decision making should be shared among some or all members of the organisation" (Bush, 2003, p. 64). Several concepts and theories relating to participatory leadership and management, such as transformational leadership, enabling leadership, servant leadership and leadership for social justice, will be my next discussion.

3.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

James MacGregor Burns first put the concept of transformational leadership forward in his book titled *Leadership* (Bolden *et al.*, 2003, p. 14). Burns, as cited by Bolden *et al.* (2003), said transformational leadership occurs:

When one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. (p. 14)

According to Bensimon, Neumann & Birnbaum (1989) within the transformational perspective, leaders are seen as directing and having a personal impact on their followers. Similarly, Bush (2003) also contended that transformational leadership assumes that the central focus has to be the commitments and capacities of organisational members. A powerful capacity for transformational leadership is needed in order for transition to a system of self-managing schools to be a success. In transformational leadership, leaders and staff are assumed to possess shared values and common interests. Bush (2003) contended further that transformational leadership has the potential value of involving all stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives. He concludes that "the aims of leaders and followers coalesce to such an extent that it may be realistic to assume a harmonious relationship and a genuine convergence leading to agreed decisions" (pp. 76-78).

Transformational principles distribute leadership further by "involving the entire staff in decisions affecting the school and work to create a shared sense of purpose" (Bass, Blasé & Blasé, Burns, Sillins & Mulford, as cited by Triska, 2007, p. 11).

3.2 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The concept of distributed leadership contests the idea of a heroic leader standing atop a hierarchy, bending the school community to his or her purpose. Gronn, as cited by Oduro (2004) suggested that head teachers' leadership alone is not enough for the school; there is a need to include leadership roles "performed by deputy heads, substantive teachers, support teachers, members of the school councils, boards or governing bodies, and students" (p. 24). Newman & Simmons (2001) shared the same sentiment, namely that:

Distributed leadership calls on everyone associated with schools – principals, teachers, school staff members, district personnel, parents, community members, and students – to take responsibility for student achievement and to assume leadership roles in areas in which they are competent and skilled. (p. 10)

Marino (2007) contended that, by establishing a community of leaders, administrators can distribute the talent of a diverse group of individuals collectively, and benefit from their multiple perspectives (p. 10).

There is a growing body of evidence within the school improvement field that points towards the relevance of capacity building as a means of sustaining improvement. Therefore, distributed leadership is at the core of the capacity-building model. Leadership is viewed as residing within the human potential available to be released within an organisation (Harris, 2007, p.12). Likewise, Copland, as cited by Timperely (2005), put it that leadership is:

A set of functions or qualities shared across a much broader segment of the school community that encompasses administrators, teachers and other professionals and community members both internal and external to the school. Such an approach imposes the need for school communities to create and sustain broadly distributed leadership systems, processes and capacities. (p. 396)

For distributed leadership to flourish, school culture is important. These cultural patterns do have a powerful impact on performance, and shape the way staff think,

act, and feel (Sasckney & Walker, 2006, p. 351). One aspect of culture that will change fundamentally with a switch to a participative democracy is the distribution of power. “With the balanced distribution of power in a democracy, a high level of functioning can be reached because all people feel they have the power and authority to lead” (Bechtold, 1997, p. 9).

Distributed leadership focuses on how leaders in schools promote and sustain conditions that are necessary for the success of the members in interaction with others. Harris (2007) added that engaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership in action (p. 14).

3.3 ENABLING LEADERSHIP

Enabling leadership is about empowerment which involves the whole group in the decision-making process, not just those who are designated as leaders (Johns, Kilpatrick, Falk & Mulford, 2000, p. 8). Lashway (1997) stated that “enabling leaders are flexible, co-operative, and sensitive to others, able to stand back and let subordinates show leadership” (p. 3).

Gardner, as cited by Falk, 2000, highlighted some of the requirements for leadership of the new millennium:

What we need, and what seems to be emerging in some of our communities is something new – a network of responsibility drawn from all segments, coming together to create wholeness that incorporates diversity. The participants are at home with change and exhibit a measure of shared values; a sense of mutual obligation and trust. (p. 6)

Leadership is not only about the characteristics of a person. It is also about enabling others by connecting them to each other, to information and to their community. The building of networks relies for its success on building trust between network members and a clear leadership role (Falk, 2000, pp. 7- 8).

Falk (2000) noted further that tools for community builders include relationship building and collaborative problem solving. Enabling leadership is also based on building relationships of mutual obligation and trust between leaders and collaborators (Johns *et al.*, 2000, p. 8). In the study conducted by Stofile (2005) in South Africa, respondents supported the idea of keeping harmonious relations among members. Respondents stressed the fact that, “without harmonious relations existing among members, one cannot expect members to be able to give of their best at work and contribute positively to the growth and development of the school” (p. 89). The culture of participation is, in turn, influenced by the school leader’s interactions with others and his/her ability to negotiate and balance these relationships (Johns *et al.*, 2000, p. 10). Fullan (2001) contended that people in an organisation want to be part of it, are willing to know the organisation’s purpose, and would like to make a difference. This is important to an organisation, because when the individual’s soul is linked to the organisation, that person becomes connected to something deeper, and this creates a desire to contribute to a larger purpose, so that they feel that they are part of a greater whole; there is a web of connection (pp. 51-52).

Falk (2000) concluded that, those able to act, those able to put the heart and soul back into their communities, will have developed co-operative and enabling processes in their community (p. 8).

3.4 SERVANT LEADERSHIP

It was Robert K Greenleaf who inspired the servant leadership concept among modern organisational theorist (Spears, as cited by Russell, 2001, p. 78). The idea behind the servant leadership concept is that leadership has, first and foremost, to meet the needs of others. Servant leaders value human equality and strive to enhance the professional contributions of all members of an organisation. They (servant leaders) delegate responsibility and nurture participatory leadership (Russell, 2001, p. 79-80).

Trust is a very dynamic ingredient in servant leadership. It lays the foundation in order for people to follow their leaders with confidence and enthusiasm. Trust is a noteworthy approach that can help enhance involvement of the community, teachers

and learners. Covey, as cited by Gordon (2003), contended that, without this atmosphere of trust present within an organisation, an empowered environment cannot exist (p. 9). Gamage & Antonio (2006) maintained that, “high levels of trust hasten the establishment of strong networks and collaborative relations among the members and stakeholders in the school” (p. 3). Driscoll, as cited by Gamage & Antonio (2006), argued further that people who have stronger trust in the organisation’s decision-makers tend to participate and be more satisfied with their level of participation. Megan (2001) concluded that trust is necessary for open communication, and discloses more accurate, relevant, and complete data about problems, [members’] feelings or ideas (p. 313).

Appreciation of others in servant leadership is a very important element of leadership. Servant leaders love their subordinates, peers, superiors and competitors. Appreciation of others symbolises fundamental personal values that esteem and honour people, and it also transforms the workplace into something that is better for everyone (Russell, 2001, pp. 79-80). This encourages participation.

3.5 LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

A concern for social justice is at the core of democracy (Lunenburg, 2003, p.4). Educational leadership for social justice is founded on the belief that schooling must be democratic and an understanding that schooling is not democratic “unless its practices are excellent and equitable” (Lunenburg, 2003, p. 34). Rohland (2002) stated that schools ought to be community centred and more democratic in leadership (p. 19). Rohland (2002) and Shields (2004) stated that the accepted view of democracy as being simply a process of reaching agreement, can silence issues of injustice, and that democracy is not just about inviting people and holding an open meeting (p. 19, p. 124). Democratic participation requires teaching people how to participate, making them feel comfortable, and empowering them to feel competent and capable (Shields, 2004, p. 124).

In order to have strong school community relationships in diverse communities, it is necessary that people learn to talk across differences, and do not simply reach

consensus. Leaders have a role to play to enhance democratic processes, foster inclusion and participation, and increase public discourse about issues (Rohland, 2002, p. 19).

Education leaders leading in a society of great diversity, ability levels, and needs, should have a genuine concern for the well being and success of all within the larger school community. It is important to note that a leader emphasises community members' strengths, develops their leadership skills, and empowers all stakeholders of the school community (Kinkead, 2006, p. 7).

Leaders who care about social justice would need to resist, dissent, rebel, subvert, possess imagination, and to be committed to transforming oppressive and exploitative social relations in and out of schools (Gerstl-Pepin, Killeen & Hasazi, 2006, p.252). Socially just leadership considers the needs of the community actively, because this contributes to social justice and it also benefits the long-term reputation, viability, and sheer endurance of schools (Hargreaves, 2006, p. 19). Participation is a way to achieve this.

The inclusion of teachers and parents in school communities is necessary for participative management in schools. I will now discuss the teachers and parents involvement in school management.

4. *TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT*

The new paradigm of systems improvement required that successful organisations involve teachers, stakeholders and even the customer (the students) in the process of improving their schools through a continuous quality-improvement approach, to bring change in the organisation (Marino, 2007, p. 10). Similarly, Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994) stated that, at the heart of changing the situation of leadership in school left by the apartheid legacy, it is necessary to have leadership and management that involve teachers and other stakeholders in the school, including parents and community leaders (p.15).

4.1 TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Studies conducted in the past on teacher leadership and involvement in school management focused merely on formally titled teacher leadership roles, such as mentors, lead teachers, and master teachers. These studies had little impact on teacher involvement in leadership in schools. Recent studies discovered that teacher involvement is connected closely to teacher learning, and that such kind of approach may result in involvement of teachers in school management and “become a part of the ‘normal’ duties of teachers” (Smylie, Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster & Cobb, as cited by Edwards, 1998, p. 19). The new shift calls for changing roles of teachers in schools. Hart, as cited by Edwards (1998) stated that:

New work designs for teachers promote teacher [Involvement] for a variety of reasons: to nurture a democratic ... system for schools; to draw on teachers’ expertise and to create a more professional workplace in schools (p. 21).

In the traditional approach, the teacher’s role has led to training being considered as the only means to influence professional performance of teachers. With the renewed and comprehensive perspective of the teacher’s role, there is a different perspective of this role. The United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation, [UNESCO] (2005) noted that:

Teacher performance may be understood as ‘the process of mobilising (teachers’) professional skills, personal dispositions, and social responsibilities, in order to: express significant relations between the components that influence student learning; participate in education management; strengthen a democratic school culture, and participate in the design, implementation, and assessment of local and national education policies in order to foster student learning and the development of life skills.’ (p. 11)

The role of the teacher, according to the definition, has three dimensions, which are student learning, education management and education policies. For this chapter, I will concentrate on the education management and education policies dimensions. Education management is about participation, relevance, shared school decision making and leadership. This refers to teachers having ownership of the school and the

community in which they work. It also requires teachers to be involved together in management planning, monitoring and assessment (p. 12).

The education policies dimension is about formulation, execution, and assessment. This means that education systems have to operate by using teams of planners who define what it is that the society, communities and schools require. The whole process requires participation of all those involved in education, including teachers. Collective consultation and participation in decisions bring discussion and decision closer to integrating schools, teachers and families. Teachers who possess professional, ethical and social skills, and who also feel prepared to take up the new participatory role (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, [UNESCO], 2005, p. 12), can carry out these roles.

Barth, as cited by Silins and Mulford (2004) predicted that the future of public education depends upon the majority of teachers extending their work as educators to include the entire school, and not being confined to the classroom (p. 447). Cranston (2001) discovered that the greater involvement of teachers was seen by one teacher who responded, as leading to developing positive relationships, enhanced collegiality and ownership of decisions among teachers (p. 13). Similarly, Katzenmeyer and Moller, as cited by Harris (2003), included in their definition that “teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom” (p. 315). Smylie, as cited by Silins and Mulford (2004) discovered that there was evidence of positive effective outcomes for those teachers who take on leadership roles (p. 447).

Teachers who were interviewed all agreed that there were considerable opportunities for teachers to get involved in decision making in the school, from a strategic level to ‘real day-to-day things’. One teacher made the remark that:

The way it operates now, I believe, is highly professional. We are treated like professionals and have a real say in what is happening. A professional culture has developed. (p. 13)

Beyond the issue of the readiness of teachers to participate, many obstacles within schools discourage teachers from taking on leadership (and management) roles. As a result, teachers are isolated from administrators and from one another, unable to plan

improvements, share information, or solve problems (Ash & Persall, as cited by Triska, 2007, pp. 21-22). In the study conducted by Kambonde (2007) in Namibia, respondents noted that there was some resistance to change in the school, and voiced their dissatisfaction that some teachers and managers were still managing in the old autocratic way. These people were, for instance, reluctant to accept advice from, or delegate duties to, other staff members, for fear of compromising their position of authority (p. 65). In the study conducted by Stofile (2005), one respondent said that,

That thing called autocracy is not good. You are in constant fear, because you can be accused of being insubordinate by management at any time. You cannot come up with your own way of doing things; you must always do as rules prescribe, and deviation from the rule means punishment. I hate the rigidity of autocracy because it kills creativity and creates dependency syndrome. Subordinates cannot take initiative; they have to depend on the SMT for everything. (p. 52)

Triska (2007) discovered that tensions between teachers and administrators over management issues often interfere with the free exchange of ideas and actions necessary for teacher participation in school (p. 22).

Training or professional development is important, to ensure that implementers are competent to carry out their changed roles and functions (Caldwell, 2005, Grauwe, 2005, as cited by San Antonio, 2006, p. 79). Mabry and Ettinger, as cited by San Antonio (2006) realised that “training give teachers’ confidence that promotes autonomy, which may be used to support ... school improvement projects” (p. 79). Pawlas (2005) maintained that teachers need to be trained to seek, welcome, and use parent and community involvement effectively (p. 80). Teachers will not be confident to accept the participation of parents without additional training and experience.

My next discussion will concentrate on parental and community involvement in school management.

4.2 PARENTAL AND OTHER COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Nowadays, parents' involvement is organised into structures often called school boards or councils. These school councils are designed to be proactive and be part of the decision-making process, rather than reactive and having things being done to them (Dukacz & McCarthy, as cited by Molnar, 1999, p. 3).

In the study conducted in Queensland, Australia, by Cranston (2001) parents who were interviewed agreed that there were many opportunities for parents to get involved in the school, at both strategic (e.g. through the school council) and operational (e.g. P&C, parent forum) levels. But there was a challenge that "the number of parents actually involved was generally small" and one parent stated:

We are still learning about all this, but it certainly is different from a few years ago. Now we have a real say of most of the important issues. But not all parents do actually get involved. (p. 12)

Parents acknowledged that the school had supported them in developing their skills (participation and decision making in school) through courses and seminars. This allowed them to understand better what was happening in education in general, and facilitated more effective participation and contribution by them in decision-making processes (Cranston, 2001, p. 13).

In the study conducted at a primary school in Namibia by Kambonde (2007) respondents revealed that there were various committees at the school, several of which were mentioned by the respondents; for instance:

We have various committees of the school; for example, we have Itana project committee, library and many others. So we have a lot of committees I can still remember, like Ibis project committee, school board committee and we have this subjects committee like life skill and languages." (R2). "Teachers and parents are playing different management roles in those committees. That's how I could tell stakeholders' involvement in the activities of the school (R6). (pp. 36-37)

Epstein is well known in the field of parent involvement. A survey conducted by Epstein revealed six types of parent involvement, namely, “parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community” (Bachely and André, 1998, Edwards, 1995, p. 4, p. 8). In considering PM, I am interested only in Type 5. Epstein, as cited by Edwards (1995) outlines Type 5 of parent involvement as parents’ involvement in governance and advocacy, and refers to parents’ taking decision-making roles in the PTA/PTO, advisory councils, or other committees or groups at school, district, or state level. It also refers to parent and community activists in independent advocacy groups that monitor the schools and work for school improvement (p. 65).

Pawlas (2005) stated that it is important to respect the cultural sensitivities and life experiences of the people you would like to become involved with the school. Pawlas (2005) contended further that some parents and community members are uneasy about interacting with teachers and administrators because of language and educational barriers. Others may be reluctant to get involved because of a poor firsthand school experience. The principal and teachers need to play a role to address these obstacles with compassion and in a forthright manner (p. 99).

Illiteracy also plays a major role in parental apathy, especially in the rural areas. In South Africa, close to two million adults are poorly educated and lack the basic knowledge and skills for active participation in society. As a result, they distance themselves from their children’s school matters. It transpired from a study by Ngubane that “most parents are illiterate,” so it become hard for them to participate in school management (Ngubane, 2006, pp. 54-55). The study I conducted is located in Kavango Education Region, in Namibia. The education census of 2001 indicated that 70, 3% were literate, and this included other languages. Of the 70%, only 13 % were literate in Kavango language (Namibia, [National Planning, commission], 2003, p. 35).

Studies conducted on parental involvement in school management in Belgium, the UK and the USA prove that parental participation in educational management is still a problem, and it seems to be a universal issue. In the study conducted by Wilson, as cited by Stofile (2005) on school governance, one of the major hindrances is

“inadequate training” (p. 13). Molnar (1999) conducted a study in Saskatchewan on parent involvement in local school governance and there, too, it emerged that, “inadequate parent training in the various aspects of education is yet another barrier” (p. 6). In the study conducted by Cranston (2001) it was revealed that the school supported parents to enable them to develop skills through courses and seminars. This allowed them to have an understanding of what was happening in education generally, and facilitated more effective participation and contribution by them in decision-making processes (p. 13).

5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the focus was on the concept of participation in management and leadership. The general characters of participative management were reviewed, followed by PM in schools through SBM. Concepts and theories associated with PM were then discussed. I also looked at leadership theories that recognise the involvement of role-players in school management. Leadership is the key in the engagement of role-players in schools. The principal has to be ready to share responsibility and authority with role-players in the school. This is in line with what Copland, as cited by Timperely (2005) noted – that leadership is, “a set of functions or qualities shared across a much broader segment of the school community that encompasses administrators, teachers and other professionals and community members both internal and external to the school” (p. 396).

I have looked at role of the parents and teachers in school management. There is a growing concern about the need to involve teachers in school management. Teachers, it is argued, need to lead within and beyond the classroom. Teachers’ participation in school management has been shown to enhance ownership of the school and community in which they work. Parents’ involvement in school management contributes significantly to a shared vision for the school, and this has the potential to lead to better educational opportunities for their children.

In the next chapter I will present the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

My research goal was to explore the experience and perceptions of participants of participative management. This includes:

- the nature of participative management processes in the school
- the challenges experienced by the participants in participative management
- Ideas and strategies to overcome the challenges.

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research design to achieve this goal. The key components in this chapter are: research paradigm, research method, and data-gathering instruments, data analysis, research validity and ethical issues. According to Yin (1994), it is of critical importance that the research procedure, data collection, data analysis and the research protocol are documented clearly to strengthen the internal validity of the results (p. 64).

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Educational research is concerned essentially with exploring and understanding social phenomena which are educational in nature. In doing so, it deals with educational questions that can be investigated by using the methods which enable satisfactory investigation (Dash, 2005, p. 1).

A paradigm is a fundamental model or scheme that organises our view of something. It tells us where to look for the answers. A paradigm is “the fundamental points of view characterising a science in its search for meaning” (Kuhn, as cited by Ruben & Babbie, 1997, p.37). The selected paradigm guides the researcher in philosophical assumptions about the research, and in the selection of tools, instruments, participants and methods used in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, as cited by Ponterotto, 2005, p. 128). There are numerous research paradigms. As my research is located within the interpretive paradigm, I discussed that only.

Hansen, as cited by Ponterotto (2005) noted that that reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than it being an externally singular entity (p. 129). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) added that “to retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within (p. 22). Ponterotto (2005) maintained further that meaning is hidden and must be brought to the surface through deep reflection. It is only through interaction that deeper meaning can be uncovered (p. 129).

My study was rooted in an interpretive perspective because I have sought to describe and understand participants’ experience and perceptions of participative management in their natural setting. I have sought to “develop an in-depth subjective understanding of their lives” in their school (Ruben & Babbie, 1997, p.40).

3.3 CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Qualitative research often uses a case study design, which means that the research focuses on one phenomenon which the researcher seeks to understand in depth. Creswell (1998) defined a case study as “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth, data collection involving multiple sources of information (p. 61). According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001), case study design is appropriate for exploratory and discovery-orientated research (p. 399). Case study was relevant to my study because I examined a topic in which there has been little prior research in Namibia (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001,

p. 399). I have investigated participants' understanding and perceptions of participative management from their experience in one Namibian Secondary School.

My study has helped identify the benefits of PM, strategies to practise PM, and the challenges that the school experiences, and participants have suggested strategies to enhance the practice of PM in the school still further. This will help policy-makers to anticipate future issues surrounding the involvement of role-players in school management and leadership (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 400).

In choosing which case to study, one has to look at an array of possibilities for purposeful selection of a case.

3.4 SAMPLING

I used purposeful selection of a case for my qualitative study. Purposeful selection is about selecting an information-rich case for in-depth study (Patton, as cited by McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 400). I have purposefully selected PM because it illustrates a feature that is of interest for leadership and management as a field of study. With this in view, I selected the school to find out how the various role-players perceive and experience participative management and leadership.

The number of participants for a study depends on what one knows, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources. My study was an interpretive study that aimed to explore and describe the phenomenon I studied: participative management in a school. McMillan & Schumacher (2001) noted that phenomenological studies usually have fewer participants (p. 404). In total, 16 participants were interviewed, who consisted of the principal, two heads of departments, four teachers, three parents school board members, four parents not in serving in school board and two community members. The other two community members could not be interviewed as they were out of the country during the interview. One school board member was also not available as the person lives 120 kilometers from the school.

It was not easy to locate parents and community members, and I made use of the principal and other participants, therefore, to refer me to parents and community members who could be key respondents for my interview. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) refer to this as network sampling. It is used frequently for in-depth interview studies (p. 403).

3.5 DATA-COLLECTION TOOLS

Qualitative research depends on multi-method strategies to collect data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 428). For my study, I used interviews, observation and document analysis as data-collection tools. McMillan & Schumacher (2001) stated further that the use of multi-method strategies also enhanced the credibility of a study (p. 429).

3.5.1 INTERVIEWS

Interview is the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. Kvale, as cited by De Vos *et al.*, (2005) defines qualitative interviews as “attempts to understand the world from the participants’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, [and] to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 287). Interviews see “the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasise the social situatedness of data” (Kvale, as cited by Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 267).

There are various types of interview, but for my study I have used semi-structured individual interview and focus-group interviews.

3.5.1.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Morse, as cited by De Vos *et al.*, (2005) defined semi-structured interviews as those organised around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth (p. 292). I prepared predetermined questions (Appendix A) on an interview schedule, but I was guided by the schedule rather than dictated to by it. The participants were perceived as the experts on the subject, and during the interview process, the participants were free to introduce issues I had not thought of. An individual interview is more likely to reveal more information about the topic, as participants are not threatened by the presence of others. In my case, the individual interview was used for convenience purposes. One community member was

interviewed on 11 September 2008 individually, because the said participant had missed the focus group interview. It was a tape-recorded interview, and it took place at my workplace at 14:30. The same questions were asked to all participants, except probing questions, which differed depending on how the participant responded.

3.5.1.2 FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS

Merton is considered the father of the focus-group interview (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996, p. 3). Focus-group interviews are means to better understand how people feel or think about an issue. The participants were divided in groups of teachers, formal leadership and school board with community and, finally, the parents group who are not on the school board. Participants for the focus group interview were selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group in terms of the experiences of leadership and management practices at the school. Krueger (1994) defined a focus group as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment” (p. 6).

According to Cohen *et al.*, (2000) group interviews are often quicker than individual interviews and hence are timesaving and involve minimal disruption (p. 287). The group interview can also bring together people with varied opinions, or as representatives of different collectivities (p. 287).

The size of the focus-group interview ranges from six to 10 participants. However, smaller groups of four to six are preferable when the participants have a great deal to share about a topic, or have intense or lengthy experiences related to the topic of discussion (De Vos *et al.*, 2005, p. 305; Krueger, 1994, p. 79). I used a small number of four people because there were participants who were absent several times, and the interviews could not be postponed for a further time as participants were tired of coming and then having the interview postponed. Some participants indicated that their employees would not release them if we continued to postpone the interviews.

The interviews for teachers and formal leadership members took place in the afternoon at school, while the school board parents and community interview took place at the house of one school board member. The parents not serving in school board could not be found the same day I interviewed school board parents and community and as a result their interview took place at my workplace in the boardroom in the morning. We could not find suitable place and they agreed my workplace will not cause any harm they will be free to be interviewed.

In the focus-group interview, I wanted to know their experience and perceptions of leadership and management practices at the school. My focus-group interview did not go as well as planned. The interviews were postponed because of the quorum, which was less than six participants, but I did manage to have a smaller focus-group interview.

3.5.2 OBSERVATION

Observation is another major means of collecting data in qualitative research. According to Cohen *et al.* (2000) observation enables researchers to understand the context of programmes to see things that might otherwise be missed unconsciously, to discover things that participants might not talk about freely in interview situations, to move beyond perception-based data, and to access personal knowledge (p. 305). I played the role of a participant observer, in order to be able to “listen, to see, to inquire, to observe and to write up the notes” (De Vos *et al.*, 2005, p. 277).

I used semi-structured observation. Cohen *et al.* (2000) stated that a semi-structured observation will have an agenda of issues in a far less-determined or systematic manner (p. 305).

Observation took place at the school, where I video-taped one staff meeting and observed the school board/management meeting, teacher/parent meeting and, finally, one departmental briefing. I observed how decisions were determined, who chaired the meeting, who did the talking, who recorded the minutes. I indicated the time period during which a person was speaking.

3.5.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis provided me with secondary data. This included minutes of meetings, agendas, internal office memos and invitation letters. According to De Vos *et al.* (2005) a variety of non-personal documents such as minutes of meetings, agendas and internal office memos are written with a view to the continual functioning of an organisation or for the execution of a particular matter (p. 315). However, some ingenuity is needed in locating documents that bear on the problem, because documents are produced for reasons other than the study at hand. According to Merriam (1998) congruence between documents and the research problem depends on the researcher's skill in identifying documents' content relating to the problem goal and the related questions (p. 125). I managed to get minutes of staff meetings for 2006, 2007 and 2008, school board minutes, departmental minutes, project minutes, and the agenda and invitation letter for the parents' meeting.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analysed by organising it into file folders and computer files. Thereafter, the data was read carefully in order to get an overall sense of it. I looked first at my research goal in order to determine the categories of my data analysis. I found that the research goal was enough for me to have headings like perceptions of participants on the concept PM, nature of PM, strategies that enhance PM and challenges experienced in the practices of PM. I started with the interview transcriptions. Thereafter I looked at observation to identify issues of PM: whether it was happening in the meetings; how stakeholders played management and leadership roles; how decisions were arrived at, who chaired the meeting. Finally, I looked at documents such as previous minutes: who chaired the meetings, how were the decisions taken and who did the talking? I confined myself to minutes for the period 2006-2008.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Van Rensburg (2001) stated that validity “refers to the degree of fit between reality and research conclusions, which are seen as corresponding with reality” (p.7). Reliability in qualitative research is about the fit between what researchers’ record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e. degree of accuracy (Cohen & Manion, 2000, p. 119).

Marshall and Rossman, as cited by de Vos *et al.* (2005), observed that all research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated (p. 345) Babbie, Vorster, Mouton and Prozesky (2001) argue that a qualitative study cannot be called transferable unless it is credible, and it cannot be deemed credible unless it is dependable. I will now explain how I used these concepts in my study.

1. Credibility

Babbie *et al.* (2001) noted that triangulation is one way to ensure credibility; by asking different questions, seeking different sources and using different methods (p. 277). Cohen and Manion (2000) defined triangulation as, “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (p. 112). I combined the methods in my study and this helped me partially to overcome the deficiency that flows from one method.

2. Transferability

Lincoln and Guba in de Vos *et al.* (2005) proposed that transferability as the alternative to external validity in which the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context, rest more with the investigator who would make the transfer, than with the original investigator (p. 346). As my study was a single case study, it was not easy to transfer the findings to another context, but the findings of practices of PM, and challenges experienced, can probably be transferred

to another case study. Some of my findings were found by previous researchers in Namibia on PM.

3. Dependability

Dependability is the alternative to reliability, where the researcher provides evidence that if the research were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents in the same (or a similar) context, its findings would be similar (De Vos *et al.*, 2005, p. 346; Babbie *et al.*, 2001, p. 278). I ensured dependability by going back to the respondents so that they could confirm the accuracy of the interview transcripts. This is referred to as 'member checking'.

3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity were addressed. Participants were informed of the objectives of the research. In my research study I considered the following ethical issues in order to "obtain valid and reliable data" (Cohen & Manion, 2000, p. 49):

1. Informed consent

Diener & Crandall, as cited by Cohen & Manion (2000) defined informed consent as the procedures by means of which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions (p.51). Participants were informed that they would be at liberty to withdraw from the investigation at any time.

2. Privacy, Anonymity and confidentiality

My study was a single case study, hence the setting observed will not be revealed in the study. Cohen & Manion (2000) stated that when information is publicised with names, privacy is violated seriously (p. 61).

Privacy was also ensured by protecting the anonymity of the research participants, and by keeping the research data confidential. Cohen & Manion (2000) put it that the essence of anonymity is that information provided by the participants should in no way reveal their identity (p. 61). Anonymity was addressed whereby the school's and participants' names were not divulged. Glesne (1999) stated that "participants have a right to expect that, when they give you permission to observe and interview, you will protect their confidence and preserve their anonymity" (p. 122). Although the principal identified some of the research participants by giving me the name of the teachers and parents, the onus was on me to identify my key respondents appropriately. I used the following codes in the findings: Parents Not in School Board: PNSB; Community: C, School board Parents: SBP, Teachers: T and formal leadership (principal and head of departments) : SMT.

The guarantee of confidentiality protected the participants' privacy. O'Leary (2004) puts it that confidentiality involves protecting the identity of those providing research data (p. 54). I used the pseudonyms Twagwana for the location, and Namupa for the school. The tape recorder was not given to anyone to listen to so as to identify the voices of the research participants, except the person who helped me to transcribe them, and she was instructed not to reveal the information. Audiotapes will be kept in a safe place for a period deemed necessary for reference purposes, and will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study.

3.9 RESEARCH CRITIQUE

Cohen & Manion (2000) maintained that "exclusive reliance on one method [therefore] may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality she is investigating" (p. 112). In this study, triangulation was implemented by using interviews, observation and document analysis as data collection tools. Many sources of data are better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena the researcher is studying. Interviews provided me with the data, and were supplemented by observation and data analysis.

I experienced a problem with the transcription of the tape recordings, because time constraints did not allow me to attend to my professional work and my study. As a result, I engaged someone to do the transcribing, and paid N\$2.00 per page. This helped me to have the transcriptions ready before I continued with the next interview, and also helped in that I could read the findings and see how best I could obtain the data I needed for the study. I started by interviewing the teachers, followed by the school board parents/community, then parents, and thereafter the school management team and, finally, the interview with the community member. I have observed that focus-group interviews are not easy to conduct, especially with people who have many commitments. This affected me because I was obliged to postpone interviews, which delayed my data collection, and this meant that my schedule was not in line with the planned programme.

I was also hampered by the fact that one staff meeting and one Grade 10 parents' meeting were conducted while I was out of the region. Observation of these meetings could not be carried out, and as a result I was obliged to rely on the minutes. This meant that I had fewer personal observations, and more interview data.

Interviews of the school board parents, parents not in school board and community were conducted in the local language. There is a possibility that some of the content might have been misinterpreted, as some of the concepts in PM were not easy to translate into English. There was only one individual interview with the community. Most of the interviews were focus groups. There is a possibility that some participants were not honest in the focus-group interviews, because they were concerned that others might reveal the information to the school management.

Finally, a female principal manages the school at which I conducted the study. She welcomed me openly, and was very helpful in providing me with necessary support of participants, and the documents that I needed for the study.

3.10 CONCLUSION

Qualitative case study has provided me with the data on participants' perceptions and experiences on the practice of PM. Purposive sampling helped me to identify the school to be studied, and participants to be interviewed. Triangulation has been used by employing interview, observations and document analysis as data-collection tools to ensure validity and reliability of my study. The limitations in my study were the problem of translating from the local language to English; the workload at my place of employment, which precluded me from observing more meetings and, finally, the difficulty of participants in the focus-group interviews who were not as forthcoming as they might have been.

I will present data findings and analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I provide an integrated presentation and discussion of my data in relation to my research goal. My research goal was to investigate participants' perception of the practice of participative management in a Namibian secondary school. I begin with a profile of my interview participants. Then I present and discuss the themes that emerged from my data. I conclude the chapter with a brief overview.

The school I studied is a secondary school in Namibia. In 2008, it enrolled a total of 402 learners, of whom 207 were boys, and 195 were girls. A female principal heads it, with two heads of department – one male and one female. There are 11 male teachers and two female teachers in the school.

4.2 PROFILE OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

SMT 1

She is the 35-year-old female principal of the school. She started teaching in 1998. In 2001, she was appointed head of department at a senior secondary school, and in 2005 she was promoted to the post of principal at this Namupa Senior Secondary School.

SMT2

He is a 35-year-old male head of department. He started teaching in 2001, and was promoted to a head of department post in 2006. He started at this school in January 2007. He has BETD and HED qualifications, majoring in science.

SMT 3

She is a 34-year-old female head of department. She started teaching English and history in 1999, and was promoted to head of department at this school in 2006.

T1

He is a 25-year-old male. He has a national diploma in education, majoring in physical science. He started teaching in 2006, and has been teaching for three years at the same school. He is a member of the school management team.

T2

He is a 28-year-old male. He has a BEd, majoring in economics and business. He started teaching in 2006, and has been teaching for three years at the same school.

T3

He is a 26-year-old male. He has a BEd, majoring in social science, geography and English. He started teaching in 2006, and has been teaching for three years at the same school. He is a member of the school management team.

T4

She is a 26-year-old female. She has a BETD qualification, majoring in agriculture and home ecology. She started teaching in 2006, and has been teaching for three years at the same school.

C1

He is a 42-year-old male, and he is employed in government. He has completed Grade 9, and serves as a member of Local Development Committee for the suburb where the school is located.

C2

He is a 32-year-old male, and he works as a contract staff member for the Ministry of Health and Social Services on Total Control of the Epidemic, an HIV-prevention project. He has only Grade 12.

PNSB1

He is a 44-year-old male, and is mainly unemployed but does casual welding work. He has three children at the school. He has completed Standard 4. One of his children enrolled at the school in 2005.

PNSB 2

She is 40-year-old female, and is unemployed. She has completed up to Standard 5. She has one child at the school, which started there in 2007.

PNSB 3

She is a 44-year-old female, and she is self-employed as a dressmaker. She never went to school. She is a single mother, and has two children at the school. One of the children started in 2005.

PNSB 4

She is a 48-year-old female. She is unemployed. She completed Standard 6, and has two children at the school. One of the children started in 2005.

SBP1

She is a 56-year-old female, and is unemployed. She has Grade 8 – previously Standard 6. She has one child at the school, and was elected a member of the school board in 2005.

SBP3

She is a 36-year-old female, and is employed. She has a Grade 10 qualification, and has one child at the school. She was elected a member of the school board in 2005.

SBP4

She is a 59-year-old female, and is unemployed. She completed Grade 7 – previously Standard 5. She has one child at the school, and was elected a member of the school board in 2005.

In the next discussion, I start presenting themes that emerged from the data. First, I will discuss participants' perceptions of PM.

4.3 THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA

4.3.1 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT (PM)

Proponents of PM promote it as a paradigm shift in education leadership and management, being a change from authoritarian and hierarchical organisation management to one of diversity, collaboration and inclusion. The shift calls for increased parental and community participation in education, increased efforts at inclusion of all students, and a drive towards participative management (Isaacs, 1995, p. 8). Participants were asked to respond to the following question: What is your understanding of the concept of participative management in school? The purpose of asking the question was to establish if the participants had an idea of what PM entailed.

My data revealed that the SMT, SBP, teachers and community members had some common understanding of what PM entailed. I present and discuss the data provided by the SMT, parents, teachers and community members.

SMT 1: Participative management is when we involve others, whom we call now stakeholders in education, (in) all the decision making and running of the school.

SBP 2: I also view it that it's about teachers not to be left alone about management of education in the school they will not succeed unless the participation of the three whereby the teacher, the parents and the learners understand and be committed. That's how I think.

Participants were able to understand that not every community member should take part in school management and leadership. Only a small part of the community can contribute to education, and that is the model that the school has followed so far as participation in school management and leadership is concerned.

T3: Not everyone in the community should take part in the school management. The school identifies a group to represent the community; for example, members who are serving in the school

board. Through the school board, the community can voice the concerns they have regarding a specific school.

PNSB, on the other hand, had a limited view and said that their participation is through the school board and the Local Development Committee.

PNSB2: school board

PNSB4: Local Development Committee

PNSB1: The committee has to be involved because the committee is in the suburb where the school is located, they know the problems in the suburb, they should get closer to the school to find out what is at school, and this is the committee of Twagwana.

Participants' understand PM as the involvement of different people in decision making.

One community member indicated that PM is embraced by managing the school in a collaborative way by means of a representative body called the school board. The school board manages the school on behalf of the parents.

C1: The school board comprises teachers, parents, and learners of the school. Those are the groups that have to be involved in order for the management of the school to progress, because they are the representatives of education at school. This is how I perceive it.

C1: We can talk of the school board – this is the board of the school which acts on behalf of the learners who are schooling at the school. The school board is the people who have to see whether things at school are going well or not. If there are problems, even minor ones, they consult parents as soon as possible, as well as the principal, in order for progress to be made.

The study conducted by Cranston (2001) on collaborative decision making in Queensland, revealed that one of the schools created a number of formal structures, e.g. a school council, through which both teachers and parents became involved in the school and participation in decision-making processes.

The school council is the strategic planning and monitoring body that consists of members elected by both teachers and parents. This group holds considerable

responsibility for setting the broad directions in the school, allocating resources to support priorities, and monitoring progress (p. 11).

Participants identify the different people who can be involved, as teachers, parents, learners, businesses, community leaders, local development committee, and heads of departments, principal and school board. This is in agreement with Sheane (1993), who noted that PM is about the involvement of all the stakeholders, “e.g. administrators, faculty, staff, parents, students, community members, business partners” in school management (pp. 2-3).

PM has some benefits for an organisation. In the next theme, I present participants’ perceptions of how the school could benefit from PM.

4.3.2 PERCEPTIONS OF WHY STAKEHOLDERS’ PARTICIPATION IS NECESSARY IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

4.3.2.1 DEMOCRATIC ARGUMENT

Teachers and SMT members indicated that participation in school management is about exercising democracy in schools. The participants’ perception is in line with the policy of *Towards Education for All*, where it is noted that Namibia is a democratic country, and the school, therefore, has to accommodate the involvement of the stakeholders in managing that school. It is stated further that participative management is rooted in the democratic principle which encourages “broad participation in decision making” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p.41).

T3: Before independence, according to the history of the policy of education, the management did not allow everyone to participate in decision making in education; policies were made from top and then imposed on the teachers, who had to implement the policies without any question. After Namibia attained its independence, the Ministry of Education emphasised that democracy meant the participation of parents in schools, and this is PM.

SMT 1: I think it (PM) came in after independence. Before independence, learners, for example, were excluded from the school board team, which makes up the management team as well. If you look



at the school board, they were not really very involved in the managing of the school; one would say the board was there just in name, and it did not really function effectively. The school management did everything, and the principal alone took most of the decisions.

T4: The Ministry of Education does promote democracy in the school, because often the decisions that are made involve the different stakeholders, such as the Learners' Representative Council, parents, and other concerned parties.

As Namupa Secondary School is in Namibia, it is necessary for it to practise PM because, in Namibia, communities and parents are regarded as active participants and contributors to discussions of school management (Namibia. MEC, 1993, pp. 41-42). The responsibility of education is no longer that of the individual (principal) alone, but is shared widely, relying on the active participation and co-operation of many other individuals and organisations to develop and support a sound education system (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 176). It is stated further that everyone has a role to play in ensuring that the system works well and that they should "start thinking of education as something that belongs to all of us" (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 176).

The systems thinking approach in PM is important, as it opens up participation of stakeholders in school management and leadership.

4.3.2.2 OPEN SYSTEMS ARGUMENT

Participants revealed that the community's participation in school management is of vital importance, since the learners come from the community, and the community also depends on the output (the learners) from the school. The school cannot work in isolation from its community.

SMT 1: Participation of the community is necessary because the learners that we teach come from the community, and we need to be supported by community members.

SMT2: The other aspect is that the school alone, or the school management alone, will not be able to cover all facets, so the parents and the community have to be involved.

SBP 2: The community where the school is located – and not only teachers or the school board or learners – has to participate; all the people have to contribute because, once the learners succeed, these learners will have social responsibility to the community.

C1: The school belongs to the community within that area. The issues at the school have to be communicated to parents and other relevant school communities for them to know what is happening. On the other hand, the parents and the community should also communicate their concerns with regard to issues affecting education in the school, and this make it easier to identify the impact it might have on the school.

T3: Yes, the school is already open to the all stakeholders. This is where we can see that PM has already been implemented, because parents are welcome to come in on whatever decision has been made by the school, to come and see how education is taking place in the school, and also to come and contribute to what is happening at the school.

The notion of systems thinking is in line with what French and Bell (1995) noted, namely that stakeholders are important groups to an organisation like a school (p. 7). A systems approach to the school “views members in an organisation as depending on one another for success”. Every member contributes to “the overall vision of the organisation, and in a situation of this kind no member can ... work in isolation ...,” but has to work “with other members and this is collective participation” (French & Bell as cited by Stofile, 2005, p. 24).

The open systems thinking approach in PM was also discovered in the study conducted by Mungunda (2003) in Namibia, wherein respondents revealed that,

In implementing participative management ... I see the school as an organisation within systems and, in order to allow the systems to function effectively, one has to involve other members of the organization. (p. 46)

French and Bell (1995) contended further that an organisation such as a school is a social system that depends on its interactions with its environment (p. 6). Stakeholders have an influence on open systems, and it is crucial, therefore, that an organisation understands the influence of the environment and harnesses it in the interest of the organisation.

Participants in this study concluded that the exclusion of the parents, school board and other stakeholders, will cause the school to be run badly, and the school will fail to receive the support of the parents on activities the school might be planning.

SMT 3: In terms of the school policy, if the parents do not participate in decisions, it becomes a problem. This is where you hear about boycotts and other things. This happens because the school did not do the right thing.

Participants said that the school needed to involve relevant stakeholders in order to share ideas and skills as a team.

4.3.2.3 SHARING OF IDEAS AND SKILLS

Smith (2003) stated that, “It is only when stakeholders and role-players come together that we can begin to appreciate the wealth of experience, knowledge, expertise, skill, leadership and vision that exists in our groups and organisations” (p. 5). Participants in the school I studied indicated that participation of stakeholders in school management can help to introduce more ideas, because experts in the community will offer their expertise – for example, to minimize disciplinary problems at school and to combat the HIV epidemic. Participants gave examples where teachers, as well as the churches, traditional leaders and the Total Control of the Epidemic (TCE) group, participate in the school.

T1: In order for the school to minimize indiscipline at school, one church leader used to address the learners at school morning assembly on the issue of discipline, and this helped the school to be a very positive environment for learning. Traditional leaders ... are people with high status ... we ... refer to them as role models for the learners at our school. I think their involvement in decision making in school, especially in combating the concept of discipline, is highly appreciated at school.

The school does involve the community in teaching about HIV/AIDS.

SMT1: Another example is that we normally make use of the community counsellors like the TCE – the Total Control of the Epidemic. These people are trained in the community, and we make use of them to come and educate the learners in the classroom. This has been integrated into the life skills subject, and the TCE group from the community comes and teaches the learners about HIV/AIDS.

4.3.2.4 TEAMWORK

Teamwork is one of other important aspects of organisational success (Mungunda, 2003, p. 50).

To value the need for PM, the school has created teams – for example subject groups, departmental groups, committees and projects groups, in order to facilitate the

practice of PM. The school acknowledged that teamwork has helped the school to perform well.

SMT2: To give an example of how perhaps this teamwork is so important, let me say that I am teaching mathematics, for example, and she is teaching business, and the other one English, and all of us are aiming for our learners to pass. If I am not really committed to my subject, and only two of the other teachers are serious about their subjects, then this goal will never be achieved. But if all of us have the common vision that we would like all these learners to pass, every teacher will put in more effort and will achieve the desired result collectively by means of the team's effort.

In the study conducted by Mungunda (2003) one respondent stated that PM contributes to teambuilding and teamwork:

Responsible people are involved in the planning, organising, solving problems and to ensure that work is done effectively. A sense of teamwork is enhanced which ultimately results in success in the long run ... (p. 51)

According to Ngcongco, as cited by Mungunda (2003) the advantage of teamwork is that group members give one another support, and that the joint energy of group members is likely to bring about success more quickly than that of individual members (p. 50).

The school I studied, participants indicated that to work as a team is good because, when a problem arises, the team can share ideas with others.

T2: It is good to work as a group, because one will learn new ideas and information on how to do certain task; if you are alone one will not know.

Twomey and Kleiner (1996) stated that,

With a group of people pooling their skills, talents, and knowledge ... teams can often tackle complex and chronic problems and come up with effective, permanent solutions. (p. 8)

Teams are being promoted in many cases, therefore, as the way to make schools "collaborative" and "responsive" (Walker, 1994, p. 38).

Participants in this study indicated further they did take part in some of the planning activities as teams. For example:

T2: We are allowed sometimes to come up with the budget for certain of the activities that we are going to carry out. When funds are required, we are allowed to come up with the budget to be able to plan ahead.

T3: And, for example, we have to sit as a school in different departments close to the end of the year – and groups such as the social science club also sat – to come up with the plan for the academic year.

Smith (2003) noted that all those groups and individuals who are likely to be affected directly by the outcome of a change process have to be actively involved in the process right from inception. In my study, the issue of improving performance by involving other teachers working as a team aiming at one goal is an indication of teamwork in the school.

Teachers are involved collectively at the beginning of the year with regard to the vision of the school, so that teachers can be committed. Teachers in this study indicated that exclusion from planning would result in them not being committed to implementing those plans:

T2: I think it is difficult for our teachers to be committed to, and implement, plans they did not develop. There are certain guidelines that indicate that we should be involved and, if that does not happen, one may not be committed.

4.3.2.5 OWNERSHIP ENHANCES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

The SMT, teachers and school board parents acknowledged that, with PM, stakeholders are able to know what is going on in the school, and what decisions have been made, so that they are able to contribute to school management. By involving stakeholders, PM enhances a sense of ownership, and this will result in people being able appreciate PM and the institution becoming much more effective. Participants have this to say:

SMT 1: People need to have that ownership in the school's achievements because, if stakeholders are not associated with the achievements, they will not put in as much effort. We want all the stakeholders to claim ownership of the good performance, or poor performance, of the school.

The participants perceive stakeholders' participation as an asset to the school, as it brings about change in the school. This idea is supported by Senge *et al.*, as cited by Sarkar Arani *et al.* (2007) who argue that the concept of learning organisations encourages a rewarding school environment and fosters an educational culture which provides opportunities for change, for learning from each other, and for collaborative learning activities. Learning organisations have become increasingly prominent over the last decade. Schools as learning organisations "can be re-created, made vital ... by ... involving everyone in the system in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness, and developing their capabilities together" (p. 1).

Bishop and Mulford, as cited by Johns *et al.* (2000) contended that failure to involve stakeholders will result in lack of ownership of the school by the community, thus reducing the capacity for the school to contribute to the community (p. 10). In order to enhance change, Naisbitt, as cited by Davidoff *et al.* (1994) put it that:

Change that bubbles up from the grassroots has staying power. For the best results, the people in the institution must have ownership. Decisions will be made from the bottom up in a participatory fashion, rather than top down (p. 21).

One respondent in the study by Mungunda (2003) on PM stated that PM has a benefit for the school as it "results in greater sense of commitment and ownership of decisions" (p. 40). Bass, Blasé and Blasé, Burns, Sillins and Mulford, as cited by Triska (2007) noted that "ownership of decisions, initiation and risk taking contributes to positive change in an organisation" (p. 11). Johns *et al.* (2000) contended that, "although greater time is taken to reach decisions, group members are more likely to support decisions reached through the shared leadership process because they have a sense of ownership of them" (p. 8).

I will now discuss the practice of participative management in the school.

4.4. PRACTICES OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOL

4.4.1 PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING

Participatory decision making is one of the strategies used by the school to ensure participation of stakeholders in school management decisions. The school management indicated that decisions are taken collectively with the teachers.

SMT1: We do not impose decisions that we take at management level but, rather, we accommodate contributions or opinions from the others. Management decisions have a negative outcome, as people will say that this is the decision that came from the management. But the moment you can involve them ... as staff, for example, we say, all right let's look at all the pro's and cons and say, let's try this; let us all participate in this action that we have taken and implement it. If it does not work out, we come back together and say, well, let us look at the alternative.

T3: Yes, suggestions are given, and this normally takes place on a platform where all the staff members are present. The suggestions are normally analysed from the perspective of the individual teacher, and then people will give an opinion on what has been raised, and then the majority point of view is taken. If it is believed that the suggestion will not work, then of course the idea will not be accepted and we have to consider alternatives.

Collective decisions are sometimes taken through voting, and the majority decision that has been agreed upon by the group is then taken.

T1: There are decisions which need collective ideas from the entire staff, and in such cases we normally use a democratic method whereby we vote before we pass that decision. But 50 % of the voices are heard, not 100%.

SMT2: Collective decisions help us to ensure that nobody will come later, after the decision has been taken, and say that it was the management's decision and I will not participate in implementing it. Therefore, when it is taken collectively, there will be no excuse not to be part of the decision taken by the majority by means of voting, and of course we have to accept that we are living in a democratic society.

Participatory decision making is also a practice that involves parents. Parents do express their concerns to the school board, and sometimes discussions are held first with the parents collectively, and then decisions are taken and implemented. The

school board represents the parents and, to ensure the practice of PM, the parents and school board do meet to discuss issues of the school.

Participatory decision making is about sharing ideas before conclusions are reached. Parents also indicated that they are called to the school to have meetings and share ideas. But they do have concerns about decisions which are taken but not implemented. I will discuss this later under Challenges.

It emerged, from the documents analyzed, that financial decisions are decided upon in a participatory nature. Previously, before this meeting, teachers complained about participation in finance decisions. But there is improvement in terms of participation. The minutes of the staff meeting held on 25 May 2006, indicated that the school requested money to purchase Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) materials, and that this request was tabled to the school board, which approved the request. It was also evident that, at the staff meeting on 22 January 2008, teachers were informed that the draft budget had been sent out and was awaiting approval from the school board. The school does have departmental briefing on Friday mornings. I managed to observe one departmental briefing on 07 November 2008, and it emerged that financial needs were discussed in the briefing, and then went to the finance committee, which compiled the needs and forwarded them to the school board.

Participatory decision making also was revealed in the naming of the school. During the interview, a community member indicated that the parents, community and learners were involved in the naming of the school.

C1: First, the school was named Twagwana Secondary School, then, later on, the community surrounding the school was not happy with the name because there was another school within the area also called Twagwana Secondary School – this was on the western side of the same area, while the new one was on the eastern side. Then we came up with the idea for the community to meet with the learners, and we decided to give it the name that we are using now.

Documents analysed showed that several meetings were held: one held on 08 April 2006 was convened by school board, teachers, counsellors, headman, principal and inspector of education, to discuss possible names that had emerged from the parents.

Another meeting, on 15 July 2006, was convened to share information on the circular of the Formal Education Act 8/2002, which sets guidelines on the naming of schools. This meeting was attended by 180 parents. During the study, the researcher was able to observe participatory discussions in the meetings. The meeting of the governing body held on 30 May 2008 should have been attended by the school board only, but I observed that two teachers and two heads of departments were also present.

In the study conducted by Kambonde (2008) respondents indicated that collaborative decision making was taking place in the school where parents and teachers were involved in decision making. An example was given of the Itana project, encapsulated as:

There was often consultation before decisions were taken; for example, in the Itana project. In this case, the management of the school and parents met together and decided that each parent should donate 1kg of mahangu flour in order to sustain the project. This evidenced both democratic participation in the management of the school and the spirit of collegial co-operation. (p.60)

The practice in the school of shared decision making supports the argument of Stevenson (2001) who noted that, in a participatory democratic organisation, authority is decentralised and resides in the organisation as a whole. Shared decision making is one of the models that demonstrate decentralisation of decision-making authority within the school (p. 103). From my findings, it was revealed that teachers, the community and the school board were involved.

Participation of parents and teachers in decision making was also found in the study conducted by Cranston (2001) in Queensland. In this study, teachers interviewed all agreed that there were considerable opportunities for teachers to get involved in decision making in the school, from a strategic level to 'real day-to-day things'. One teacher made a remark:

The way it operates now, I believe, is highly professional. We are treated like professionals and have a real say in what is happening. A professional culture has developed. (p. 13)

Stevenson (2001) stated that “shared decision making represents a horizontal devolution of authority within the school from the principal to a collective of members of the school”. Some formal authority is delegated and redistributed to principals, teachers and parents (and sometimes students), related to such core areas as budget, staffing and programmes. The assumption underlying shared decision making are ‘that greater ownership, morale and commitment among stakeholders will result ... and that decisions made at the local level are likely to be more responsive to the specific, individual school contexts’” (p.103).

In this study the staff meetings and school board discussions observed, discussions were held and decisions were reached through consensus, and some critical ones through voting. Stevenson (2001) puts it that, “Decision making ... is based on a consensus process in which all members participate in the collective ... negotiation of decisions” (p. 104).

Shared decision making is facilitated by ensuring that members in the organisation share leadership. I will now discuss shared leadership.

4.4.2 SHARED LEADERSHIP

Participative leadership, espoused by the human relationists and organisational humanists, was a movement founded in order to reduce the power and status difference that prevailed between the superior and the subordinate (Johns & Moser, 2001, p. 117). The participatory approach is in line with the collegial models that emphasise that, “power ... should be shared among some or all members of the organisation” (Bush, 2003, p. 64).

It emerged from the observations of the meetings that the school board, community members, and teachers exercised leadership roles in school management and leadership. It also emerged in the observation of the meetings that teachers were heading school committee projects at school. At the staff meeting observed on 02 May 2008, teachers representing the environmental club, science club, education tour,

sports, drama, fundraising, school uniform, culture and choir, for example, presented their reports.

It was also confirmed from the interview that teachers did play leadership roles at the school, and they acknowledged that they did take the lead in the various committees. Some indicated that they were project co-ordinators; some served on the examination, disciplinary, or NANTU committees, or were subject heads.

T3: I am a member of the disciplinary committee, and we are responsible for seeing to it that our learners conduct themselves in a disciplined and acceptable manner. I am also a member of the environment club, whereby I cultivate a sense of environmental awareness among our learners. I am also a member of the school management, appointed because of PM and not by the Ministry of Education as a formal leader, so I do contribute to the decision making at this school. I am also a member of the fundraising committee, which organises activities in which we engage our learners so that they may acquire entrepreneurial skills.

T1: I am member of the examination committee, which is responsible for controlling the examination material and making examination arrangements. I am also the co-ordinator of the science club at the school, which sees that the science activities are carried out and that the learners are being taught the important of science at the school. I am also a member of the fundraising committee, and we have just merged with the school tour committee.

On 07 November 2008, during data verification, I managed to observe one departmental morning briefing. In this briefing, the teacher responsible for exams passed a message requesting that teachers assist with the binding of the question papers that had been duplicated.

A teacher heading the exams made the request: "Teachers have to start stapling the question papers that have been duplicated".

This indicates that the teachers are given the power to manage the committees they head.

It also emerged in the interview that the school board had identified one community member to be part of the 'vetkoek' (fat-cake) project (a fundraising initiative for the

school), which was initiated jointly by teachers and the school board in order to supplement the school development fund. The project committee consists of the school secretary, a teacher, a community member, and a head of department. The school board sought approval for this project from the circuit inspector of education, who approved the request.

SBP 3: The other thing we experience is poverty (lack of funds) at school. The school board and teachers decided to have a tuck-shop. There was not enough money for us to have a building where we could sell goods but, because we were so determined, we decided to have a volunteer to bake vetkoek. This project is still in place, and the person is still selling vetkoek.

The vetkoek project was applauded by the SMT in that it was helping the school to buy consumable items for the school administration.

SMT3: The school has started the cake project with a little money – \$150 – with which to buy ingredients, and the lady continued selling. The \$150 was returned to the school development fund. Now the project stands on its own and it helps the school to buy consumables; for example, cartridges for the printer and ink for the duplicating machine.

During my observation at the school, I found her selling vetkoek, after which she counted the money with the secretary, and stored it in one of the heads of department's office. The community member who sells the vetkoek does not have a child schooling at school, but does have one relative there.

Another community leadership example emerged when I was seeking key informants. I was informed that there is, at the school, a group of HIV/AIDS volunteers from the community. With the teachers of My Future, My Choice (the life skills programme for Grades 8-12), this group takes a lead in creating awareness to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In the interview, the community member revealed:

C2: The school allows us to participate in their schedule by coming and sharing what we have. What we do is teach the learners how to live positively with HIV and AIDS; we teach learners about HIV and AIDS prevention and malaria, and we organise sport and songs, etc., to create more awareness among the learners.

C2: They normally see how they can accommodate us in the timetable, but usually we are given the physical education and life skills periods in which to visit.

The study conducted by Cranston (2001) on collaborative decision making in Queensland, revealed that one of the schools created a number of formal structures through which both teachers and parents became involved in the school (p. 11). In the study conducted in Australia by Gamage *et al.*, as cited by San Antonio (2006) the findings revealed that, "committee structure is a very useful feature of public school administration leadership and management (p. 157).

My findings also emerged in the study of Kambonde (2007) where respondents revealed that there were various committees at the school, several of which were mentioned by the respondents; for instance:

We have various committees of the school; for example, we have Itana project committee, library, and many others. So we have a lot of committees. I can still remember the Ibis project committee, school board committee, and we have subjects committee like life skills and languages (R2). (pp. 36-37)

Another respondent mentioned the committees, such as the library, Ibis, and school board committees. The school board consists of parents and teachers together.

Apart from that there are also different committees like library, school board and many others. "Teachers and parents play different management roles on those committees. That's how I could tell that there is stakeholders' involvement in the activities of the school" (R6) (pp. 36-37).

In my study, teachers revealed that, by being given projects and clubs to lead, they were given a sense of empowerment.

T3: Teachers are empowered to be leaders of different projects and clubs that we have at school, so whenever we are leading our learners in these activities, we feel we are inspiring them and grooming them for a better future.

According to Triska (2007) a transformational leader “inspires followers to a greater sense” and “aims to develop followers into leaders”. In schools, transformational principals create structures that enable teachers’ professional growth, providing time and resources to learn, collaborate and institute their ideas. Transformational principals distribute leadership further by involving “the entire staff in decisions affecting the school, and work to create a shared sense of purpose” (Bass, Blasé & Blasé, Burns, Sillins & Mulford, as cited by Triska, 2007, p. 11).

In the study by Kambonde (2007) in Namibia, respondents acknowledged the usefulness of the committee:

Committees are good to operate with, because you can get all the people on the board, you know. You can involve all the people in the activities of the school. Everyone is always kept busy in the school and you find that you could accomplish more work in a day. Some committees’ members are more expert than you and they do things creatively. In that way, the school will improve more and more. (p.39)

Oosthuizen and du Toit (1999) shared the same sentiment, namely that,

In a participative environment, most members are self managing. They direct their own workflow. In the participative enterprise, performance focuses on the students, on the adding of value, on beneficiation and on the ability to replenish. People everywhere in the system are equally responsible. (p. 214)

Proponents of distributed leadership also promote the call for shared leadership in schools. Newman and Simmons (2001) posit that,

Distributed leadership calls on everyone associated with schools – principals, teachers, school staff members, district personnel, parents, community members, and students – to take responsibility for student achievement and to assume leadership roles in areas in which they are competent and skilled. (p. 10)

Walker (1994) supported this, and states that the facilitator (principal) in schools eases the way for others in the school community to emerge as leaders within a participatory environment (p. 39).

During my data collection period, the school was still under construction. I found that the administration block, computer lab and science lab were about to be completed. One community member interviewed, stated that the leadership role played by the Local Development Committee of Twagana, that worked hard in order for the school to be completed according to the initial plan.

C1: I remember this school, Namupa Secondary School; according to the plan of the Ministry of the Education, it was supposed to be a big school. But when we looked at the school in the beginning, it had few classrooms. We, as parents who are in the area covered by Namupa Secondary School, consulted the inspector of education to ask for support, and to find out what we needed to do, because, according to the plan, it would be a senior school (and would need more classrooms and to be upgraded to Grade 12), so we used to keep on asking how far are things?; what is needed?; what should we do?; what should we contribute?

The involvement of the community in, for example, developments regarding the construction of the school, is an indication that the school values the contribution of the community, and vice versa – the community has the interest of the school at heart. Marino (2007) contended that, by establishing a community of leaders, administrators can distribute the talent of a diverse group of individuals collectively, and benefit from their multiple perspectives (p. 10). The role of the school and community leadership has been found to be critical in school-community development. The development of a strong community support base is an important factor which contributes to a successful school, and this includes the commitment of sufficient resources, in terms of money and expertise, to the partnership by schools and communities, (Johns, Kilpatrick, Falk & Mulford, 2000, p. 6).

Another note, in this study, I discovered that shared leadership was evident in the preparation and conducting of meetings. The school board/management meeting and teacher/parent meetings were both chaired by a parent. Further, I observed that, prior to the teacher/parent meeting; teachers were assigned to arrange the meeting and to take minutes of the meeting. Parents on the school board were responsible for making announcements over the radio to invite parents to the meeting. The school board and the teachers set up the agenda collaboratively for the school board/management meetings.

Schmuck and Runkel (1994) noted that participative leadership is a feature of effective meetings. It is about “any behaviour that helps the group carry forward its work or satisfy members’ needs in constructive ways”. All members of a group should share functions, while individual members are assigned primary responsibility for certain special roles, such as organiser, convener, recorder, process observer, and follow-up monitor (p. 188).

The next discussion will present the challenges of PM in the school.

5. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN PRACTISING PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT

Despite the effort from the school to accommodate stakeholders in managing the school, there are challenges that inhibit the practice of PM. The participants expressed the following views:

5.1 LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT

Parents interviewed (who do not serve on the school board) indicated that they did not know much about how to go about participating in school management. As a result, many of the parents do not participate effectively in school management and leadership at the school. They responded as follows:

PNSB 4: What I have noticed as parents – one thing that makes us to withdraw from being involved – is that we lack knowledge about school management. When letters are written to us to attend parents’ meetings, we may say that we are not going to be there, and give an excuse that we are not well, because we don’t know what the role of parents in school management is all about.

Observations of the parents’ meeting on 31 May 2008 revealed that parents were mostly informed on issues affecting learners’ performance and projects in which the school wants parents’ participation. Although a platform was created for parents’ participation in discussions, very few individuals took part by putting forward ideas,

and parents did not reach consensus regarding ideas to be recommended for implementation on some issues. For example, the following extract shows that a few parents were participating, but without any direction on which suggestions were supported by them:

10:55 Male parent, regarding supplement on rules to be followed, urges school to call and inform parents. Suggests school rules be translated into the local language.

10:58 Chairperson, points at a person.

11:29 Male parent adds, regarding failure, "I am not happy to condone them (learners who fail more than once); it is not good. Let us request that our children have to repeat the grade if they fail.

11:30 Chairperson says, "I found at school a list of 30 learners who did not write the April test".

11:31 Male parent says, "I suggest that the school makes copies of the financial report and parents will contribute".

11:32 Parent suggest, "Let us discuss the issue of policy on condoning learners; let us discuss making children repeat. I am suggesting that each learner has an exercise book where a record of homework and tests is kept, to show parents what is happening with the child at school.

11:41 Chairperson says, "Thank you, parent". Chairperson tells the secretary to make a note of that point and the previous one and to take the contact numbers of the parents.

This indicates that ideas were brought forward, but there was no agreement on which would be implemented. There is lack of skill on how to facilitate effective meetings in order to share decision making.

In the study conducted by San Antonio (2006) in Australia, it was discovered that, "knowledge, skills and attitudes" are barriers which preclude stakeholders from applying the practice of PM in the school. In this study, one parent indicated:

How to be an active and efficient implementer of school council decisions is a skill every member should possess. Even if not all are involved in implementing decisions and projects, it is important to be aware of the strategies. Parent 3. (p. 210)

San Antonio (2006) went further, but recommended that the knowledge and skills indicated by the parents be noted down – and this included lack of knowledge and skills – about “how to effectively implement ... projects and how to lead more effectively” (p. 210). Respondents gave examples such as, “the need to learn skills in dealing with people (interpersonal skills, role modelling, motivating people, understanding others, creating a friendly atmosphere, presiding over meetings, making parents involved) and skills in carrying out their tasks (San Antonio, 2006, p. 11).

Ngubane (2006) in a study conducted in South Africa on an investigation into the implementation of participative management in the Pietermaritzburg district also discovered that, “most parents lack the necessary skills to participate in democratic and professional settings.” Ngubane (2006) suggested the need for parents to, “acquire basic skills and knowledge” to participate in school management. Baatjies, as cited by Ngubane (2006) concluded that “the education of adults is particularly significant because they are in the position to use what they learn immediately, and can participate in the building of a new, participatory democracy” (p. 55).

5.2 COMMUNICATION BARRIER

Participants claimed that communication in the school was one of the barriers which hamper parents’ participation in school management and leadership. Communication to parents to invite them to attend meetings was done in both English and Rukwangali, because there are parents who did not understand English, while the majority did understand Rukwangali. However, parents stated that some received the letters, given to them by their children, in English only and, as a result, it was difficult for them to read the information. Parents claimed that, if participation in school management was to increase, written communication had to be in Rukwangali (a local language understood by most parents), and parents would appreciate that.

PNSB 1: Even if it is not explained properly, if it is in Rukwangli, you can read for yourself what is written. But if it is in English, someone may translate wrongly what is written in the letters.

The SMT and one teacher also raised the concern of the language difficulty being one of the biggest challenges:

T1: Some time ago, I disputed the issue of sticking to the official language. Few people can articulate in English as the official language. Most of the people are Nyembas, and it may be that we have to translate from English, Rukwangali and Chokwe, so that information is disseminated to everyone.

SMT1: The biggest challenge here is language. I should think that, except for the chairperson and the vice-chairperson, the rest of the school board members have a problem with the official language.

I also enquired about the written communication between the school and the parents. I discovered that, in the invitation letter written to parents on 17 March 2006, two languages were used – Rukwangali and English – with one language on one side, and the other language on the other side. As from 2007, the printing was changed, and now one language on the left, and the other language on the right-hand side. Furthermore, I discovered that all the minutes for school board and parents' meeting were written in English.

One community member indicated that there was written communication to the parents, but that many of them were illiterate. As a result, they did not receive the information communicated to them.

C1: And the other difficulty is communication with parents, because Namupa Secondary School actually does send letters, which are given to learners to give to their parents – but, because some parents cannot read, and some will not know what paper is that the child has brought unless the child explains that they have been invited to a meeting, they have difficulty with reading it.

At the meeting of parents held on 31 May 2008, the barrier caused by the use of English was also observed, in that parents meeting I observed that parents found it difficult to understand the school rules because they were written in English.

10:45 many of the parents do not understand English and the school rules are in English. Learners were sent to explain rules but, because of their attitude in some cases, they were not explained well.

Illiteracy plays a major role in parental apathy, especially in the rural areas (Ngubane, 2006, pp. 54). The school where I conducted the study is located in Twagwana, an informal suburb in Kavango region. Parents prefer to use Rukwangali, as it is the language understood by the majority of the parents. However, the education census of 2001 indicated that 70.3% were literate. Of this 70.3%, only 13% were literate in the Kavango language (Namibia, [National Planning Commission], 2003, p. 35). According to a study conducted in South Africa, close to two million adults are poorly educated and lack the basic knowledge and skills for active participation in society. As a result, they distance themselves from their children's school matters. It transpired from the study that "most parents are illiterate," so it was hard for them to participate in school management (Ngubane, 2006, pp.54-55).

Molnar (1999) conducted a study in Philippine, Saskatchewan, on parent involvement in local governance. It was discovered that language barriers add further to the obstacles of involving parents successfully. It was stated that, "due to a difference in social class or cultural background, values and language skills, day-to-day language usage causes difficulties and discomfort between educators and parents (p. 5). Pawlas (2005) stated that it is important to respect the cultural sensitivities ... of the people you would like to become involved with the school. Some parents and community members are uneasy about interacting with teachers and administrators because of the language. Therefore, the principal and teachers needed to play a role to address these obstacles with compassion and in a forthright manner (p. 99).

Another note on communication was raised by parents, who indicated that the school did not communicate properly with the parents on some of the decisions taken. Parents gave an example of a decision taken to purchase school uniform:

PNSB 3: Like some of the decisions, for example, were taken in collaboration with parents, and left in the hands of the principal for her and her teaching staff to implement. When the school realise that this is difficult, they should come back to the parents. To be specific: with regard to the wearing of school uniform, parents were asked if they would like their children to be dressed in uniform. The parents said yes; they approved of the idea of the children wearing uniform. But when the uniform was delivered to the school for parents to buy, some parents were not willing to purchase it, because they had only agreed

that learners should be dressed in uniform, but they hadn't been told how much the uniform was going to cost them.

My findings are in line with what Molnar (1999) stated, namely that implementation of plans for increased parent involvement often encounters difficulty due to ineffective communication (p.5). In my findings, parents claimed that they were not well informed as what the cost of the uniform was going to be and, as a result, when the uniform was available at the school, some could not afford to buy it. Schmuck and Runkel (1994) noted that, for educators to be clear about solving important problems, make effective decisions, and put plans into action, communication is required (p. 119). Schmuck and Runkel (1994) concluded that, if the educational organisation is to remain responsive to demands of all sorts, an open flow of information from and to various groups must be maintained (p. 119).

5.3 AUTOCRATIC MANAGEMENT

It emerged in the study that, though some practice of PM was taking place, there were times when authority was still in the hands of those in formal leadership. This is in line with what Bush (2003) contends, namely that "Authority is vested in the officers who hold places in the chain of command" (p. 44). Sergiovanni (1996) had also pointed out that bureaucratic management emphasised, "follow me because of my position in the school and the system of bureaucratic roles, rules, and expectations that I represent" (p. 83).

In this study one teacher indicated that there were some members in formal leadership who were still exercising autocratic management. This kind of leadership instructs teachers as what should be done.

T2: There are some (in formal leadership) who have the tendency to use autocratic power and command teachers to carry out instructions. The teachers are compelled to do things whether they (teachers) like it or not.

Another teacher also indicated that autocracy was not in line with PM and should not be exercised.

T3: It (autocracy) can affect PM because the staff will be demoralised, meaning that they are not going to be happy to belong to an organisation were they are compelled, with no choice. At the end of the day, it will discourage the teachers from participating in some decisions, especially in times when they are going to be needed. Therefore, when autocratic decisions are taken, there should be caution that it does not affect PM.

In the study conducted by Stofile (2005) one respondent said that,

That thing called autocracy is not good. You are in constant fear, because you can be accused of being insubordinate by management at any time. You cannot come up with your own way of doing things; you must always do as rules prescribe, and deviation from the rule means punishment. I hate the rigidity of autocracy because it kills creativity and creates dependency syndrome. Subordinates cannot take initiative; they have to depend on the SMT for everything. (p. 52)

In the study conducted by Kambonde (2007) in Namibia, on teachers' perception of participative management, respondents noted that some managers were still managing in the old autocratic way. They were, for instance, reluctant to accept advice from, or delegate duties to, other staff members, for fear of compromising their position of seniority. This kind of attitude stood in the way of the smooth running of participative management in the school (p. 65). Triska (2007) noted that tensions between teachers and administrators over management issues often interfere with the free exchange of ideas and actions in teacher participation in schools (p. 22).

6. STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PM FURTHER

6.1 STRENGTHEN PARENTS' AND OTHER COMMUNITIES' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Parents who were not in the school board had a feeling that they were not involved in most of the decisions. They (parents) indicated that decisions were initiated from the top down, and there was a need, therefore, for the school board to discuss issues with parents and take decisions collectively.

PNSB 4: I am just adding that the school board of Namupa Senior Secondary School should, when ideas are initiated, bring them to the parents so that they are discussed and good ideas accepted and bad ones rejected. The school board should refrain from taking decisions alone, but let the parents also participate and make decisions together with the school board.

Parents went further, to suggest that there was a need to involve the suburb committee in the management and leadership of the school.

PNSB 1: The community committee of Twagwana can also contribute their ideas to the school and have them considered, because they are in the suburb of Twagwana. The committee has to know what problems are in the suburb, because the parents complain to the committee as well as to the school board. But the school does not take the committee into consideration. What we want is for the school to consider ideas from parents, and put an action plan into effect.

The school board indicated that the school alone could not bring about change in the school. For change to take place, therefore, other stakeholders in the community needed to participate. This is also one way that the school could benefit from PM. One school board member said:

SBP 2: Without the help of another person, one person cannot succeed. Some people near Namupa Secondary School used to come to support the school, and this helped the school to grow. It would also help our children, because if we, as parents, got involved in education, the school would produce doctors, ministers and many more.

A community member also suggested the idea of involving the community in school management by saying:

C2: The school has to see to it that, even if you do not have a child at the school, all parents should come to the school. The school has to call meetings for the community surrounding the school to attend. The elders who do not have children but who do attend will encourage the others who do have children to come and be involved in school activities, and such arrangements have to be set up by the school in order for all parents to be involved.

Teachers added that there was a need for more teachers to participate in school management and leadership, because it was of benefit to them as future managers. There was a feeling from the interview that, apart from teachers heading subjects and

projects, the school management team should include the different field of studies of the school. The school management team comprised the principal, two heads of departments, and two teachers. The commerce field of studies was singled out as not being represented by any teacher in the school management team.

T2: I think if you are not really groomed in that field, it is a problem. For example, if I get a post as a head of department, when I have never acted in a formal management position and I was never empowered to help run the school, I will encounter difficulties in terms of management duties, because at present I am only dealing with the learners, but I do also have to perform the duties of a head of department.

In the study conducted by Cranston (2001) parents claimed that there was a challenge in that “the number of parents actually involved was generally small,” but, through participation in decision making, parents learn to participate, and one parent stated:

We are still learning about all this, but it certainly is different from a few years ago. Now we have a real say in most of the important issues. But not all parents do actually get involved. (p. 12)

The call for more participation of stakeholders in school management is in line with the findings of Smith (2003) who noted that all those groups and individuals who are likely to be affected directly by the outcome of a change process, have to be involved actively in the process right from its inception. Sergiovanni, as cited by Bush (2003) concluded that, people are more likely to accept and implement decisions in which they have participated, particularly where these decisions relate directly to the individual’s job (p. 79).

In some studies in America, it was discovered that “participation leads to satisfaction among those involved in the process, and it is a positive outcome of a successful process”. It was also found that greater participation leads to greater effectiveness (Birnbaum, Weick & Williams *et al.*, as cited by Kezar & Eckel, 2004, p. 388). Brown and Harvey (2006) add that participation provides opportunities for individuals to develop their full potential (p. 79).

6.2 STRENGTHEN A CULTURE OF TRUST, GOOD RELATIONSHIP AND OPENNESS

One community member stated that there was a need to strengthen a culture of trust among teachers and the community. A culture of trust would help teachers and stakeholders to communicate effectively.

C1: The teachers should trust themselves, their principal and their school board, in order to bring development at the school or any change in the growth of the school. They should not keep quiet, thinking that we will not be able to assist, but teachers should have trust in us and inform us about changes at school. Also, if we have ideas, we should bring them forward to the school.

SMT participants also concurred that trust is very important in the school. It was stated:

SMT2: To add to what my colleague has mentioned about trust: whenever you are working with people and they know they are trusted by the person who is leading them, they will feel comfortable in whatever they are doing.

T3: Trust is one of the most essential things in any educational set up, because in education one cannot achieve the goals on one's own; you have to work together from different angles from different fields. If there is not trust, then the organisation and the whole system will collapse. Trust is very important because, when you trust each other, then of course you will assist each other in whatever way possible, with the aim that all of you should reach one goal.

Trust lays the foundation for people to follow their leaders with confidence and enthusiasm. Trust is a noteworthy approach that can help enhance participation of the community, teachers and learners (in school management). Covey, as cited by Gordon (2003) contended that, without this atmosphere of trust present within an organisation, an empowered environment can not exist (p. 9). Gamage and Antonio (2006) maintained that "high levels of trust hasten the establishment of strong networks and collaborative relations among the members and stakeholders in the school" (p. 3).

One teacher stated that there was a need for the school to strengthen good relationships by timeous communication with the stakeholders, in order for the practice of PM to flourish.

T1: I think the most important thing is that there should be a very good relationship between the school and the stakeholders, so the stakeholders are informed timeously about the activities taking place, and the school should involve the parents, either on the learners' performance, or in any issues of school management.

In the study conducted by Stofile (2005) in South Africa, respondents supported the idea of keeping harmonious relations among members. Respondents stressed the fact that, "without harmonious relations existing among members, one cannot expect members to be able to give of their best at work and contribute positively to the growth and development of the school" (p. 89). Fullan (2001) supported good relationships in organisations, and noted that "it is actually relationships that make the difference" (p. 51).

To strengthen relationships, it was stated further that there was a need for formal leadership to strengthen a culture of transparency in managing the school. One teacher said:

T2: The school should be transparent in everything that it does, because if the school is transparent, then the stakeholders feel free to come and take part in PM. In cases where the school is not transparent, and hides some things, it is very difficult for other members to be open and come and participate in this type of policy.

T3: Open communication is very important, and is about sharing ideas and information on how things should be done. If there is open communication, one can raise a concern and you can be given clarity on something that might have contributed to frustration.

Gamage and San Antonio (2006) noted that better decisions and greater efficiency are achieved when issues are discussed extensively via open communication among people having varying viewpoints (p. 2). A friendly communication climate in an organisation encourages members to communicate with colleagues in an open, relaxed and convivial manner, since good interpersonal relationships depend upon open communication (Amushigamo, 2006, p. 32). Gill, as cited by Kinkead (2006) contended that openness within an organisation increases when people believe that their thoughts and feelings are appreciated and understood. This openness creates the potential for an interdependent relationship between leaders and followers (p. 3).

6.3 SENSITISE STAKEHOLDERS

All participants concurred that there was a need for all stakeholders to shed more light on the role of stakeholders in school management. Participants felt that having a better understanding of the practice of PM may help them to know how to get involved and how to involve others in school management.

SMT1: It may be they (parents) don't understand their role. We should come up with a day when parents could come – not a parent's meeting, but where we divide ourselves into groups of learners and parents. Here, it would be outlined what our roles are in school management, and we could also invite someone to explain it all to us very clearly.

PNSB 3: They (the school) should explain PM to us, even if we have to come for a few hours one day, and then come again for a few hours the next day. These meetings could be arranged once or twice per year, especially during the holiday, because the children are at home and parents will be free for certain hours. We lack knowledge in school management, and that's why we are lazy and we criticise things.

School board members also indicated that they were never trained, and they supported the idea of being informed as to how to practise PM.

SBP 2: Actually, we, the school board, were never trained; we never attended training workshops. If we were trained, we would have the confidence to do our work, as I said earlier. That is what we are waiting for; we humbly request that training take place so that our school board will be the heroes of Namupa Secondary School.

SBP 4: Actually, from our point of view, you cannot just stand up and do the work. When we volunteered for HIV work, we were trained well with people who were suffering from the illness, so we do this job well because we have been trained. So, as it has been said, people have to be trained. This is a very good idea; as such people will know how to do their duties and to persevere.

SMT1: Training the school board is very important. It should be done right at beginning, when the school board is elected. Training is very important, but we kept postponing it for the current school board, so they have not had the necessary training.

In the study conducted by Wilson, as cited by Stofile (2005) into various stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of participative management in South

Africa, it was discovered that one of the major hindrances of parent involvement in school management was “inadequate training” (p. 13). In another study conducted by Molnar (1999) in Saskatchewan, on parent involvement in local school governance, it also emerged that inadequate parent training in the various aspects of education was “yet another barrier” (p. 6).

In the study conducted by Cranston (2001) parents acknowledged that the school had supported them in developing their skills through courses and seminars. This allowed them to understand better what was happening in education in general, and facilitated more effective participation and contributions by them in decision-making processes (p. 13).

In this study teachers also supported the idea of informing those (teachers) about the practice of PM, encapsulated as follows:

T2: I think, to add to what my friend has said, it is very important for somebody with in-depth knowledge to come and explain at school about the practice of PM. We can talk of having the participation of businessmen or whatever, but we don't know in which activities we can involve them.

Training or professional development is important to ensure that implementers are competent to carry out their changed roles and functions (Caldwell, 2005, Grauwe, 2005, as cited by San Antonio, 2006, p. 79). Pawlas (2005) maintained that teachers need to be trained to seek, welcome, and use parent and community involvement effectively (p. 80). Teachers will not be confident to accept the participation of parents without additional training and experience. Mabry and Ettinger, as cited by San Antonio (2006) realised that “training gives teachers’ confidence that promotes autonomy which may be used to support ... school improvement projects” (p. 79).

7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, data presentation and analysis has been presented. It transpired that participants had little understanding on the concept of PM. Participants went further and acknowledged that PM was of benefit to the school. Benefits identified were: PM promotes the policy of democracy in schools; PM opens up the participation of stakeholders in school management and leadership; PM allows for sharing of ideas and skills, and ownership enhances opportunities for change. It emerged further that shared decision making and shared leadership were some practices currently prevailing in the school, and these promoted PM. Participants indicated that the barriers that precluded them from participating fully in school management and leadership were lack of knowledge about the practice of PM, and lack of communication. To overcome these barriers, participants recommended that there was a need to strengthen parents' participation in the decision-making processes that were currently in place at the school, as well the culture of trust, relationship and openness to allow more stakeholders to participate in school management and leadership. Participants concluded that sensitising them to the practice of PM would be a noble idea which would enable them to improve on their school practice of PM.

The next chapter will conclude by summarising the findings, and providing potential value, recommendations, suggestions for future search and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will discuss firstly the summary of the research findings and, thereafter, the potential value of this study. The next discussion will centre on recommendations to enhance effective participation of stakeholders in school management and leadership in terms of PM. I will also discuss the issues for further research and, finally, limitations of the study, to be followed by a conclusion of the chapter.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

It emerged from the study that teachers, community members, school board members and people in formal leadership had at least the minimum understanding of PM. They indicated that not every community member should participate in school management and leadership, but that participation should be according to the needs of the school. The school board was identified as a body that represented the parents and other community members. The parents, on the other hand, had very little understanding on PM practices in school management and leadership. Participants identified the different groups that could be involved in school management and leadership, which is in agreement with Sheane (1993) who noted that PM is about the involvement of all the stakeholders, “e.g. administrators, faculty, staff, parents, students, community members, business partners,” in school management (pp. 2-3).

It was noted further that PM was about exercising democracy in school management and leadership, and that it was instituted after Namibia became independent. The policy of *Towards Education for All* promotes PM in its goal of democracy by encouraging participation of stakeholders in school management and leadership. The responsibility of education is no longer that of the individual (principal) alone, but it is

shared widely, relying on the active participation and co-operation of many other individuals and organisations to develop and support a sound education system (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 176). The school is already operating as a social system because it accommodates the parents and the community in participating in the school and seeing how the children are performing academically.

Teams were also revealed as having a role to play in helping the school to have better academic performance and to work towards a common vision. Teams help the stakeholders of the school to share ideas and skills because, “with a group of people pooling their skills, talents and knowledge ... teams ... can come up with effective, permanent solutions” (Twomey & Kleiner, 1996, p. 8). Participants perceived stakeholders’ participation as an asset to the school because it enhanced opportunities for ownership. In the study conducted by Mungunda (2003) PM has a benefit for the school because it “results in a greater sense of commitment and ownership of decisions” (p. 40).

It emerged that participative decision making was exercised and was working among the teachers and the school board. Decisions were sometimes taken through democratic voting after deliberation in the form of a meeting; e.g. parents’ meeting, staff meeting and departmental meeting. Sergiovanni, as cited by Bush (2003) concluded that, “people are more likely to accept and implement decisions in which they have participated, particularly where these decisions relate directly to the individual’s job” (p. 79). Another strategy that emerged from the study was that structures that were in place in the form of committees. Teachers were heading various committees, e.g. as project co-ordinators for the environmental club, science club, education tour, sports, drama, fundraising, school uniform, culture, choir, and examinations, and served as subject heads as well. Teachers felt that being able to lead various projects provided them with a sense of ownership, and groomed them as future leaders. The school board represented the parents and the community. Proponents of distributed leadership also promote the call for shared leadership in schools. Newman and Simmons (2001) posit that,

Distributed leadership calls on everyone associated with schools – principals, teachers, school staff members, district personnel, parents, community members, and students – to take responsibility for student

achievement and to assume leadership roles in areas in which they are competent and skilled.... (p. 10)

Despite the effort to practise PM in the school, there is still much that needs to be done to ensure its effectiveness. It emerged from this study that parents did not understand explicitly how they could participate in school management and leadership in the school. It transpired from the study that illiteracy had an impact on communication and inhibited the practice of PM. Ngubane (2006) noted that, because of high illiteracy rate among the parents, it becomes hard for them to participate in school management (pp.54-55). Teachers revealed that some members in formal leadership did sometimes exercise autocratic leadership, and this discouraged teachers' participation in school management and leadership.

Participants felt there was still a need to improve participative decision making to ensure more participation. Issues like trust, relationships and openness were good interpersonal communication skills that needed to be strengthened to enhance the practice of PM in the school. It was noted further that stakeholders needed to be sensitized, so as to be able to understand how they could participate in school management and leadership in the school. In the study conducted by Cranston (2001) parents acknowledged that the school had supported them in developing their skills through courses and seminars. This allowed them to understand better what was happening in education in general, and facilitated more effective participation and contribution by them in decision-making processes (p. 13).

I will now discuss the potential value of this study.

5.3 POTENTIAL VALUE OF THIS STUDY

This study has a potential value in that it has filled the gap that existed in the field of leadership and management in Namibia. The study has shed new light on how stakeholders have experienced, and perceive, their role in managing a school. The findings are relevant to the policy-makers in the Ministry of Education. It informs them on the difficulties that schools and stakeholders experience in understanding and practising democratic participation of stakeholders' in school management.

In the study conducted in Namibia by Mungunda (2003) only principals were interviewed, and they were all male. In another study, conducted by Kambonde (2007) in Namibia, only teachers were interviewed. My study has filled the gap in the sense that there was a fair representation of genders, and I also interviewed different groups, which consisted of teachers, school board members, parents and the school management team. This has shed light on how these various stakeholders perceive and experience the practice of PM.

The study has also revealed the potential value of the preparation of teachers, school board members and parents on the practices of PM. The provision of knowledge about PM would help participants to gain a better understanding of it in order to strengthen the participation of relevant stakeholders in school management and leadership.

In the next discussion, I present recommendations for effective practice of PM in the school.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study revealed that the school does practice PM, and that relevant role-players have played a role. However, there were mixed feelings from the parents who did not serve on the school board, and who would like to see the school board taking more decisions in consultation with parents. Parents' meetings should allow for more discussion before the decisions are arrived at. In this regard, there is a need to educate the school board on how to conduct effective parents' meetings.

It emerged from the study that teachers, parents and the school governing body would like to be kept informed about PM. There was a need for the school to take up the initiative under the leadership of the principal to provide workshops for teachers on how to involve other stakeholders in managing the school.

The circuit inspector of education should conduct training for the school board. School boards are gatekeepers in terms of parents' participation in school management. There is a need for school board members to acquire skills and knowledge that will enable them to participate more meaningfully in the promotion of the practice of PM, and to play a role in encouraging other role-players to come on board. In this training, the role of the school board needs to be emphasised to ensure that school board members understand fully how to involve the stakeholders in school management.

Communication is necessary to ensure full participation of all. Illiteracy was one of the factors that hindered communication. In the parents' meeting, parents supported the concern that the school rules for learners were in English, and that they needed to be translated into the mother tongue. In addition to this, in the interviews participants indicated that letters inviting them to attend parents' meetings were sent to schools and were typed in English and Rukwangali (the local language), but that parents had to ask their children to read the letters for them. There is a need for the school board and the school management team to consult adult education programmes to get more information in order to introduce classes at the school. Once parents acquire basic

reading skills in the mother tongue and English, they will be motivated to engage in school management.

The participation of stakeholders in school management and leadership can ease the work of the principal and it also helps the school to acquire more resources. It emerged from the study that there were only three committees on which parents and other communities participated, namely, the school board, the vetkoek project, and HIV/AIDS awareness. According to the study conducted by Cranston (2001) the following committees could be initiated in the school where my study took place: programme managers, class parent forum and community review forum (p. 11). Studies conducted about PM revealed that parents could serve on various committees in the school. There is a need, therefore, for the school to conduct a needs assessment with the parents, and identify possible committees where parents can play a role. Although other community members are not members of the organisation, they can also play a role in school leadership.

I will now provide the suggestions for future research in the next discussions.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In Namibia, few studies have been conducted on the concept of PM. There is a need to conduct a large-scale study to give more general results.

Inspectors of education, education planners, the deputy director and regional director were not interviewed in this study. Future studies should include them in order to get their perceptions on the practices of PM in schools.

A study needs to be conducted to find out the impact of PM on the academic performance of learners. Measuring instruments need to be applied to yield better results.

Further studies need to be conducted in school/schools that were in existence before Namibia became independent in 1990, in order to find out the impact of PM on teachers, heads of departments and school principals.

In this study there were limitations that affected it, and I present these in the next discussion.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF MY STUDY

This research has the following limitations:

Time constraints prevented me from obtaining the perspective of more teachers. As a result, only four teachers and all members of the school management team were interviewed. I also interviewed only four parents who were not in the school board, while there were many parents who had children at the school. I think that, had I been able to interview more participants, I could have obtained a broader and deeper perspective of a single case study.

In this study, the concepts of leadership and management have been used interchangeably. The reader was warned of this in the chapter on the literature review, and I hope I have made the presentation of the concepts (leadership and management) very clear, so that the reader is able to understand my study.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The research study explored the perceptions and experience of participants in the practice of PM in a secondary school. The findings revealed that the school was practicing PM, and that there are some benefits in PM. This is an indication that the goal of democracy as stipulated in the policy in *Toward Education for All* is a practice in the school I studied. However, participants went further by sharing the challenges that the school experienced in practicing PM.

It was also revealed it was necessary for the school to strengthen participation, and promote a culture of trust, relationships and open communication, and for relevant role-players to be trained in knowledge and skills regarding PM. Autocratic leadership from some formal leadership in the school was also discouraged, as it hinders the practice of PM.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT?
 - 1.1 WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL AND WHY, PROVIDE REASONS?
2. HOW DOES THIS SCHOOL INVOLVE YOU STAKEHOLDERS (PARENTS NOT IN SCHOOL BOARD, SCHOOLBOARD PARENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND TEACHERS) IN A PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL?
3. WHAT DIFFICULTIES DO YOU EXPERIENCE IN PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHOOL?
4. HOW CAN THE SCHOOL IMPROVE ON THE PARTICIPATION OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT IN THIS SCHOOL?

APPENDIX B

The Principal
Namupa Senior Secondary School
Rundu

Dear Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT DATA COLLECTION AT NAMUPA S.S.S.

I am a registered student for a Master's degree in Education Leadership and Management with the Education Department at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. To qualify for my Master's degree, I am required to write a research report on a topic that is linked to an aspect of the work undertaken in the course work component of the Master's programme. I have chosen your good school to do my investigation for the purpose of the study. More specifically, the goal of this research is to investigate experience and perceptions of participants into participative management.

Data will be collected by using interviews, observation and document analysis. I will need a focus group interview with the FOUR parents who are not in the school board but at least have attended a parents meeting or serve in other committees of the school. These parents will be interviewed in one group with 4 school board parents and 3 community members who are participating in the school; another group will be for 5 teachers who are serving in committees in the school and finally the school management team who are in formal leadership position in this I refer to you and head of departments.

Observation will be conducted where I will attend staff meetings and parents meetings.

I will assure participants anonymity throughout the study and in the final research report. They will also be informed of the drafts of the report to ensure that details are accurately recorded and reported. All interviews will be tape recorded.

I would be most grateful if you would allow me to conduct the study at your good school.

Yours sincerely,

.....
Ms. Christine Shilima

