

**LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING THEIR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

BY

RESEARCH CANDIDATE: JULIUS MUNIKWA

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE

(MASTER OF EDUCATION)

IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

EAST LONDON

JUNE 2016

RESEARCH PROMOTER: PROF N.S.DUKU

DECLARATION

I, Julius Munikwa, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all sources that I used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references. Furthermore, I declare that this body of work has not been submitted to any institution for any purpose, academic or otherwise.

J.MUNIKWA

.....

DATE

07 JUNE 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would not have been able to do this on my own and would like to express my earnest, sincere gratitude and appreciation for all support towards the fulfilment of this project to the following:

- ❖ Firstly, I would like to thank God the Almighty for making this endeavor possible.
- ❖ My supervisor, Prof. N.S. Duku for her support advice guidance and patience without her unselfish, positive and motivating comments and encouragement, I would not have completed the study. Be blessed abundantly!
- ❖ Prof. C. Maphosa for guidance and support through the study, I truly appreciate.
- ❖ Ms. Pam Maxakato for her motivating, wisdom and motherly guidance,
- ❖ The UFH East London staff for successfully organizing informative workshops on research aspects.
- ❖ The participants for their willingness to cooperate in the study. Their contributions greatly made this research study a success. To their parents, for allowing them to take part in the study, I salute.
- ❖ I greatly thank Dr Rose Masha for proof reading and editing this document.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my lovely parents, Mr M. Munikwa and Mrs M. Chidaushe-Munikwa; despite their peasantry background, they sacrificed all they have for me to be able to put pen on paper. I greatly thank you, I love you.

I also dedicate this work to all student leaders who sacrifice their precious study time to stand for the rights of fellow students as a way of ensuring democracy in education. May your commitment persist to build better schools in South Africa.

ABSTRACT

Effective learner participation for the development of Representative Council of Learners (RCL) governors in school governance (SG) is of great essence. A qualitative study was conducted in order to assess the learners' views regarding their lived views and experiences in SG. Twenty four (24) RCL and class representatives from three data sites comprising three high schools in East Cape, in the East London District Education participated in the study.

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis from two convenient and one snowball samples, respectively. From each school, a chairperson, a secretary and six focus group discussions (FDGs) members were utilised as participants in order to enrich the study. In doing so, the study made use of Wilcox's ladder of participation as the lens to unpack the learners' views regarding their effective participation in school governance. This ladder includes information, consultation, deciding together, acting together and supporting independent community interests.

The findings showed that learner participation in both township and former Model C schools is significant. However, a number of pertinent factors that make the voices of learner governors to be stifled emerged. These include lack of capacity building, exclusion from other meetings, dominance of adult governors, lack of collaboration and the fact that learners have to be seen as being respectful and disciplined when in meetings with parents. This makes them to accept their role as a tool for middlemen between the parents, teachers and fellow students. These make the field of effective learner participation uneven, hence making them window dressers and have pseudo contributions in SG. The study therefore suggested that learners should be capacitated to make effective and meaningful contribution in school governance. Learners should work collaboratively with adult governors to enhance effective participation in SG.

Key concepts: learner participation, school governance, Representative Council of Learners (RCL), School Governing Body (SGB), effectiveness.

ACRONYMS

- EC - Eastern Cape
- EL - East London
- ELDE - East London District Education
- FET - Further Education Training
- FDG - Focus Group Discussion
- GET - General Education Training
- RCL - Representative Council of Learners
- TLO - Teacher Liaison Officer
- UFH - University of Fort Hare
- SASA - South African Schools Act
- SGB - School governing body
- SG - School Governance

LIST OF TABLES

Wilcox's Ladder of Participation	26
Profiling of schools taking part in the study	62
Profiling of RCL participants	63
Profiling of FGD respondents	64

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACRONYMS	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
APPENDICES	xi
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	2
1.0. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	2
1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	9
1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	10
1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	10
1.5. SUB QUESTIONS	10
1.6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	10
1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	10
1.8. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	11
1.9. DEFINITION OF TERMS	11
1.10. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	12
1.10.1. WILCOX'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION	12
1.11. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	13
1.11.1. THE CONCEPT OF LEARNER GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS	13
1.11.2. LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR LEARNER PARTICIPATION GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS	14
1.11.3. ROLES OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	14
1.11.4. CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL	15
1.11.5. WAYS OF EMPOWERING LEARNERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	15
1.12. RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY	16
1.12.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM – INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM	16
1.12.2. RESEARCH APPROACH	17
1.12.3. RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY	18
1.12.4. SAMPLING	19
1.12.5. NEGOTIATION OF ENTRY	19
1.12.6. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES	20

a) SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	20
b) DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	20
c) FOCUS GROUPS.....	20
1.12.7. DATA CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS	21
1.12.8. DATA ANALYSIS	21
1.12.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	22
1.13. CHAPTER OUTLINE	23
1.14. CONCLUSION	24
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	25
2.0. INTRODUCTION	25
2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WILCOX'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION	25
INFORMATION	26
CONSULTATION.....	27
DECIDING TOGETHER.....	28
ACTING TOGETHER	28
SUPPORTING LOCAL INITIATIVES	29
2.2. PARTICIPATION VERSUS INVOLVEMENT	29
2.3. THE CONCEPT OF LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	30
2.4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF SGB AND RCL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SA.....	31
2.5. IMPORTANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SG.....	32
2.6. ROLES OF LEARNER GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	34
2.7. ROLE OF LEARNERS IN PROMOTING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.....	35
2.8. ROLE OF RCL IN PROMOTING TEAM WORK.....	36
2.9. ROLE OF RCL IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	36
2.10. ROLE OF RCL IN DECISION MAKING.....	37
2.11. ROLE OF RCL IN SCHOOL POLICY, VISION AND MISSION FORMULATION.....	38
2.13. STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE USED TO TRAIN LEARNERS TO BE EQUAL PARTICIPANTS IN SG	38
2.14. FACTORS HINDERING EFFECTIVE LEARNER PARTICIPATION	39
a) Lack of capacity to govern	40
b) Cultural versus western views on children participation.....	41
c) Power relations.....	41
d) Language barrier	42
e) Legal limitations.....	42
2.15. CONCLUSION	43

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY.....	44
3.0. INTRODUCTION	44
3.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM.....	44
3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE APPROACH	45
3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN	47
3.5. SAMPLING	48
PURPOSIVE SAMPLING.....	48
CONVENIENCE SAMPLING	49
SNOWBALL SAMPLING.....	49
3.6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS	50
INTERVIEWS.....	50
THE ONE ON ONE AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROCEDURE.....	53
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS.....	54
3.7. PILOT STUDY.....	54
3.8. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES	55
3.9. DATA CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHNESS.....	56
Data trustworthiness	56
Data credibility	56
Data transferability	57
Data dependability.....	57
3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	57
Negotiation of entry.....	58
Confidentiality	58
Anonymity.....	59
Informed consent.....	59
Protection from harm	59
3.11. CONCLUSION.....	60
4.1. PROFILES	61
4.1.1. PROFILING OF SCHOOLS TAKING PART IN THE STUDY	62
4.1.2. PROFILES OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS	63
4.1.3. PROFILES OF FGD PARICIPANTS.....	64
4.2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	66
4.2.0. RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation in school governance?	66
PERCEIVED TRAITS OF LEARNER GOVERNORS.....	66

HOW EFFECTIVE IS LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SG?	67
THE ROLES OF LEARNER GOVERNORS	71
LEARNERS' ROLES IN DECISION MAKING	74
THE COMPOSITION OF LEARNER GOVERNORS IN SG MEETINGS	76
4.2.1. RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What factors affect their participation in SG?	78
LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE BENEFITS OF LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SG78	
RESPONSES AS EVIDENCE OF LEARNERS BEING CHALLENGED IN SG	81
PERCEIVED WEAPONS USED BY ADULTS TO SILENCE LEARNER PARTICIPATION	85
EXPERIENCES OF RCL GOVERNORS IN SG	90
4.2.2. RESEARCH QUESTION 3: On the basis of their participation, how can learners' participation be enhanced?.....	94
RESPONSES ON WHETHER THERE IS TRAINING OF LEARNER GBs.....	94
RESPONSES ON RCL GOVERNORS WORKING IN COLLABORATION WITH ADULT GOVERNORS	96
RESPONSES ON WAYS OF EQUIPPING RCL GOVERNORS.....	99
4.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	101
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	102
5.1. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS	102
5.1.1 Summary of chapter 1.....	102
5.1.2. Summary of chapter 2.....	103
5.1.3. Summary of chapter 3.....	103
5.1.4 Summary of chapter 4.....	103
5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	104
5.2.1. What are the underlying assumptions regarding learner participation in SG?	104
5.2.2. What factors affect their participation in SG?	105
5.2.3. On the basis of their responses, how can learners' views be enhanced?	106
5.3. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY	107
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	107
5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY	108
REFERENCES	110
APPENDICES.....	118
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE	118
APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT LETTERS	121
APPENDIX 3: APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE: HUMANS	124

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview schedule	118
Appendix 2: Informed consent forms	121
Appendix 3: Application for ethical clearance: humans	124
Appendix 4: Ethical clearance certificate	147
Appendix 5: Permission to conduct study letter from DoE	149
Appendix 6: Editing certificate	151

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The participation of learners in school is paramount since they are part of the other stakeholders who complement the work of parents, teachers and community at large in school governance. It is important for the SGBs to work with the school to ensure the delivery of quality education. Learners, as key stakeholders, should be afforded an opportunity to express their views in SGB meetings to embrace what is entailed in SASA of 1996. Making learners' voice be audible is an advantage in promoting the gains of our hard fought democracy and as well icing what the 1976 class of students fought for, fair and equal treatment in all respects, effective governance of their schools included.

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Participation in school governance entails the involvement of stakeholders in decision making (Naidoo, 2005). Jeruto and Kiprop (2012) define learner participation as the work of learner representative bodies- such as school councils, student parliamentarians and the prefectural body. It encompasses all the aspects of school life and decision making where learners make a contribution, informally through individual negotiation as well as formally, through purposely created structures and mechanism (Ibid). From the above definitions, active learner participation is realised if learners are involved in collective decision making of all school life activities. It is crucial to facilitate a dialogue between learners and other decision makers hence, the need to look at their views regarding their effective participation in school governance

The promotion of active participation of all stakeholders in education is a growing worldwide phenomenon (Raimson, 2007). International evidence indicates that in Britain and Wales the issue of citizen empowerment and participation in spheres of education started after the World War 2 (Aurthur & Cremin, 2012). Cornwall (2008) notes that across the globe, from Brazil to India to the United States, there has been an explosion of interest in participation over the past decade.

In England, Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) was introduced even though there was no actual legislation relating to student representative bodies in English

schools though official encouragement by Ofsted, the national school inspection service, as well as non-statutory guidelines (Huddleston, 2007). Though being the case learner participation in SG is valued in England.

The Education Act of England (2000) requires education authorities, governing bodies and schools to consider the views of children and young people and involve them when making decisions. Despite the lack of legislation in England, the vast majority of secondary schools have a student council of some sort, and participation of students in England resulted in student attainment and learner well-being (Hannam, 2001). This shows that although learner participation in UK is not legislated, it is being recognized as a positive step towards making learners reach their educational goals; this also makes them to be well respected citizens, able to sustain relationships, continue with education and work with others in work places. It is important to note that in England, even though learner participation in governance was not legislated as in other European countries, their significance in school governance was realized.

Legal structures with regards to learner participation exist in Spain, Czech Republic and Slovenia, just to mention a few. In the Czech Republic, the Schools Act (2005) introduced a legal obligation to set up school boards in all basic and secondary schools. This was made up of one third parents, one third teachers and one third community representatives, with school students also represented. The act sanctions setting up of elected, student self-governing bodies and free expression of students on any decision making relating to their education. Notable in Czech Republic was the fact that students were rarely represented even though they were entitled to this (Backman & Trafford, 2006). This means that the concept of learner participation, though legally viable, was seen as superficial and of less importance.

In Spain, the new education law published in 2006 recognized the participation of learners in SG as a right, with school boards comprising no less than one third of parents and students. Although represented, learners were less active and deprived of participation because of “old school” teachers and parents who were reluctant to give students a voice. Similarly, in Slovenia, the Law on Primary School that came into effect in 1996 introduced half sessions for class communities which formed the basis of school parliaments (Huddleston, 2007). This shows that whether legislated

or not, learner participation in SG is important. These trends also existed in the African continent.

In the African context, learner governance was also witnessed. Over the last few years, there have been increased calls for increasing the extent of inclusion of students in decision making in secondary schools in Kenya owing to the frequent occurrences of student unrests in the sector (Buhere, 2008; Kindiki, 2009, Kamuhanda, 2003 in Jeruto & Kiprop; 2011). The reason why participation of learners in SG was justified was that decisions in school affect the student in various ways. Hence, the recommendations made by students may be constructive and if approached in the right manner, would work positively (Sushila & Bakhada, 2006). That is one of the main reasons why the Ministry of Education formed the Kenya Secondary School student Council (KSSC) of 2009 with the view of making secondary schools more participatory.

In Swaziland, the involvement of children governors in making decisions that affect them and finding solutions to their problems was recognized as the most effective way of working, not just an add-on. There was a need in integrating a holistic approach towards integrating learners' needs, including health, education, protection, equality, dignity and participation (Save the child Swaziland, 2010). In a case study done in Swaziland at St Marks Secondary School, it was found out that the principal calls meetings with governors, and each was accorded a chance to make suggestions and express views; this helped in dissemination of information from the governors to the rest of the school.

In Zambia, children are participating in governance initiatives which are focused at encouraging them to participate in decision making in schools as a way of building critical thinkers and active citizens. Save the child Zambia (2010) points out that school councils were initiated in 2006 by ZCEA and have been established in five districts in Zambia with the aim for the councils to be institutionalized by the Ministry of Education to participate in SG, through interacting with teachers, parents and the head teacher.

There is also evidence that learner participation in SG have been institutionalized in countries like Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and

Botswana. This is so because laws were enacted in these countries to encourage children to participate in decision making by recognizing the rights of children as equal citizens. Therefore, various networks have been focusing on shifting the culture of not listening to children to that of combined effort in decision making by all stakeholders.

In South Africa, stakeholder participation is seen as key in SG, and these stakeholders include parents, teachers and learners and the community at large in the education system of their learners. This is so that learners can be active participants in the education matters of their schools. Carter, Harber and Serf (2003) and Mncube (2005) assert that mechanisms to involve all stakeholders (parents, teachers and learners) in governance of schools are employed globally as a form of democratizing education. Learners should play a crucial role in attaining more democratic distributed leadership, decision making and policy implementation (Woods, 2005; Cockburn, 2006). Learner participation in school governance has both personal and institutional benefits (Mncube, 2008/9; Wilson, 2009; Carr, 2005; Mabovula, 2009).

Amongst others, learner involvement in school governance improves the quality of education and also influences decision making in schools. It also enhances the children's evolving capacities and provides opportunities for children to develop competence, independence and shared responsibility (Phaswana, 2010). As such, it is imperative that learner participation should be embraced and emulated in school governance as a way of enhancing democratic principles in schools.

The year 1976 saw South African youth revolting against the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in local schools. 1976 gave rise to significant student movements with growing clarity of political and educational demands. The students felt that their rights were being violated, so they mobilized and fought for change (Sithole, 1995). The concept of students' representative democracy was rooted in resistance politics. This almost coincided with the global launch of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989), which promoted learner participation as stakeholders in decision making in school governance. South African youths revolted

against the apartheid policies, and this gave impetus to student participation in school governance.

Therefore, after 1994, stakeholder participation, which includes learners in school governance, was legislated through South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, No. 84. The stakeholders, as per SASA (1996), included the participation of learners from Grade 8 to 12. The learners were to participate through the democratically elected Representative Council of Learners (RCLs). This was aimed at democratizing the school structures in governance of all public schools (Duma, 2011). SASA 1996 notes that the participation of learners in school governance processes was intended to provide the necessary space for them to acquire democratic capacity and leadership skills. The Department of Education (DoE) (1999) gives the following as the major functions of learner governors in schools: it acts as an important instrument for liaison and communication, meets at regular intervals, as determined by its constitution, to consider ideas, suggestions, comments and complaints received from its constituency. It also conveys feedback from meetings.

Most SA schools have democratically elected RCLs as per SASA, but their participation is mostly characterized by challenges, difficulties and contestations (Duku, 2006; Mncube, 2008; Hystek, 2004; Bush & Hystek, 2003; Ngidi, 2004; Fayemi, 2009). These include traditional African democracies versus Western principles that underpin SASA and SGB principles and fear of victimization among others. As noted by Mncube (2008), according to SASA, learner governors should be regarded as full and legitimate members of SGBs. However, they are not afforded full opportunity to participate in making crucial decisions by adult members of the governing bodies, either directly or indirectly. This pseudo-learner participation in decision making tends to undermine the principles of democracy and justice in school governance.

Reporting on parents' views on learner participation, literature (Duku, 2006; Mafora, 2013; Mncube, 2007; 2008; Hystek, 2003; Mabasa & Thelmane, 2002) shows that learners do exist in SGBs, but their significance is not well recognized. This is mainly due to various factors like their age and the African notion that views elders as owning decision making. In addition, similar studies have been published on

educators' and principals' views with regards to learner participation in governance (Mncube, 2008; van Wyk, 2004; Ngidi, 2004; Bush & Heystek, 2003; Hystek, 2006). Parents and educators view learner governors as stakeholders who are not seriously taken to cognizance in SGB meetings. Their contribution in SG is rather like a toothless barking dog.

Similarly, learner contribution is not vibrant, hence unfelt, as noted by Hystek (2006) who notes that learners do not make positive contributions at SGB meetings and when they do, such contributions are viewed with sceptism. Mostly, learner governing bodies are excluded from some meetings, and this hinders active participation in them realizing fully their potential (Sithole; 1998, McPherson; 2000, Carrim & Tshoane; 2000).

Fayemi (2009:103) notes that "democracy is culturally relative", meaning that democracy tends to vary among different societies. In African tradition, there is 'consultation, and discussion of issues and consensus is reached where it is achievable or consent where it is not". Nyerere (1997) says in African traditional democracy, the elders sit under the big tree and talk until they agree about the issues under discussion. This reflects free discussion among stakeholders in decision making through consensus. Even though this is the case, learners do not fully engage in discussions and dialogue. This exclusion based on African democracy means learners are not considered as equal participants, as underpinned by SASA and SGB (Mncube & Harber; 2013, Mncube; 2007). Duku (2006) points out that those learners are expected to follow their parents' rules as opposed to the rules of the field of democratic school governance. Therefore, it is clear that culture plays a negative role in learner SGB participation.

Apart from that, learner governors serve in office for only one year, and this makes them unaware of the demands of the SGB. RSA (1996) states that RCL members in the SGB may not be in the office for more than one year. This presents a challenge since other stakeholders, that is, parents, non-teaching staff and teachers are accorded three years in office. This simply means that by the time they leave office, they will not be familiar with SGB procedures and active involvement; so this hinders learner governors' participation. This lack of ongoing training is a barrier to learner participation since learners lack skills on how to participate. Mabasa and Themane

(2002) report that the SGBs are not trained before they resume their duties, and this manifests in problems such as unfamiliarity with procedures.

Limiting learner participation in SG is fear of victimization by teachers as well as fear of straining relations at school. Cockburn (2006) and Bragg (2007b) concur that most schools, by nature, value hierarchies and exclusions. Cockburn (2006), in his study, concluded that since principals control both agenda and processes, it means that the nature of the school does not encourage young people to challenge structures of authority around them. This also makes the learners to be shy to express themselves in any issue, maybe fear of offending elders in meetings stifle learner participation.

Again, unequal power relations, coupled with misconceptions about children's capacities in SG hinder learner participation. James and James (2004) note that children's relationships with adults are located within social framework. This limits their participation since parents comprise the majority group (51%) of the SGB, and their beliefs and attitudes are crucial to whether and how learner representatives engage in the SGB (Mabovula, 2009). Most of the challenges faced by learner governors are views coming from the parents, educators and principals; hence it is important to examine how learner governors view their participation in school governance.

Research of parents' and educators' points of view on learner participation concluded that in most cases, the leadership of principals is perceived as a barrier to democratic transformation and social justice (Mafora, 2013). In addition, studies found that democracy in SGBs is stifled because of the positions the principal possesses, and as such, principals take all the decisions (Mncube & Harber, 2013; Mncube & Naiker, 2011; Ramfol 2011; Meier, 2015). It was earlier observed by Mncube (2009) that the powers of the principals hinder democratic practices and as such, affect stakeholder participation; principals use their status to champion decision making. Consequently, other stakeholders, learners included, fail to exercise sovereign power in making decisions in the SGB due to the principal reigning over the governance process (Mncube & Naiker, 2011). As such, learners' participation in SGBs is determined by what teachers, parents and principal view as being appropriate. It is on this background that learner participation is seen as

superficial that I assessed the learners' views in relation to their participation in school governance.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learner participation is a crucial global phenomenon (Phaswana, 2010). This means that participation of Representatives Council of Learners (RCL) governors in SG is a force to be reckoned with for the democratic principles to be realised. In South Africa, learners were not given the latitude to have a say on how schools were governed. SASA of 1996 legislated that in South Africa, school governance should be inclusive of all stakeholders, including learners. The roles of RCL in school governance include: drafting the promotion of relations among learners, community, parents and the school maintenance of discipline, punctuality and cooperation and active participation in school activities.

Research on parents' and teachers' perspectives on learner participation includes 'good thing', 'right thing', 'positive thing' (Duku, 2006), which may denote their participation being superficial. Hence, views from parents and teachers also hint on pseudo-learner participation and mere involvement rather than genuine participation in school governance. (Ramfol, 2011; Duku, 2006; Mncube, 2009; Mafora, 2013) The participation of learners in school governance is seen as of little importance because of their purpose and limited powers (Mncube, 2007; Duma, 2011; Duku, 2006; Hystek, 2006; Cockburn, 2006; Bragg, 2007b). However, learners' voices are flat and unheard with regard to their effective participation and contribution to school governance

Therefore, this study made use of what Soudien and Nekhwevha (2002) in Duku (2006) refer to as "a view from below", an approach that seeks to construct the history of education from the perspectives of those "to whom schooling is done". This approach helps to ascertain the learners' views with regards to their participation in school governance, since most studies on learner participation are from the point of view of the teachers, parents and policymakers. As such, this study sought to afford learners a voice in examining their roles and manner of participation in SG, even if it means reconceptualization of the phenomenon of learner participation in school governance.

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of learner participation in SG in three high schools.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

CORE QUESTION

What are the learners' views regarding their effective participation in school governance?

1.5. SUB QUESTIONS

- What are the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation in school governance?
- What factors affect their effective participation in school governance?
- On the basis of their views, how can effective learner participation be enhanced?

1.6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to examine the views of learners' in relation to their effective participation in school governance.

Also, the study sought to:

- To identify the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation in SG.
- To establish the factors that affect effective learner participation in school governance.
- To reveal how effective learner participation in SG can be enhanced.

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There seems to be lack of voice on how RCL effectively participate in school governance, so this study sought to tap into the context of the role of learner governors in school governance. This resonates with what Soudien (2005:513) in Duku (2006) refers to as the "questioning of the incomplete profiles of the world" in education. This concept goes a long way in finding strategies and ways to help recognize the silent voice of the learners in school decision making. As such, the learners, as crucial stakeholders in school governance, will be empowered and be

recognized as equal participants in the day to day running of the school. This, as noted by Sayed and Soudien (2003), will help lift education out of its divided and unequal past; this can be achieved through the South African government's development of a comprehensive and complex framework motivated by the principles of inclusion, equity and redress. Therefore, the findings of this study would help in mapping solutions towards effective participation and empowering learners in school governance.

1.8. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Two township high schools and former Model C schools in the East London Education District were used for study. Theoretically, the study focused on assessing learners' views in relation to their effective participation school governance.

1.9. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Participation-in this study, participation is defined as members of the public taking part in any of the processes of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies. Naidoo (2004) defines it as the involvement of stakeholders in decision making.

A school representative council of learners- refers to learners elected by learners in public schools from 8 to 12 to represent their interests. Each school must elect an RCL, and the RCL must elect two members to the School Governing Body, as stated by Section 11(1) of SASSA number 84 of 1996.

School governance -entails rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised, particularly with regards to openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence (SASSA number 84 of 1996)

Decentralization - means the distribution of authority to different agencies, groups and stakeholders, the transfer of powers, authority, functions, responsibilities and the requisite resources from the central government to local governments or administrative divisions (Sinclair, 2001).

Effective- means success in producing a desired or intended result or fulfilling a specified function, though not formally acknowledged as such (Sinclair, 2001).

1.10. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.10.1. WILCOX'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

The term *participation* can be interpreted in various ways depending on the context. Shaeffer (1994) defines participation as being involved in the delivery of service, often as a partner, with other actors taking part as implementators of delegated powers and being involved in real decision making at every stage; this includes identification of problems, the feasibility, planning, implementation and evaluation. Buhler (2001) defines it as the process of empowerment of marginalized people, people's involvement in decision making processes, and a process through which stakeholders influence control of development initiatives and resources. Deducible from the definitions is the fact stakeholders should actively take part in decision making; because of that, my theoretical framework encompassed the idea of RCL empowerment in school governance as a mode of participation based on David Wilcox's 1994 ladder of participation.

The study made use of Wilcox's (1994) five rung ladder of participation, which is based on Arnstein's 1969 ladder of participation but simplified and arguably easier to achieve. The levels are:

- Information- merely telling people what is planned so that they are informed of what is happening;
- Consultation-offering some options, listening to feedback, but not allowing new ideas. The decision is made taking account of the results of consultation alongside other factors;
- Deciding together-encouraging additional options and ideas and providing opportunities for joint decision making and paving the way forward;
- Acting together -not only do different interests decide together on what is best, they form a partnership to carry it out. They are equally responsible for the outcome; and
- Supporting independent community interests-local groups or organizations are offered funds, advice or other support to develop their own agendas within guidelines.

According to Wilcox, in the 5 rungs different levels are appropriate at different times to meet the expectations of different interests. Based on this ladder, it is important to note that RCL should be clear on what they are doing as governors. Notable also is that consultation among all the stakeholders in school governance has clear benefits since it helps in planning, testing, prioritizing, targeting and improving services and set standards. As such, the RCL should be given information on what will be happening with regards to school decision making, consulted for ideas and join in decision making, working alongside all the other stakeholders towards improving the education of their respective schools. This would go a long way in enhancing and promoting quality education. If learners are recognised as equal participants in school governance, then SASA principles will be fully implemented, and issues of democracy and transparency in schools will be accounted for. If learners are actively involved in SGB meetings and are being consulted in decision making, this may help to groom citizens who will be able to be future leaders in spheres of life. Based on Wilcox's participation ladder, it is clear that participation of all stakeholders in decision making is of great importance for the functionality of the school system in modern South Africa.

1.11. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Related literature on learner governance in SGB participation is reviewed in this section. The concept of learner participation in SGBs, history of learner participation and the challenges faced by learners in SGB governance are discussed.

1.11.1. THE CONCEPT OF LEARNER GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

In South Africa, the children's right to participate in decisions affecting their lives is highlighted in the Children's Act (2010) and SASA (1996). Learner participation gives schools and their communities an important say in decision making by devolving power to stakeholders who participate in democratic school governance (Mncube and Harber, 2013). Wilkes (2010) notes that listening to and involving children in decision making are far reaching strides and provide insights into children's capabilities and perceptions of their own lives and experiences in terms of the needs and problems that affect them.

The Department of Education has taken great strides in decentralizing powers to the grassroots level through the enactment of SASA which gives powers to stakeholders, learners included, to participate in SG. As noted by Bhengu (2005), if decisions are made closer to the clients, better decisions will be made, and greater achievements will result. This implies that the inclusion of learners in SG aims at democratizing education. For this to be fully achieved, it is important to listen to and allow all the voices concerned to make decisions together. Learner participation in SG will benefit the school if informed by learner's opinions and concerns; it can also assist in identifying problems and solutions because learners have unique knowledge and perceptions of their school and about learning, teaching and schooling. Mager and Nowak (2012) opine that learner participation in decision-making processes yields positive effects for the child regarding: life skills, behaviour, and self-esteem, developing democratic skills and concepts of citizenship and tolerance for others. Even though this is the case in most schools, there are concerns about the level of participation, especially with regards to learner participation.

1.11.2. LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR LEARNER PARTICIPATION GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The year 1996 saw the passing of the White paper on the organization governance and funding of public schools (RSA, 1996) which culminated in SASA of 1994 No.84 which became operational in 1997. SASA mandates that all public schools must have democratically elected SGBs composed of parents of learners at the school, teachers at the school, non-teaching staff at the school, learners at school from grade 8 to 12 and the principal as the *ex-officio* member. The aim of SASA was to give powers to the grassroots stakeholders and democratizing the education system of SA (Mncube & Harper, 2013; Mncube, 2008; Duku, 2006; Magadla, 2007; Mabasa & Thelmane, 2002)

1.11.3. ROLES OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Among the duties of the SGB - of which learners are to actively participate in - are: formulating the school vision and mission and setting the purpose and aims of the school within an agreed policy framework, appointment and management of

educators and non-teaching staff, maintenance of school property, maintaining the school account, determining school fees and determine the school language policy (SASA, 1996). The execution of these duties is the responsibility of the SGB, learners included; however, researchers (Magadla, 2007; Mncube & Harber, 2010; Duku, 2006; Mncube, 2008; Xaba, 2004) are of the view that in most cases, the learners do not participate in these duties hence, this study examining how learners examine the participation in school governance.

1.11.4. CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL

Research (Xaba, 2011; Duku, 2006; Mncube & Harber, 2013; Magadla, 2007; Mncube, 2008; Cockburn, 2006; Bragg, 2007b; Mabasa & Thelmane, 2002) notes that there are a number of challenges faced by learner governors in school, namely, lack of support and recognition of the RCL by adults at schools, which undermines learner's right to authentic and active participation in school governance. Other challenges are: lack of training on meeting protocols, writing proposals, navigating the school management system and liaising and consultations with adults at school to equip learners with the necessary skills to take part in school governance. Participation is also hampered by adults' traditional views about the place of children in society, internal conflicts of adults in the boards, and in some schools, parents are excluded in school governance decision making; and in such situations, learners are also not recognized. Other challenges noted are the feeling of intimidation by the presence of other members who seem knowledgeable and perceiving their roles as simply endorsing what others have already decided upon, not knowing appropriate legislation and difficulties in managing large volumes of paperwork.

1.11.5. WAYS OF EMPOWERING LEARNERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

For learners to be active participants in school governance, all stakeholders need to be trained, that is, parents, educators and learners so that they can have equal representation when it comes to decision making (Mabena, 2002). Such training sessions help in enabling a change in the mind-set of stakeholders towards equal representation in school governance.

Moreover, Carr (2005) notes that supportive school ethos is essential to encourage participation in school activities before, during and after elections. Pendelbury

(2010/2011) asserts that as children stand in an unequal relation of power to adults, the principal and teacher liaison officer have a particular obligation to protect them from possible harm that could result from their speaking out in SGBs and other participatory forums.

In addition, learners should be equipped with leadership skills, conflict management skills, communication skills and motivation skills for them to be able to be active participants in shared decision making in school governance.

1.12. RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Research methodology constitutes a research activity and should be in a position to specify the concepts and related statement, what methods to apply, how to measure progress and what constitutes success in a study (Gray, 2009). Therefore, methodology should specify how to communicate about an area, research activity, its structure and expected deliverables. As noted by Briggs and Collena (2007), it is the rationale for the manner in which the researcher will carry out all the research activities.

In this section, brief discussions on the technical facets used in this study are covered and the appropriateness of the study explained, namely: research paradigm, research approach, research design, sampling instruments for data collection, analysis; this includes negotiation of entry issues of credibility and trustworthiness as well as ethical issues relating to the study.

1.12.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM – INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

A research paradigm is defined as a world view, general perspective, and a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world (Maree, 2007). Terre Blanche and Durreheim (2006) indicate that it is a form of background knowledge that tells us what exists, how to understand it and how to study it. Research paradigm is concerned with the arrangement of conditions of collecting data and analysing the data aiming at combining relevance to the research study.

I used the interpretive paradigm in this study. Trepper and Franklin (2012) note that interpretationist positions are founded on the theoretical belief that reality is socially

constructed and fluid. They further explain that the following are premises for interpretive paradigm: people make decisions and act in accordance with their subjective understanding of situations in which they find themselves, peoples' actions are based on the interpretations in which relevant situations are taken into account as defined.

Based on the above assertions, I considered RCL members' responses as significant and of value with regards to their effective participation in school governance. I also fostered dialogue with my respondents because the dialectical process between the researcher and his participants helps to create more informed and sophisticated understanding of the social world (Descombe, 2007). Therefore, as noted by Durreheim (2006) selecting an appropriate theoretical paradigm is essential when planning a research study as it influences the research problem and the manner in which the research can be conducted. In this study, the participants explained reality as they see it with regard to how RCLs effectively participate in school governance.

1.12.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach falls within the interpretive paradigm and lends itself to a qualitative approach. This research was qualitative in nature and examined the views and experiences of RCL stakeholders in relation to their participation in school governance.

A qualitative approach is an approach that locates the observer in the world. As explained by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2013), qualitative research encompasses an interpretive, a naturalistic approach to the world in which the natural setting is in a flexible manner and views human behaviour as the product of people's interpretations of the world. This approach was used to shed light to the grey area on the views of learner participation in SG with the hope of understanding their observed views. This approach was appropriate so as to gain insight on how learners view their participation in SG.

1.12.3. RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY

The research was qualitative in nature and explored the views and experiences of RCL stakeholders in relation to their participation in school governance. Babbie and Mouton (2013) state that research design involves the planning of scientific inquiry, in the first instance, to specify what needs to be researched, and secondly, to determine the best way to go about this. In other words, research design is a strategy to be adopted because it facilitates entry into participants' life-worlds to explore their lived experiences. In support, Gray (2009) notes that research design incorporates people's motivation, emotions, prejudices and incidents of interpersonal cooperation and conflict. It also describes and analyses people's individual and collective social action, beliefs thoughts and perceptions. Merriam, in Mestry (2004), indicates that research design is primarily concerned with the view that individuals interacting with the social world construct qualitative reality.

I interpreted the RCL participation in school governance in terms of the meaning that people assigned to it. Brown and Duku (2008) argue that crucially, qualitative research contends that knowledge is subjective and ideographic, and truth is context-dependent, which can only be obtained after entry into the participant's reality. Consequently, through qualitative research, the researcher interacted with participants to obtain data. Neiuwnhuis (2007) acknowledges that qualitative research allows an interactive relationship between the researcher and the participants as well as their own experiences and how they have constructed reality.

This case study design was the best strategy to enable the RCL members to state their own views, thoughts and ideas concerning how they participate in school governance of their schools. Creswell (2013) notes that a case study is adopted as a research design because it enables the researcher to utilize numerous data collection techniques as a process to improve the findings of the study. Participants were quoted verbatim as part of gaining answers to the assessment of RCL in learner governance. A case study, among other things, helps in examining how and why certain occurrences happen the ways they do instead of articulating what the occurrences are. (Descombe; 2007)

1.12.4. SAMPLING

Nueman (2006) defines sampling as a small set of cases a researcher selects from a larger pool and generalizes to the population. Putting it in simple terms, Nieuwehuis (2007) says it refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study. As such, a sample population for this study was drawn from members of the RCLs. Lemmer and van Wyk (2004) point out that the use of a small sample is common in qualitative research in which the aim is depth rather than breadth. Creswell (2014) concurs by saying it is impossible to include all the participants in a given population.

This study used convenience sampling since it is a method of drawing representative data by selecting people because of their availability or ease of access. Subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Gray; 2009). As a non-probability sample convenience sampling makes use of people who are easy to reach and in this case, the RCL learner governors.

Two township high schools were conveniently selected as a focus for the study. This convenience sample is important because it increases the utility of information obtained from small samples (McMillan and Schumacher; 2006) and also helps to obtain the richest possible source of data to answer research questions. The sample size included 2 RCL (chairperson and secretary) members from both schools as well one focus groups per school, with GET and FET band class representatives from both schools (6 in each group).

In addition, I used snowballing to obtain one chairperson, one secretary as well as one focus group with a total of comprising of 6 members from a former Model C school as a way of enriching the depth of the data collected.

1.12.5. NEGOTIATION OF ENTRY

Before the collection of data from the field, I sought permission and clearance from all the relevant authorities, especially the Department of Education as well the concerned schools. This was a more practical stage of the planning of the research. Gray (2009) points out that when conducting a research project, one needs permission or approval from stakeholders, or must meet the criteria for acceptability.

It is crucial for the gatekeepers to know the reason why they have to open the gate for the researcher. Harwood (2006) gives the reasons why gatekeepers do so: information is confidential, promises have been implied or given and enabling research takes up the staff's time and often requires space, like a desk for the researcher. For the learners, written consent letters were written to the parents.

1.12.6. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, as well as document analysis were employed in this study.

a) SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Hatch (2002) says semi-structured interviews are a type of interviews where the researcher uses guiding questions and yet stays open to following the leads of informants and probing into areas that arise during the interview interactions. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask probing questions while ensuring some consistency in the main questions posted to the participant. I made use of one-on-one interviews strategy with the RCL governors and chose interviews because of their flexibility. O'Leary (2004) points out those semi-structured interviews are neither fixed nor fully free but are a flexible research technique or method.

b) DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis was done by analysing official documents, minutes of meetings, quorum of the SGB meetings as well as their contributions. This gave me insight on how RCLs effectively participate in school governance matters within their respective schools. Terhoeven (2009) points out that document are of importance as a source of data because they do not intrude upon or alter the setting in ways that the presence of the investigator might.

c) FOCUS GROUPS

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which this study group's participants were asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards RCL participation in school governance. Three focus group discussions of six (6) participants were conducted with learners in both the GET and FET bands

1.12.7. DATA CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Creswell (2014) points out that in a qualitative study, it is crucial that every stage of the research, credibility and trustworthiness are taken in consideration. Research defines trustworthiness as a demonstration that the evidence for the results reported is sound when the argument made based on the results is strong (Ibid). Trustworthiness of qualitative research can be maintained by high credibility and objectivity. To ensure data trustworthiness, triangulation was used through use of focus groups, individual interviews and document analysis. This is so because while focus groups and individual interviews suffer from some common methodological shortcomings, since both are interviews of some kind, their distinct characteristics also result in individual strengths. The use of different methods in qualitative research compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits. Where possible, supporting data may be obtained from documents to provide a background and help explain the attitudes and behaviour of those in the group under scrutiny, as well as verify particular details that participants have supplied (Shelton, 2004; Silverman, 2001). Shelton (2004) notes that opportunities should be used to examine any documents referred to by informants during the actual interviews or focus groups where these can shed more light on the behaviour of people in question.

Another way of triangulation is to involve the use of a wide range of informants. This helps to check out bits of information across informants (Silverman, 2001). Multiple methods of data collection were used namely: interviews, focus groups and document analysis to ensure data trustworthiness. In other words, triangulation was put into use since it is a strategy for improving data credibility of research and evaluation of findings. Patton (2001:247) advocates the use of triangulation by stating that “triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods.”

1.12.8. DATA ANALYSIS

Data from interviews and document was analysed, transcribed interpreted and categorized into themes. The data consisted of transcripts and notes taken during interviews with the participants. Marshal and Rossman (1999) claim that although data analysis is a relatively unstructured, ambiguous and time consuming process, it

is also creative and fascinating. Hatch (2002) advises that data analysis start soon after data collection has begun. Following this advice enabled me to keep track of field notes of impressions, reactions and reflection as well as tentative interpretations themes on how RCLs participate in school governance.

1.12.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations refer to the standard and behaviour expected of a group as described in the group's professional conduct. These are principles of right and wrong that guided me while conducting research. Sotuku and Duku, in Okeke and van Wyk (2015) state that conducting research involving human participants requires the researcher to be guided by principles such as honesty, trust and reliability.

Informed consent was applied, that is, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and its importance before they decided to take part in the research. Sotuku and Duku (2015) note that participants should be afforded an opportunity to exercise their rights and choose whether or not to participate in a research project. Participants in this study exercised their free will and power of choice without any undue pressure, and both direct and third party consent was considered.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchel (2005) explain that ethical behaviour is particularly important in social research, as it involves things such as honesty, respect for the rights of others and concern for the subjects to take part freely based on the informed consent. Crow, Wiles, Heath and Charles (2006) categorize young people as participants within the 'vulnerable' group because of their perceived openness to coercion, exploitation or harm by more powerful others; for such reasons, the issue of informed consent was important in this study.

The participants were made aware of the purpose of the study and the procedures taken during the research and why they were selected. I gave them a brief personal biography in relation to the context of the study.

Harwood (2006) notes that confidentiality is an ethical principle that affords participants privacy in research for them to willingly volunteer information regarding their beliefs and actions on a host of issues. This study's participants were told that information given was solely for research purpose and would not to be shared with any other party. Jamison (2007) indicates that confidentiality can be defined as an explicit or implied guarantee by a researcher to a respondent in a research whereby the respondent is confident that any information provided to the researcher cannot be traced back to the respondent. This helped the participants to be honest in their responses.

The principle of anonymity essentially means that the participant remained anonymous throughout the study even to researchers themselves (Trochian, 2006). This means anonymity is a stronger guarantee of privacy, and participants did not use their names for the sake of anonymity.

Likewise, the principle of respect for privacy should be considered. Sotuku and Duku (2015) point out that privacy is the freedom a participant has to determine the following aspects about his or her identity and private information: time, extent and circumstances under which the participant's identity and private information can be shared or be withheld from others.

An ethical clearance letter was applied for and obtained from the University of Fort Hare, and permission to carry out the study was also obtained from the EC Department of Education.

1.13. CHAPTER OUTLINE

This research report is organized into chapters.

CHAPTER 1: This is the introductory chapter which gives the background of the study by identifying a gap in the literature on how RCLs participate in school governance, the research questions, statement of the problem, significance of study, delimitation of the study as well as clarity of some key terms are outlined.

CHAPTER 2: This is a detailed discussion on the literature that was reviewed. Here, concepts emerging from salient literature are discussed in detail, and the theoretical framework in which the study is based is also detailed.

CHAPTER 3: This presents a detailed account of the research methodological framework that was considered to be the best to support this research. It explains the paradigm underpinning and guiding this study and design and procedures involved in data collection and analysis of data. Details of the research context and selection process of participants are provided. This chapter set forth the researcher bias and pre- understanding uncovered through the process of interviews and ethical considerations pertinent to the study.

CHAPTER 4: This chapter focused on the data collection procedures from the field, data presentation and discussion. Here the display of data is organized and connections between the study's findings and existing literature are made.

CHAPTER 5: The researcher summarises the findings and gives recommendations for future research in this chapter.

1.14. CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 discussed the background of study, significance of study, delimitation, research questions, theoretical framework and methodology. The next chapter focus on reviewing the literature and theoretical framework related to this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. INTRODUCTION

The participation of learners in SG is based on the principle of democracy, equity, equality and redressing the imbalances of the colonial past. In this chapter, literature related to the roles of RCL in SG as an SGB component crucial towards a holistic development of the school is discussed. To ensure a clear understanding of the RCL participation in SG, I looked at the theoretical framework informing the study as well as the roles of learner governors as key stakeholders in shaping the school.

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WILCOX'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

Access and participation are key characteristics of democracy in schools and as such, public citizen participation in policy making was made explicit in the declaration of the UN Conference. For this study, a framework that encompasses learners' participation in school governance was used. Wilcox's (1994) ladder of participation, modified from Ainsten's 1969 ladder of participation, suggests that some levels of participation are better than others. Unlike Ainsten, Wilcox's framework is more of a case of horses for course, where different levels are appropriate in different circumstances. The situational approach applies in this framework and guided this study as a way of explaining the importance of learner participation in school governance.

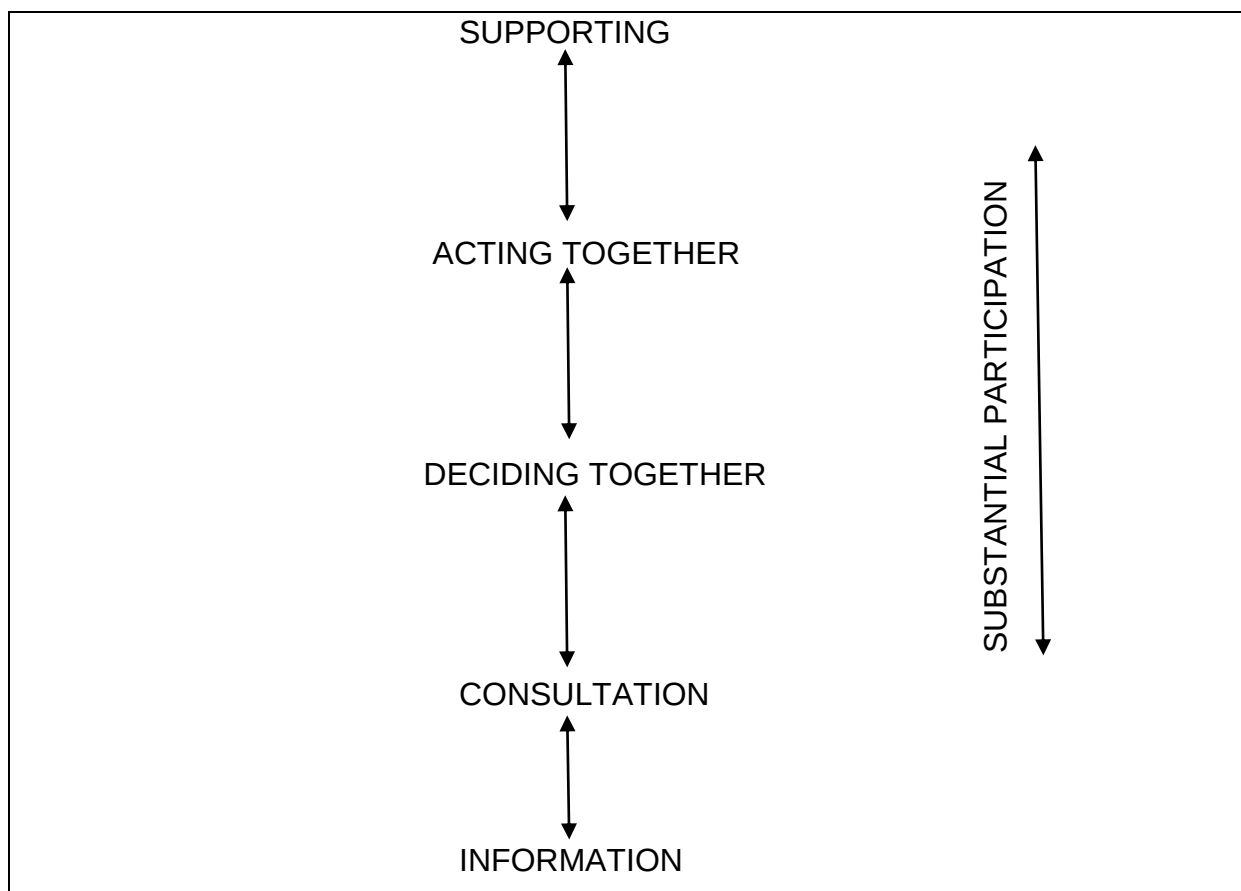


TABLE 1: WILCOX’S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

Table 1 above shows Wilcox’s ladder of participation, the theoretical framework in use in this study. Below are important facets on how the ladder relates to the participation of learners in school governance.

INFORMATION

According to Wilcox (1994), it is crucial to inform all stakeholders when dealing with matters that affect the school. From Ainstein’s ladder where it was derived, it is seen as the first step to legitimate participation. According to this ladder, informing entails telling people what is planned. Based on Wilcox’s ladder, it is crucial to inform stakeholders when dealing with matters that affect them in the day-to-day running of the school. For its viability, the following basics were taken into account: the information giving stance - essentially a “take it or leave it” approach (Wilcox, 1994). It is also crucial to note that people may not accept, they cannot have a say, and

information will be judged on what you are and the style of your leadership. Therefore, in SGBs, it is appropriate to give RCL governors information that relates to the day-to-day running of the school. As stipulated in SASA (1996), learners, as part of the SGB, must be given information even if there is no room to manoeuvre and must follow the course of action. For example, when policy statements are released from the Department of Education (DoE), learners (through the RCL) must be kept up dated. Therefore, it is important for principals to disseminate information to learner governors so that they can report to other learners, especially when reporting a course of action which is essentially internal and does not affect others and can be used to shape future discussions in the SGB meetings.

CONSULTATION

According to Wilcox's (1994) ladder of participation under consultation, the leader of the school has options to take because leaders consult other stakeholders to solicit feedback. In the case of the SGBs, learners should be consulted on issues of the school as a supporting structure. RCL governors should be consulted, that is, principals should offer other people such as parents, educators and learners' room to air their contributions as a way of promoting democratic governance in schools (Xaba, 2004). Consultation helps schools to put combined ideas into action.

All the SGB members should be consulted on problems affecting the school and be allowed to offer options, comments and take action. It is crucial to include learners in the consultation process of their school because this helps to improve service delivery and helps the leaders of the school to handle feedback and have a wide scope to choose from or modify options from the various stakeholders.

Again, consultation is important because it helps principals who have a clear vision and plans to implement a programme, especially if there is a limited range of options. Over and above, consultation helps stakeholders to contribute to the development of the school because it can relate to the concerns, interests and needs of stakeholders (Fletcher, 2003). Therefore, learner governors should be given room to air their ideas as well.

DECIDING TOGETHER

According to Wilcox (1994), the ladder should encourage other stakeholders to provide some additional ideas and options and join in deciding the best way forward. Deciding together means accepting other people's ideas and then choosing from the options you have developed together (Wilkes, 2010). This means that in the case of SGBs, the principal, teachers, parents and learners areas equal partners and should generate options together, choose between options and agree on programs of action. If learners are given the opportunity to decide together with other stakeholders, they feel valued and have confidence in how the day-to-day running of the school is carried out. If learners decide together with other stakeholders, they see themselves as owning solutions to the given problems and as such, contribute fresh ideas and devote their time in improving the school.

ACTING TOGETHER

Not only do different interests decide together what is best, but they form a partnership to carry it out. Acting together, according to Wilcox (1994), may involve short-term collaboration or forming of more permanent partnerships with other interests. When all SGB stakeholders are acting together in partnership, it involves both deciding together and then acting together towards achieving a common goal. RCL governors, teachers and parents should have a common language - a shared vision of what the school wants and the means to carry it out (Naidoo, 2005).

All the stakeholders need to trust each other as well as agree on what they want to do. Fletcher (2003) notes that for partners to effectively work together, a bond has to be established; there is need for all concerned stakeholders to feel they have appropriate input to contribute towards the development of the school. In addition, all stakeholders should have a fair say of what is happening in school governance. Acting together is crucial in SG where learners are involved because it helps solidify what a single individual cannot achieve on his or her own. This shows that if stakeholders are working together, they go an extra mile as there is commitment to time and effort needed to develop the school.

However, in some schools, it is very difficult for learner governors to act together with parents, educators and principals because some principals tend to hold all power

and resources and use this to impose their own solutions (Mncube & Harber, 2013). This tends to make commitment to partnership only skin deep.

SUPPORTING LOCAL INITIATIVES

From Wilcox's ladder of participation, leaders have to help others do what they want, perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the Department of Education (Wilcox, 1994). This stance helps stakeholders to develop and carry out their own plans in SG. This stance is the most empowering one provided people want to do things for themselves. The stakeholders may, quite properly, choose a lower level of participation. If well manned, it gives people in the SG a chance to involve them in setting up new forms of organizations to carryout programs at school. Supporting local initiatives at school level means learners have to own the process and move at the same pace with the rest of the stakeholders in the SGB. This helps people in the SGB to be well committed in taking initiatives and by so doing, become empowered and interested to continue doing more for their school.

2.2. PARTICIPATION VERSUS INVOLVEMENT

The terms *participation* and *involvement* are often interchangeably used and mean different things indifferent contexts. According Buhler (2005), participation is the state of being related to a larger whole and entails the process during which individuals, groups and organisations are consulted on or have the opportunity to become actively involved in a project or program of activity. Participation encompasses an ownership interest or profit-sharing right.

On the other hand, involvement is the act of involving, or the state of being involved. Maharaj (2005) in Duku (2006) notes that participation relates to how groups and individuals are empowered and have control over their lives. Furthermore, Clayton et al.(1997)in Duku (2006) suggest that it is more useful to see participation in terms of a continuum on which participation moves from merely nominal and representing little meaningful or direct involvement to a transformative participation; this results in people's empowerment and in direct and effective participation. The above definitions shows that participation requires one to be part of the decision making and contribute input, whereas in involvement one can be part of the decision making process but without being consulted.

In this study, participation means that stakeholders that are learners, teachers and parents should be empowered and takes part in discussions and decision making concerning the day to day life of the school. This implies that in the case of SGB, these stakeholders should work together in consultation towards the development of the school. Oxfam (2007) notes that the ultimate goal of participation is a feeling of ownership that the students feel they are investing in when they are responsible for the school and the activities that take place within it. Therefore, participation helps learners to express their own views and needs and where collective action is taken, to reflect those views and meet the needs (ibid). This shows that participation of all stakeholders is central to the functionality of the organisation as a whole, and in my case, this refers to the school.

Fletcher (2003) terms this notion *meaningful student involvement* which he defines as a process of engaging students in every facet of the educational process for the purpose of strengthening their commitment to education, community and democracy. He further notes that meaningful student involvement recognises the unique knowledge, experience and perspective of each individual student. This, therefore, means in SG, RCL members should be meaningfully involved or participate so as to unlock the doors of learning and create enthusiasm for leadership through experience.

Fletcher (2003) warns that learners should not be taken as passive recipients or empty vessels to be filled with adult input and should not be filtered with adult interpretations. He also warns against disregarding students' potential for meaningful contribution within education. This implies that in SGB, learner governors should not be taken as empty vessels but should be accorded an opportunity to make meaningful contributions. Having explained the concept of *participation*, I am now going to focus on what literature says with regards to learner participation in SG.

2.3. THE CONCEPT OF LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Learner participation, as a global issue, has captured the imagination and hopes of politicians, policy makers and practitioners alike (Cornwall, 2008; Jochuin, et al; 2005). The issue of stakeholder participation in governance with learners included has generated lot of interest among all spheres, particularly public participation in

community related matters (Dunn et al, 2007). Durr (2004) notes that there is a growing body of literature explicitly supportive of the principle of increased student participation in SG.

Jeruto and Kiprop (2012) define learner participation in decision making as the work of learner representative bodies such as school councils, student parliaments and the prefectural body. It also encompasses all aspects of the school life and decision making where learners may make a contribution, informally, through individual negotiation as well as formally, through purposely created structures and mechanisms. In other words, learner participation refers to the participation of students in collective decision making at the school or class level to facilitate dialogue between learners and other decision makers, and not only consultations or surveys among students.

2.4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF SGB AND RCL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SA

The SGB is a statutory body of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners in Grade 8 or higher who work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community. This body enhances the SASA Act of 84 of 1996 that determines various functions applicable to additional functions, as listed in section 21 of SASA from the Head of Department in each province (Western Cape DoE, 2014). Khumalo (2009) notes that unlike in other countries where membership to SGBs comprises parents, educators, community representatives and the principal, in South Africa, there is also provision for learner membership.

Bush and Heystek (2003) opine that the inclusion of learners in governance agrees with democratic principles of giving all stakeholders a say in school governance. However, learners do not have voting rights on issues that have a legally binding obligation. In agreement, Van Wyk (2004) notes that the SASA's principal aim was to transform education on the principles of democracy, unity, non-discrimination, equity and equality. All this was aimed at improving participation of all stakeholders in SG and as such, in 1997, SASA was officially enacted in all public schools.

Therefore, schools were compelled by SASA, for the first time in the history of education, to include learners in decision making at school level as opposed to the traditional bureaucratic system, in the new democratic era of participation and transparency. Chaka (2008) is of the view that SASA made many contributions to the new education system ushered in the new age of school governance. Important powers were decentralized to the level of school community; concurring is Brown and Duku (2008) who state that SGBs were tasked with addressing specific aspects and functions. These specific roles give all stakeholders, learners included, a clear direction to the nature of the participatory activities in which parents, learners and other SGB members can engage.

Mahlangu (2008) notes that given the lack of participation history by communities, especially in traditionally marginalized and disadvantaged black schools in the education circles, it was paramount that the structures to facilitate effective participation of communities (at school level) be created. Mabena (2002) argues that these structures were seen as the first legal structures to be democratically elected by all stakeholders in all SA public schools. SASA established SGB, which included learners as a way of benefiting the school and the pupils and community served by allowing them to participate in daily schooling activities. According to SASA (1996), the grassroots participation notion was constituted and entails the democratization and decentralization of education legislating that all stakeholders be actively and effectively involved in the activities of the school. Challenges are, however, experienced in implementation of the SASA legislation. This is because SGB members, including learners, lack training, thereby resulting in poor decision making in the SGB (Bush & Hystek, 2003).

2.5. IMPORTANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SG

A learner, according to SASA (1996), is a person who receives education in terms of the Act. In this study, it refers to all secondary school children who are officially enrolled at a school from Grade 8 to 12. Participation is the involvement of stakeholders in decision making (Naidoo, 2005). School governance is defined as an act of determining policy and rules by which schools are to be organized towards realization of objectives (Maile, 2002; Ngidi, 2004). SASA (1996) emphasizes on decentralized governance in schools, thus implying that decision making

responsibilities have been devolved from central to self-governing communities (Fareed & Waghid, 2005). Therefore, learner participation entails the involvement of learner governors in the day to day running of the school, together with the other components of the SGB (parents, educators, SMT and the principal) all working towards developing the school. This means that learner governors should not be just bench warmers but equal participants in all school activities so as to realize the school goals, vision and mission.

For this to be achieved, Mabena (2002) acknowledges that all members of the SGB must work collaboratively with each other to achieve a common goal, 'must' participate in the activities of the school entailing the development of the school as a whole. In other words, if all stakeholders are taking part in sound school governance, democratic values and accountability will be promoted (Serfontein, 2010). As such, according to Kuye and Kakumba (2008), a partnership between the leaders and the led is of great advantage to the entire society's well-being.

It is important to include learners in school governance. Pendelbury (2010/11) notes that they should participate because they have the right to do so. The above-mentioned author cites Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) which establishes participation as both a substantive and procedural right for children. This means that as a matter of principle, children are entitled to be listened to and taken seriously in matters that concern them; procedurally, their participation is a vehicle through which they protect and promote their rights. Wilkes (2010) supports this by saying listening and involving learners in decision making provides insights into children's capabilities and perceptions of their own lives and experiences in terms of the needs and problems that affect them.

Learners should participate in governance because it is good for them, for the school and for sustaining a democratic culture in South Africa. Phaswana (2010) notes that participation in collective decision making and joint action can enhance children's evolving capacities and provide opportunities for children to develop social competence, independence and shared responsibility. In agreement, Chipkin and Ngqulunga (2008) say that participation contributes to a better functioning school and, more broadly, to promoting social cohesion. This is contrary to the traditional

top down approach. If learners collaborate with other stakeholders in decision making, it makes them grow up equipped to be independent thinkers in future.

Mager and Nowak (2012) point out that learner participation in the decision making process yields positive effects for the child regarding: life skills, behaviour, self-esteem, developing democratic skills and concepts of citizenship and tolerance of others. A learner who is used to participate in governance is flexible to listen to others and as such, can freely assist others in the world. Participation is a tool for life. Mncube and Harber (2013) note that learner participation gives schools and their communities an important say in decision making by devolving power to the stakeholders who participate in democratic school governance.

In addition, Wilson (2010) argues that children who participate in governance appear to benefit from increased confidence, a sense of personal control and better relationships with teachers. This is because they are exposed to debates that take place in SGB meetings where emotions and tempers flare and still resolutions have to be reached besides differences. Such learners will have better relationships with educators because participation is associated with greater educational commitment, higher educational expectations, improved practical reasoning skills and promotion of democratic values and procedures (Mncube, 2008; Phaswana, 2010).

Mabena (2002) is of the view that if they participate in school governance, learners will be able to know their roles, duties and functions, and this will minimize problems such as school boycotts, fidgeting in financial matters of the school and ousting of the principal. Therefore, participation helps learners to view themselves as co-owners of the school rather than viewing the school as owned by the principal.

2.6. ROLES OF LEARNER GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The role of learner governors in school governance is worthwhile and rewarding for those who want to make a positive difference to their school. The RCL is an equal governor to the rest of those on the body and have a unique contribution to make. As a principle of good school governance, it should be expected that learner governors will play as full a part in the governance of the school as possible.

To begin with, let me clarify what governance entails: it is based on the core democratic values of representation, participation, openness, tolerance and rational

discussion. Collective decision making and accountability are paramount in the quest for realization of the best interest of schools and provision of quality education (Karlsson, 2002; Hystek, 2004 cited in Serfontein, 2010). Maile cited in Xaba (2004) alludes to school governance as an act of determining policy and rules by which a school is to be organized and controlled, which includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively.

The sole aim of all this is to ensure that schools fulfil their functions of providing a relevant, quality service to learners and communities in which they are located. In other words, governance embraces the issue of democracy and democratization. It encompasses all stakeholders (parents, teachers, learners and other members of the community) participating in activities of the school (Portigier 1997). However, even though the Schools Act section 16(1) gives SGBs the powers to run the show in school governance, no clear-cut definition is afforded the term *governance* (Visser, 2003). Fareed and Wanghid (2005) opine that a dichotomy exists between the ideals of democratic policies and the manner in which the distribution of power are interpreted and implemented; this is more likely to be the case because of the unequal representation that exists in SGBs.

2.7. ROLE OF LEARNERS IN PROMOTING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Discipline is one of the pillar roles of learner governors in the SG of their respective schools. The RCL must establish a code of conduct for the learners as the school's framework for creation of a culture of positive behaviour within which learners should conduct themselves (Western Cape Department of Education, 2007). As prescribed by SASA of 1996 section 8(2), the code of conduct is aimed at establishing discipline (learners to have characteristics such as: self-control, responsibility, obedience, excellence) and purposeful school environment (all activities within the school environment are in accord with the vision of the school), dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of quality of the learning process.

The Department of Education (2008), cited in Mestry and Khumalo (2012), asserts that the school is committed to providing an environment for the delivery of quality teaching and learning by promoting the rights and safety of all learners, educators and parents. The SGB, through the RCL, can and should play an important role in

the establishment and maintenance of sound discipline (Jourbert & Bray, 2007). The RCL, in promoting good discipline, should hold regular learner meetings and discussions to ensure that learners abide to the school rules and regulations. This is important because discipline is central to the whole school development and academic achievement of all learners; hence Joubert and Squelch's (2005) assertion that to enable effective learning to take place, it is crucial that a safe, secure and positive environment is created.

2.8. ROLE OF RCL IN PROMOTING TEAM WORK

The RCL is important in promoting and developing a positive spirit among the learners, teachers, parents and the principal. Vogt (2002) defines team work as a group of people interacting and cooperating in a work-related action. It involves hands-on working together as well as processes of organizational planning, decision making and development. He further alludes that team work is seen as crucial: policy seek to promote a new understanding of parents, teachers and learners working together in developing the school as an organization. Sprague (2004) points out that team work is often imperative for organizational success. As such, it is important that the principal and the TLO of the school strive to facilitate team work among the RCL and the rest of the SGBs.

The RCL members, as learners themselves, must understand the importance of teamwork despite its intangible nature. They must, therefore, create a culture that encourages and values teamwork. Where RCL cultivate and work as a team, it goes a long way in improving the academic achievement of learners. Team work in schools entails openly sharing important information across and within departments. Sprague (2004) is of the view that these aspects promote communication while simultaneously fostering relationships which cultivates synergy within an organization.

2.9. ROLE OF RCL IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict is disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns (<http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/aboutwhatitis.htm>.2012). In any school, conflicts do exist. Since conflict has the potential to erupt, emotions may flare

among learners, teachers and parents on a number of issues because people have different needs, views and values. Sprague (2004) is of the view that it is important to find ways of managing conflict constructively so that those involved can learn and grow from the experience. To minimize conflicts in schools, each school should develop a positive problem solving process (mediation) among the stakeholders in the SGB, with learner governors included. If learner governors are trained on mediation procedures, this helps all disputing parties to assess their options realistically and reach mutually acceptable solutions. Mediation works in various cases, for example, teacher/student, parent/school, teacher/administration, and parent/parent. If learners are part of the mediation process, it helps to work towards the achievement of a common goal.

2.10. ROLE OF RCL IN DECISION MAKING

Decision making is a process of selecting the best among different alternatives. It is an act of making a choice; before making decisions, all alternatives should be evaluated from all perspectives.

Decision making is important in the day-to-day running of the school. Thus, it is crucial to involve learners in the decision making of the school so that they are part of the planning process and finding solutions to problems. For learners to effectively function in the SGB decision making processes, they need to be empowered with such skills.

The Guide for RCL (1999) in Mabena (2002) gives some steps to follow when making decisions:

- Identify a problem by distinguishing the problem from a person;
- Identify possible solutions by brainstorming exercises. Brainstorming is a group process to obtain a large number of ideas in a short time;
- Choose solutions. The best solution is not always the easiest solution, but the best way to solve a problem;
- Implement the solution. Decisions need to be implemented in order to achieve objectives for what it was made for; and
- Evaluate the situation. RCL governors should be able to check whether the decision taken is correct.

According to Wilcox's ladder of participation, for this to be able to take place, RCL governors should be part of and should work together with the various stakeholders in SG. Working together helps learners to be groomed and be able to open their eyes and participate in good decision-making for the benefit of their schools.

2.11. ROLE OF RCL IN SCHOOL POLICY, VISION AND MISSION FORMULATION

It is important that schools maintain appropriate standards and give quality education as well as deliver acceptable results (Ngwako, 2001). Therefore, the formulation of clear vision and mission statements is paramount to create effective schools. Madsen (2013) notes that a vision statement is a paragraph that encapsulates everything one would like to be, do and have. In other words, it defines what successes and excellence one wants to achieve in future and reflects on one's values, goals and purpose and how to operate.

Learners should be involved in the formulation of policy, vision and mission statements of their schools because these are key and located within the realms of a school as a learning organization. The mission and vision statements are central to the functionality of the school since they determine the organizational structure, management process, management strategy, innovative ideas, values and culture of the school (Ngwako, 2001). Learners should be active participants in the formulation of this since this will impact on their results as well. The mission and vision statements of the school should be aligned with the learners' values, culture and possibilities of the school; if this occurs, learner governors and all the learners can work progressively and fulfil their academic dreams.

2.13. STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE USED TO TRAIN LEARNERS TO BE EQUAL PARTICIPANTS IN SG

The following are ways that can help to enhance learner participation in school governance.

Firstly, learners should be equipped with the skill to negotiate with the other stakeholders in the SGB (Mabena, 2002). The RCL needs to be well versed on how to negotiate issues in governance. Negotiation refers to the interaction process aimed at fairly reasonable and mutually acceptable positioning of one party in the

interaction with the other party. In this case, learner governors should be able to negotiate issues with the rest of the SGB governors that affect them. The skill of negotiating helps in shaping good relations within the whole school setup. It is also imperative to note that for learners to be able to negotiate, they must master the skill to be able to listen to the other governors. This is so because for one to be able to interact with another part, he or she should get to understand what the other party is saying.

Secondly, learners should be motivated to participate in SGB. The principal, as the head of the institution, must be able to help learners to be positively skewed towards participating in school governance. If he fails, learners will not be able to value the essence of participating in school governance. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation must prevail for the learners to feel accommodated in SG. Prasiloo (2000) views motivated learners as those who regard the school as a pleasant place to be in, look for better ways to improve their school and are proud of their work and accomplishment. This is so because they attach value to what they do in governance, solely because they are well motivated.

Thirdly, learners should be equipped with conflict management skills. Conflict management entails the ability to deal with differences and coming up with amicable and viable solutions. Conflict is healthy in an organization and helps one grow in life. It is clear that in life, we cannot avoid conflict because people have different backgrounds and viewpoints. As such, the principal and the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO) are supposed to gear up learner governors with the skills to handle tense situations in dealing with conflict in schools; this helps the governors to curb unnecessary criticism in school violence, strikes and so on.

2.14. FACTORS HINDERING EFFECTIVE LEARNER PARTICIPATION

Brown and Duku (2008) note that SASA was founded on the principles of participation and representation in SG, but it appears as if not everybody understood the notion of participation in the same way. Xaba (2011) concurs by saying that despite SASA's efforts to democratize education, 20 years down the line; it still falls short of its intended outcomes. Mncube (2009) identifies sources of lack of participation as being related to the level of education of parents, in general, a fear of

academic victimization, language barriers, and difficulty in attending meetings. Hystek (2003) adds that negative attitudes towards schools and feelings of inferiority prevent learners from being effective partners in SG. Mabasa and Thelmane (2002) indicate that problems with stakeholder participation in SG are, by no means, unique to developing countries.

a) Lack of capacity to govern

Learner governors do lack the capacity to participate in SGB. Though attempts on SGB functioning through SASA have been made, challenges do exist with regards to enactment and performing of the roles. This is because SGB members lack training on how to carry out their duties (Xaba, 2011; Tsotseki, Van Wyk, & Lemmer, 2008). In most cases, SGB members commence their duties before even receiving training, as noted by Mabasa and Thelmane (2012). This culminates in problems such as unfamiliarity with meeting procedures, problems with the specialist language used in meetings, difficulties in managing large volumes of paper, not knowing how to make a contribution, not knowing the appropriate legislation, feeling intimidated by the presence of other members who seem knowledgeable and perceiving their roles as simply endorsing what others have already decided upon.

This lack of training is even worse among the learner governors who only have one term in office to serve compared to the other components' three years. By the time the learner governors leave office, they are likely not fully aware of how to execute their duties. Lack of training, especially for learner governors stifles them in terms of contribution in SGB meetings. As revealed by Hystek (2001), learners do not make positive contributions at SGB meetings, and when they do, such contributions are generally viewed with sceptism. In some instances governors are excluded in SGB meetings, thus preventing them from participating in the day to day running of the school (Phaswana, 2010; Steinmann, 2013; Hystek, 2001).

The above-mentioned findings confirm findings of studies done by Sithole (1995), van Wyk (1998), McPherson (2000) and Carrim and Tshoane, (2000). Mncube and Harber (2013), in their study, found out that lack of training is a hindrance to learner participation, and learners need to be equipped with the necessary skills to participate in meetings where they engage with mostly adult components of the SGB.

b) Cultural versus western views on children participation

The other challenge is based on the African cultural view that children are supposed to respect adults. Cultural beliefs tend to stifle learner participation in SG. Altinyelkin (2010; 167) wrote: “in traditional Ugandan culture, children are brought to respect adults and those in authority. Questioning them or challenging them is not often considered appropriate behaviour”. In agreement, Chiwela (2010:66) put forward that in Zambia: “culturally, children are brought up to believe that they should remain silent in the presence of adults. Hence, children may be hesitant to speak, while the adult is uncomfortable with the child who expresses his opinion”. This is the case in many African cultures where parents or adults are supposed to be respected, and a minor cannot overrule an elderly person’s view.

Such sentiments are contrary to the modern Western ways of democracy where a child is supposed to look the senior in the face when discussing issues, are given time to air views which are always considered as of importance. The African culture tends to make learner governors docile when it comes to participation in SGBs. Based on the afore-mentioned, learner governors are bound to be shy to express themselves because they fear insulting elders if they open up and express themselves, and such meetings tend to be dominated by adults (teachers, parents and school heads).

c) Power relations

Power relations between the learner governors and adult governors results in lack of collaboration in SGB. Steinmann (2013) notes that principals or management are apathetic about collaborating with RCL and tend to exclude the latter totally or partially from SGB meetings. Fataar (2008:22) in Mncube and Harber (2013) states that the SGB has become a prime site for principals to establish a platform for their authority performances”. Principals want their presence to be felt in SGBs, tend to undermine the role of other stakeholders and tend to dictate the pace. Mncube and Naicker (2011) suggest that they are the ones to reign over the governance process. In support, Mncube (2009) argues that power relations affect school governance, regardless of the cultural context in which they operate and are bound to play a role in affecting stakeholder participation in governance. Principals often use their status

to place themselves at the forefront of decision making. This power relation tends to make them manipulative of the SGB and stifles learner participation.

d) Language barrier

Phaswana (2010) points out that the use of English as a language of communication during meetings is one of form of excluding learner governors from effectively taking part in SG. He went on to say that learner governors felt that often, teachers realize that most learners can be very articulate in local languages and would thus challenge their authority during meetings; such teachers would then choose to the use English in SGB meetings. The use of a foreign language makes it easy for the educated to argue their case easily, thereby neglecting the learners and, of course, disadvantaging them (Mncube 2009). Mabovula (2009) found that learners find it easy to express themselves in their own mother tongue than in English, hence the validity of Mncube's (2008) recommendation to include learners who have a good command of English language so as to facilitate easy debating in the SGB meetings.

e) Legal limitations

There are also legal challenges limiting learner governors' participation in school governance. Section 32(1) of SASA points out that learner may not contract on behalf of the school. Learners, by virtue of them being perceived as minors, have limited capacity to act. Section 32(2) notes that learners may not vote on resolutions of a GB which imposes liabilities on third parties of the school. The White Paper of 1995 stipulates that it would not be appropriate for learners to participate in decision making pertaining to contracts of performance of currently employed staff because of the legality of their contracts.

Section 32(3) stipulates that learner governors incur no personal liabilities for any consequences of their membership in the GB. This means that only the major components of the SGB, that is, parents, teachers and principal are liable for contract signing as well as issues pertaining to finances of the school. This shows that the law, even though it tries to empower learner governors, has some reservations on some pertinent issues and as such, learners' roles tend to be neglected by the other governors.

2.15. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, learner participation is key in SG. Literature has shown that globally, learner participation is gaining recognition due to the various advantages that it entails. However, there is limited literature on learner governors' views regarding their participation, hence the need to fill in this gap.

The following chapter focuses on research methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research methodology and methods I used in this study. Briggs and Coleman (2007) define research methodology as the range of approaches which are used as the basis for inference and interpretation for explanation and prediction. A clear and concise description of how the study was carried out is given. I defined the following research terms: research paradigm, research approach, research design, data collection methods, sampling technique, sample size ethical considerations and proposed data analysis approach.

3.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

In research, one can use a number of paradigms for a study namely: positivist, constructivist, interpretivist, pragmatism, and emancipator and critical. McKenzie and Knipe (2006) note that it is the choice of a paradigm that sets down the intent, motivations and expectations of the research. The following section explains what a research paradigm entails.

Willis (2007) defines a research paradigm as a world view, a general perspective, and a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world. It is concerned with the arrangement of conditions of collecting data and analysing the data aiming at combining relevance to the research study. Maree (2007) states the following as functions of a research paradigm: it defines knowledge how the world works, how knowledge is extracted from the world and how one is to think, write and talk about his knowledge; it also defines the types of questions to be asked and the methodology to be used in answering, what is to be published and what is not, as well as the meaning and the significance of the research findings. Therefore, a research paradigm is the overall plan for the research study. Creswell (2014) points out that there is need to adopt a paradigm for an academic research because it is an encircling system of unified practices and values that delineate for the researcher the nature of their inquest along three dimensions namely: ontology, epistemology and methodology.

In this study, I employed interpretive paradigm. Maree (2007) notes that interpretivists' positions are founded on the theoretical belief that reality is socially constructed and fluid. Thus, what we know is always negotiated within cultures, social settings and relationships with other people. Taylor & Medina (2013) are of the view that this paradigm supports the belief that reality is constructed by subjective perception and predictions cannot be made. They went on to say that people have free will, goals and intentions, so they should be studied as active agents. Punch (2011) notes the following as premises for the interpretative paradigm: people make decisions and act in accordance with their subjective understanding of the situations in which they find themselves; people's actions are based on their interpretations in which the relevant situations are taken into account; and social life consists of interaction processes rather than structures and therefore constantly changes.

Therefore, based on these premises, I considered individual responses as significant and of value and also I fostered a dialogue with my respondents. I depended on the participants' background and experiences for me to get rich data, nuanced and detailed data of the participants in the study (Creswell; 2014, Taylor and Medina; 2013). This was so because the learner respondents explained realities as they see them, hence the choice of paradigm.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Qualitative approach is a method of inquiry employed in many different academic disciplines traditionally in social sciences but also in market research and further contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons given for such behaviour. They investigate the how and why of decision making not just what, where and when (Creswell, 2014), hence qualitative research's focus on smaller samples. In other words, qualitative research consists of an investigation that:

- Seeks answers to a question;
- systematically uses a pre-determined set of procedures to answer the question;
- collects evidence;
- produces findings that were not determined in advance; and

- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

In this case, focus was on RCL governors, examining how effective their participation in SG is. A qualitative approach was used in this research because it produced information only on the particular cases studied; and any general conclusions are only informed assertions on areas that are obscured (Trepper & Franklin; 2012, Shank & Villella; 2004). Additionally, it sought to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population. Moreover, I was able to secure a deeper insight of how learners view their participation in school governance because very few studies have been conducted on the subject thus far.

Fischer (2005) gives the following as the advantages of a qualitative approach: it produces more in-depth, comprehensive information and also seeks an understanding of the entire situation. Taylor and Medina (2013) note that the strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It also provides information about the “human” side of an issue, that is, the often, contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions and relationships of individuals. In this study, the qualitative approach was applicable because I wanted to explore the learners’ views regarding their effective participation in SG. This was done through asking those questions that sought to solicit how they take part in SG. The learners gave their views on the issues pertaining to their participation in SG, that is, both the positives and negatives and what they thought should be done to improve their participation. I used semi-structured interviews and focus groups to elicit the data from the learners.

The qualitative, however, has some disadvantages, namely: the subjectivity of the inquiry leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approaches’ data. It is also difficult to prevent or detect the researcher included bias and the scope due to the in-depth comprehensive data gathering.

3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2013), Gray (2009) and Maree (2007) define research design as a plan or strategy that moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques and data analysis used to obtain answers to research questions. In agreement, Babbie and Mouton (2013) note that research design involves the planning of scientific inquiry, in the first instance, to specify what needs to be researched, and secondly, to determine the best way to go about this. This is supported by Leedy and Omrod (2013) who say that research design is a strategy for solving a research problem. Punch (2011) in van Wyk and Taole cited in Okeke and van Wyk (2015) opines that this involves all issues involved in planning and executing a research project - from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing results.

To gain entry into the lived experiences of the participants a case study design was used to determine views of how learners regard their effective participation in school governance. This was determined by the research problem, research questions, paradigm and approach employed. Punch (2011) in van Wyk and Taole, cited in Okeke and van Wyk (2015), explains that a case study is an empirical research method which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real life system. He further says that it emphasises the unity and wholeness of that system but confines the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research at the time. The case study design allowed the RCL governors to state their own views, opinions, thoughts and ideas concerning how they participate in the SG of their school. Furthermore, a case study design allowed for the utilisation of numerous data collection techniques by the researcher as a way of improving the findings of the study (Creswell; 2013). This helped in accessing data from a variety of learner governors with regards to their participation in SG.

Over and above, Descombe (2007) argues that a case study allows the examination of why and how certain trends happen the way they do instead of articulating what the occurrences are. In this case, I looked at how learners participate in the SG of their schools, that is, whether their participation is effective or not and why.

On the contrary, case study designs have drawbacks. They pose a challenge of generalization; however, Zainal (2007) notes that at the same time, given their specificity, care needs to be taken when attempting to generalise from the findings. Yin (1984:21) in Zainal (2007) notes that case studies are criticised for lack of rigour, that is, too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. Moreover, case studies provide very little scientific generalisation since they use a small number of subjects and are often labelled as being too long, difficult to conduct and producing vast amounts of documentation. There is danger that comes when data are not managed and organised systematically. The following section looks at the data sites and how they were established.

3.5. SAMPLING

Sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a pre-determined number of participants are selected from a large a number of populations (Friedman, Wong and Blumenthal, 2010).The methodology used to sample data from a larger population depended on the type of analysis performed. The sample of schools and participants was a representation of the general population. In other words, sampling means a few people are chosen to represent the whole population. Three high schools were used in this study to examine learners' views regarding their effective participation in SG, and these schools were purposively sampled.

PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

According to Creswell (2010), purposive sampling has specific elements of theoretical sampling which looks for those who can assist in building the theory further and people who fit the criteria of desirable participants. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) said purposive sampling is used in order to access "knowledgeable people" - those who have in-depth knowledge of a particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, access to networks, expertise and experience. In this case, three high schools were purposively sampled because they have RCL legislated by SASA as is legislated in South African schools - any school with Grade

8 up to Grade12 must have an RCL (SASA, 1996). These schools were chosen to represent high schools in the East London Education District. Of the three schools one, was a former model C school, and two were township schools.

CONVENIENCE SAMPLING

Creswell (2014) states it is not possible to include all participants in a given population, therefore, due to that, convenience sampling was used in this study. Convenience sampling, as the name suggests, involves sample units that were readily accessible to me. Therefore, the participants for the study were chosen because of their accessibility. Rubin (2005) notes that it is crucial to define participants and why they were included in a study because the right selections also help the researchers to make their argument credible. A convenient sample is made up of people who are easy to reach. After purposively sampling the schools, I considered their convenience. This resulted in me selecting schools within my vicinity. The RCL chairpersons and secretaries of both schools were conveniently selected for both schools, and three focus groups were selected from GET and FET governors, respectively. It was easy for me to carry out the study because the schools are within easy reach and also helped me to cut on transport expenses.

SNOWBALL SAMPLING

Morgan (2008) defines snowball sampling/chain sampling or referral sampling as a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among the acquaintances. The reason why I used snowball sampling to sample School C, a former model C was because issues of gaining entrance into such schools are problematic. In my case, snowball sampling was used to get learner governors from a former Model C school.

Snowball sampling uses a small pool of informants to nominate, through their social networks, other participants who meet the eligibility criteria who can potentially contribute to a study (Denzin & Lincon, 2011). I found one female RCL member from a former Model C school, and she helped me to find the other RCL governors and class representatives. McMillian and Schumacher (2006) note that snowball

sampling is a useful tool for building networks and increasing the number of participants. It, however, relies on initial contacts and connections made for its success. Morgan (2008) outlines the following as steps to follow when doing snowballing: draft a participation program (likely to change but indicative), approach stakeholders and ask them for contacts, gain contacts and ask them to participate, community or group issues that can be included in the participation program emerge, continue the snowballing with contacts to gain more stakeholders if necessary, ensure diversity of contacts by widening the scope of persons involved in the snowballing exercise.

Snowballing helped to locate hidden participants, locate people of a specific population and was not costly. In this case, since it was difficult for me to get entry into a former Model C school, snowballing helped a lot in gaining access to their RCL governors. I managed to get a maximum of eight participants from that school.

3.6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection plan reveal sources of data and the role played the researcher during data collection procedures. Creswell (2010) suggests that data a collection plan encompasses the sequential steps taken in the collection of data. The plan is of paramount importance since it enables the researcher to prepare the logistics and the procedures to be undertaken in collecting data overtime. The study made use of interviews (semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews) and document analysis as its data collection techniques. The interviews were the prime source of data collection in this study. For data collection I began by administering semi-structured interviews, followed by focus group discussions and finally, I did document analysis. All the three were aimed at accessing data on learners' views regarding their effective participation in SG.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews, as defined by Creswell (2014), refer to a two-way conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee which can be used to gain information, ideas, beliefs, views and opinions about the phenomenon understudy. In this study, learners were interviewed to find out their views regarding their effective participation in SG. Interviews were appropriate for this study and enabled me to gain in-depth

data from the primary participants on their views regarding their effective participation in SG. I selected interviews because they provide information that is inaccessible from observations. Therefore, learner views can be clearly be understood if described and explained instead of observing them. I selected interviews, because they enable a one-on-one, face-to-face interaction with the participants. I was able to probe initial participant responses for further clarity of issues, which is to ask why or how. This helped me get rich data with regards to the effectiveness of learner participation in SG. Facial expressions also helped me to see the reality on the ground, and through gestures emotions were expressed by the learners. Leedy and Omrod (2013) note that the use of open-ended questions and probing gives participants an opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses as quantitative methods do. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are:

- meaningful and culturally salient to the participant;
- unanticipated by the research; and
- rich and explanatory (ibid)

In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews seek to describe the meaning of the central themes in the life world of the subjects; the main objective of interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviews say (Maree, 2007). Semi-structured interviews were made use of in the research has mentioned above. These are face to face situations where there are interactions between individuals to get information. It is a direct way of obtaining information from interviewees by the interviewer and they helped gave me an opportunity to expand areas of interest that may arise during the data collection allowing for in depth expression of feelings (Raburu, 2015). The interview allowed me to exhibit some flexibility, repeat or rephrase questions and to probe for more information. Interviews provided me with first-hand information as a way of enhancing the credibility, trustworthiness and the conclusions that can be drawn from the study (Maree; 2007). Semi structured interviews were conducted with the chairpersons and secretaries of all schools under study.

However, there are some weaknesses associated with the use of semi structured interviews. It may be expensive, in terms of transport and time. I however confined the interviews to the schools in his proximity. Interviews also lack anonymity and confidentiality which makes them prove to bias. Again, the interviewees may practice response acquiescence and deviation. To counter that, I assured the respondents of anonymity and confidentiality. I also established good rapport and created a relaxed conducive environment to make respondents feel free to open up. Also, I vividly explained the importance of the research study.

After the face-to-face individual interviews, FGDs were also conducted, followed by document analysis.

Gumbo and Maphalala, cited in Okeke and van Wyk (2015), explain focus group discussions as a form of qualitative research method in which the researcher can ask a group of people about their perceptions, opinions, and beliefs, attitudes towards a product, service, concept, and idea and so on. It may be an informal dialogue amid a group of carefully chosen individuals about a specific topic (Gumbo & Maphalala, 2015). Amongst its benefits, focus groups encourage a free flow of ideas and allow the researcher to observe and take note of visual aspects such as the respondents' body language and facial expressions as they are given topics to discuss (Administration methods;2010).

This type of interview was conducted with a group of 6 to 8 GET and FET learner governors (class representatives) per school. Focus groups helped me to gain more information and widen the range of responses from participants as they generated multifaceted information regarding learners' views in SG participation. I made use of moderator-dependant focus group, whereby I organised the groups and the interaction among the participants, asked the groups questions and facilitated discussions. The main advantages of focus groups are that they are useful to obtain detailed information about personal group feelings, perceptions and opinion and can save time and money compared to individual interviews including providing a broader range of information (www.evalued.bcu.ac.uk/tutorial/4b.htm).

Focus groups, however, have got their demerits. They can tend to become influenced by one or two dominant people in the session, thus making the output very biased (Gumbo & Maphalala, 2015). This was the case in School B where two boys wanted to dominate the discussions and wanted to bully other respondents. To counter that, I tried to handle the situation by ensuring that all learners participated. Ensuring that all learners participated helped me to avoid biased responses. In addition, focus groups are not ideal when dealing with sensitive topics and are very artificial environments which can influence responses. In addition, focus groups are susceptible to facilitator bias as some participants may not feel free to express or give personal information. To counter that, I used triangulation.

THE ONE ON ONE AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

I commenced the interview process by introducing myself to the participants, and they did the same. This helped me to create a conducive and relaxed atmosphere for the interviews. Thereafter, I explained the purpose of the study, that is, to obtain their views with regards to how effective their participation in SG is. Briggs and Coleman (2007) note that this helps to establish whether or not participants are interpreters and co-producers of meaningful data. I then explained ethical issues, clarifying that the data collected was going to be used for the sake of this study. This was aimed at making participants feel free and open to give information. I also gave the respondents freedom to choose the language of preference.

In the study the respondents used both English and IsiXhosa, especially those from Schools A and B. Those from school C used English because they can easily express themselves in it. Those from Schools A and B code switched between the two languages. I asked their permission to record them using my cell phone. Here some participants declined, so I resorted mainly to note taking. Probing was done to seek clarity and for follow up purposes. Moreover, the learners did not use their names for both individual interviews and FGDs. For the FGDs, I ensured that all participants are motivated and take turns to contribute.

I made use of the break times for the interviews in schools A and B, and for school C, I met the learners after school at a neutral venue.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Babbie and Mouton (2013) explain document analysis as a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed (ibid). I used document analysis as a way of accessing secondary data. I analysed official documents, that is, minutes of SGB meetings to view the attendance of learner governors and their contributions.

From the documents I was also able to find out the active voices and silent voices in the meetings. That helped me to gain insight into how RCLs participate in SG within their respective schools. Terhoeven (2009) opines that documents are of importance as a source of rich data because they do not intrude or alter the setting in ways that the researcher might. Maree (2007) concurs by saying documents helps to shed more light on the problem under study. Document analysis helped me to see the trend with regards to who contributes most in meetings. They helped me to be in a position to assess whether learner voices are active or not in governance, and also the type of meetings they attend. The documents also helped me to come up with conclusions as to the degree to which different schools handle RCL participation. The next section discusses how I tested the research instruments.

3.7. PILOT STUDY

Pilot study is a “pre-study” of your fuller study, also called “feasibility” study or “trial run”. It includes specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as questionnaires or interview schedules (Polit et al; 2013). It was done in preparation for the main study. Piloting is crucial in research because even though it does not guarantee success of the main study, it does increase the likelihood of getting the required results (Ibid, 2013). It also helps to fulfil a range of important functions and can provide valuable insights for other researchers. This was the first practical application of the assessment of learner participation in SG. It also acted as the last

step of the first grouping of the intervention in the research study (Dos Vos; 2002). I conducted the pilot study after I had a clear version of the research topic and questions, techniques and methods applied. This trial run was used to the research techniques and the study's methods, namely, the interviews and focus group questions.

The pilot study helped me a lot since it gave me insight as to how I probed the participants to get clarity on some issues that seemed hanging. All the areas were consolidated, for example, the handling of focus groups. All in all, the pilot study helped me, to a great extent, to pave way for the final collection of data.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Data analysis is a process of bringing together order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data in an incessant and iterative process (Turesky, Clouter and Turesky, 2011). De Vos, et al (2013) concurs by saying that data analysis is a process of arranging data from interviews and other research instruments to be able to increase the researcher's understanding of the study and what the researcher has discovered in clear terms.

I arranged the data into themes emerging from the large quantities of participant responses and analysed responses from the interviews and documents. Van Wyk and Taole, in Okeke and van Wyk (2015), are of the view that data could be in the form of a text, transcript of recorded interviews, stories and or photos. The aim was to understand the meaning that people create or to understand what make sense to the participants or even why people do things and behave in the way they do. Maree (2007) says data analysis reduces the volume of information and identifies significant patterns. Written analysis or comments were used because they are easy to interpret. It is, therefore, clear that data analysis is important as it makes it easy for people to understand the findings of the research study. Statements from participants were quoted verbatim in support of the findings of the study on learners' views regarding their effective participation in SG.

After interviews were conducted and documents were analysed, I transcribed the data. After transcribing, the data was categorised into themes. Lefebvre (2005) notes that categorisation is the process in which ideas and objects are recognized differentiated and understood. I grouped data into specific themes, namely, thematic analysis. Van Wyk and Taole (2015) note that thematic analysis helps identifying of important information in the data and categorising it as important information should relate to the research questions and should describe the phenomenon under study. The themes were based on my research questions.

3.9. DATA CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

This study is qualitative in nature and as such, issues of research credibility and trustworthiness were adhered to. I focused on issues of, among other things: transferability, dependability, credibility and conformability of the study (Creswell, 2014). Different data collection methods were used to ensure a deeper understanding of the study on learners' views on their effective participation in SG. Below is a detailed explanation of the above:

Data trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness is the process whereby the researcher confirms that the findings accurately reflect the participants' experiences and views and not the researcher's perceptions (Babbie & Mouton, 2013). In this study, the learners' views regarding their effective participation in SG were confirmed from their responses. To ensure data trustworthiness, I took notes. Schmidit and Brown (2007) note that qualitative studies are trustworthy when strategies have been used to meet credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity. In my study, the notes made ensured data trustworthiness.

Data credibility

Data credibility deals with how confident one is regarding the true value of data (Babbie & Mouton, 2013). This study sought to determine the learner governors' lived experiences and their voices regarding their participation in SG. To ensure data

credibility, I used semi structured interviews, FGDs and document analysis. Also, the respondents answered in both English and IsiXhosa as a way of ensuring data credibility. My male colleague acted as my personal assistant during the data collection process. This was also a way of ensuring credibility since he helped interpreted some deep IsiXhosa statements.

Data transferability

Babbie and Mouton (2013) refer to transferability as the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other contexts, situations or respondents. In this study, I selected RCL participants and class representatives who are information rich participants with regards to their views in SG participation. After collection of data through interviews to saturation point, dense descriptions of data through verbatim quotations were done to ensure transferability of the study findings.

Data dependability

Data dependability, according to Polit et al. (2005) refers to the stability of data over a period of time and over conditions. De Vos, et al (2013) describe it as an alternative to reliability of data where the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the subjects chosen for the study as well as the changes in design brought by a better understanding of the RCL setting or school environment. I used a dependability enquiry audit to enhance dependability.

3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When undertaking research on people, the well-being of research participants must be a top priority, thus the need for research ethics. Ethics refers to what is right or wrong when conducting research (Sotuku & Duku; 2015). Drake, in Okeke and van Wyk (2015), states that understanding how to protect the interests of those who are ready and willing to take part in the research has repeatedly drawn research ethics to the foreground. Therefore, a researcher needs to act responsibly and with integrity when carrying out a research study (Sotuku & Duku, 2015). As such, research ethics were considered, and these include:

Negotiation of entry

This was a more practical stage of planning for research project; with a research project, one needs permission or approval of stakeholders or must meet criteria for acceptability. Therefore, negotiating entry or access is an important stage in the process. Seeking access is important because legislation (Data Protection Acts of 1984 and 1998) seeks to ensure that personal information will not be abused. Moreover, it is important that one get access from organizations, in effect, gatekeepers, and it is important to understand the reasons why they will not open the gate to anyone. There are reasons for gatekeepers to do so, namely: information held is confidential, promises have been implied or given, and research takes up staff's time and often requires space like a desk for the researcher. I completed research ethics forms from the University of Fort Hare's Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee and sought permission from the Department of Education to do my research in three of the high schools in East London Education District. After, aspects of gaining entry were considered, equally more important principles of ethics were ensured.

Confidentiality

Harwood (2006) notes that confidentiality is an ethical principle that affords participants privacy in the research for them to be willing to volunteer information regarding their individual beliefs and actions on a host of issues. They should be informed that the information given is solely for the research purposes and will not to be exposed to any other person. I explained the purpose of the research to the participants and assured them that their information is not going to be exposed. Jamson (2007) says that confidentiality can be defined as an explicit or implied guarantee by a researcher to a respondent in a research whereby the respondent is confident that any information provided to the researcher cannot be traced back to that respondent. The respondents were assured that their responses would be treated with confidentiality and that they have a right to privacy and freedom of expression. This shows that assuring confidentiality to the respondents helps them to be honest, so I assured my participants of confidentiality.

Anonymity

The principle of anonymity essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study, even to the researchers themselves (Trochran; 2006). This means that anonymity is a stronger guarantee of privacy and respect (Sotuku & Duku, 2015). I informed my respondents not to give me their names, so in this case, pseudo names were used to promote privacy and anonymity. This was a way of ensuring that the principle of anonymity was upheld. For schools, the names School A, B and C were used. Pseudo names were also used for individual participants and FGD participants as a way of ensuring the research ethic of anonymity.

Informed consent

There should be informed consent in any research involving humans, that is, the subjects must be informed about the research before they decide to take part in it (Sotuku & Duku, 2015). This is so because informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so that they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate or not (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It is one of the most important tools for ensuring respect for persons during research (ibid). Letters were written to parents of participants to seek permission for their children to take part in my study.

The respondents were also told the purpose of the study; I gave an explanation on the procedures to be taken during the research process and explained why and how they were selected. In addition, the respondents were given assurance that they are free to decline or withdraw their consent and discontinue from participating in the research at any time. I gave the parents as well as the participants the name and contact information of my research promoter to be contacted for questions or problems related to the research.

Protection from harm

Respondents must be protected from harm that is physical, social, emotional and spiritual in nature (Harwood, 2006). The researcher should not deceive the

participants and should avoid telling the truth about the research after having deceived the respondents (de-hoaxing) (Ibid). Burns and Grove (2009) note that protection from discomfort and harm originates from the principle of beneficence which refers to doing good and avoidance of doing harm. To ensure that this principle was held, I avoided any distressing and discomforting situation of the participants.

3.11. CONCLUSION

This chapter's focal point was this study's research methods and methodology. The research paradigm, approach, design used was outlined and the subjects focused on were also identified. In addition, data collection instrument were discussed, that is the interviews and document analysis. Issues of ethical considerations and data analysis plans were also discussed.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.0. INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of this chapter is on the presentation of the data collected during the research and the discussion of the findings. This research was designed to answer questions on how learners view their participation in school governance.

Data presented in this chapter were collected through a qualitative approach, and qualitative data techniques were employed in the study. These were semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) (with learner governors) with RCL members and class representatives, respectively. Document analysis was also done at two of the three participating schools.

In this chapter, a detailed description of each key participant and data sites is done so as to get an in-depth understanding of how RCL governors participate in SG. The data was organized in accordance with the three research questions and has been classified according to a set of interview questions as well as the emerging themes identified through close reading of transcripts. Data from interviews was complemented by data gathered through document analysis.

The following research questions are the basis of the data presented:

1. What are the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation in school governance?
2. What factors affect their participation in SG?
3. On the basis of their views, how can learners' participation be enhanced?

For confidentiality and anonymity, the names of schools and participants were changed.

4.1. PROFILES

The following section provides the profiles of the data sites involved, as well as the profiling of research participants involved in the study as follows:

4.1.1. PROFILING OF SCHOOLS TAKING PART IN THE STUDY

A total of three (3) schools were used as sites for data collection. In order to achieve the purpose of research, the profiling was done as follows:

School Name	Enrolment	Average Matric performance	Quintile	School type	Category
School A	1300	65%	3	Township	Section 21- no fee paying
School B	830	41%	3	Township	Section 21 no fee paying
School C	1200	100%	5	Urban	Former model C- fee paying

TABLE 1: PROFILING OF SCHOOLS

Table 1 shows the three research sites that participated in this study. Of the three schools that participated, two schools are categorized as Section 21 schools and fall under Quintile 3 (no fee schools) and one former model C school is categorized as a fee paying school and falls under Quintile 5. According to SASA (1996), Section 21 schools are schools that do not pay school fees; instead, they rely on government funding.

School A is a comprehensive township school in the Buffalo Metro with an enrolment of about one thousand three hundred learners from Grade 8 to 12. The learners attending this school are from around the vicinity. School B is also a township school with an enrolment of about eight hundred learners. It is a school surrounded by lower income and below poverty datum line dwellers, and it is in the midst of a slum surrounded by shacks. Most people in this environment rely on government grants for a survival. Most learners from single parents or child headed homes.

School C is a former model C school in the Buffalo metro urban area, with an enrolment of one thousand two hundred learners and a wide scope curriculum comprising academics and practical subjects. It is a school that houses learners from diverse cultures (learners from former colonial masters, Coloureds, blacks and Indians). It caters for learners from middle class income parents. They study English as a home language, unlike school A and B who study English as a First Additional Language as their Home Language isiXhosa.

Data from the Department of Education data base shows that the average matric pass rate of school A stood at 65 %, school B average pass rate for the same duration stood at 41% making it fall under what is known as Matric Intervention Program (MIP) school and school C's matric pass rate stood at 100%. These averages are the performances of these schools for the past four years, that is, from 2012 to 2015.

School A and B were conveniently sampled and comprised eight participants respectively, and School C's eight participants were obtained through snowball sampling. Their profiles are as shown in the next section.

4.1.2. PROFILES OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant	School	Age	Gender	Grade	Portfolio	Race
Leo	A	18	M	12	Secretary	Black
Maria	A	17	F	11	Chairperson	Black
Charles	B	19	M	11	Secretary	Black
Susan	B	17	F	10	Chairperson	Black
Rudo	C	17	F	11	Chairperson	Colored
Sihle	C	17	M	12	Secretary	Black

Table 2: PROFILES OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Table 2 indicates that six (6) participants took part in the study. Out of the six, three were males and three were females. From each school that participated, in terms of age groups, four participants were seventeen years of age, one eighteen and one nineteen years. From the above table, three participants were from Grade 11, two

from Grade 12 and one from Grade 10. Furthermore, five of the participants are blacks and are from an IsiXhosa background while one is a Coloured.

With regards to the RCL portfolio occupied by the respondents, Table 2 indicates that a total of six key RCL members were individually interviewed, that is, chairpersons and secretaries for the three schools under study, respectively. All the participants are RCL members in SG and are from schools based in the East London Education District in Eastern Cape. Gender balance was struck in the six participants with three males and three females. It is important to note that the participants were drawn from different school environments that are from conveniently sampled township schools and two obtained through snowballing from a former model C school. Five participants were blacks and one was a coloured. The names given to the respondents were not their real names but pseudo names to protect their identity and also for ethical purposes.

4.1.3. PROFILES OF FGD PARTICIPANTS

Table 3 indicates that three (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) groups participated in the study. The FGDs comprised six (6) participants per school and were also drawn from schools A, B and C respectively. They were also interviewed to ascertain their views regarding learner participation in SG. The gender and ages of the participants are tabled below:

School A				School B				School C				PORTFOLIO
Name	Grade	Gend	Age	Name	Grade	Gend	Age	Name	Grade	Gend	Age	CLASS REPRESENTATIVES
FDS A 1	9	M	16	FDS B 1	8	M	15	DSC 1	10	M	16	
FDS A 2	10	M	18	FDS B 2	10	M	17	FDS C 2	11	M	17	
FDS A 3	11	M	18	FDS B 3	10	M	17	FDS C 3	11	M	17	
FDS A 4	10	F	17	FDS B 4	11	M	18	FDS C 4	8	F	15	
FDS A 5	10	F	17	FDS B	9	F	16	FDS C 5	10	F	16	
FDS A 6	11	F	18	FDS B 6	11	F	17	FDS C 6	11	F	17	

TABLE 3: PROFILING OF FGD RESPONDENTS

Table 3 shows the profiles of Focus Group Discussions participants' ages and gender. From school A, six class representatives participated in the research, and there was gender balance comprising of three males and three females. The males were from Grade 9, 10 and 11 and aged sixteen and eighteen, respectively. Of the three females, two were from Grade 10 aged sixteen and seventeen and one from Grade 11 aged seventeen.

From school B, six class representatives took part in the research; four were males drawn from Grade 8 aged fifteen years, two from Grade 10 - both aged seventeen years and one from Grade 11 being eighteen years old. Two girls aged sixteen and seventeen were from Grade 9 and 11, respectively. All the members were class representatives at the time of study.

From school C, six class representatives participated in the study. Two males aged seventeen were drawn from Grade 11 and the third one aged sixteen from Grade 10.

Two females came from Grade 10 and 11 respectively and the other one aged fifteen from Grade 8.

In total, eighteen members constituted the focus group. Of the eighteen, ten were males and eight were females. Overall, the majority of participants in the three focus groups came from Grade 10 and 11 respectively; seven out of the eighteen were from Grade 10, seven from grade eleven, two from Grade 9 and two from Grade 8. Pseudo names were used to protect identity of the participants; those from school A were named FDSA 1 to 6, those from school B, FDSB 1 to 6, and those from school C, FDSC 1 to 6.

4.2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents data obtained from the individuals and also gives analysis of the data.

4.2.0. RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation in school governance?

PERCEIVED TRAITS OF LEARNER GOVERNORS

This section focuses on the traits and characteristics that the respondents gave as having resulted in their election into office.

Of the twenty four participants from schools A, B and C, fifteen indicated that they were chosen into the RCL because they are disciplined. For instance, FDSA 2 provided said:

I was chosen to be in the RCL because I am a well disciplined and obedient learner.

Similarly, Rudo from School C attested that:

I am a leader generally because even at primary I was a school prefect. It is something I thank the Lord for and my parents for nurturing me well. They instilled discipline in me and they taught me values, punctuality and respect of others.

Male respondents Leo, Charles, FDSA 3, FDSB 4 and FDSB 1 said they are argumentative, vibrant and talkative. Leo revealed that he was chosen into the RCL because:

I am an argumentative person who can freely express her views.

Likewise, Charles and FDSB1 maintained that:

I am a vibrant, talkative and am a person who has confidence in everything I do.

The majority of female respondents indicated that they were chosen because they are friendly and approachable, for example Maria noted:

I am a person who has a big heart and I tolerate other learners. I don't feel comfortable if other learners are in problem I prefer going my way to help.

Sihle, FDSA 5, FDSA6, FDSB 6 and FDSC 3 said they were chosen because the learners and teachers have faith and trust in them as hand workers committed to whatever they do at school.

The above traits and characteristics displayed by the learners resulted in them being voted into being office bearers to represent other learners as RCL governors. Deducible from the above traits is the fact that for both the township schools and the snowballed former model C school, the learners do have more or less the same characteristics. It is clear that for learners to be voted into office, certain traits are considered. It is not just a matter of choosing any learner who cannot represent others but one who possesses certain qualities. The following are given as characteristics to look for in RCL members: willingness to serve, active involvement in school, trustworthiness, integrity, commitment, having a positive attitude, pride in the school and its learners and good communication skills with fellow students and staff members (gmsouthafricafoundation.com/RCL. in South African Schools). Based on the traits shared by the participants, it shows that they do have documented and proven qualities that one has to possess to be an RCL governor.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SG?

Data from the individual, focus group interviews and document analysis revealed that the RCL participation in SG, in township schools is not taken seriously. This means

that there is no consistency in them attending meetings, they do not form part of the agenda formulation and are not part of the decision making process. This makes their participation ineffective. This was evident from the respondents who took part in the study. The following are some of the indicators from the respondents to show that learner participation is not taken seriously:

- *Learner views are not taken into account;*
- *Learners do not get the opportunity to air views;*
- *Principals want to do everything;*
- *They are excluded from some GB meetings;*
- *They do not get enough support from parents. ;*
- *They sometimes don't get feedback from the meetings they don't attend;*
- *Their presence is camouflaged by their parents who constitute 51%; and*
- *Deliberate use of English language in meetings.*

With regards to the individual data and focus group discussions, it is important to note that participants showed mixed feelings, especially among the two township schools, that is, school A and B. Male respondents, Leo, Charles, FDSA2, FDSA 3, FDSB 1 and FDSB 3 felt that they were not taken seriously by the principal, teachers and parent governors. For instance Leo confirmed that:

It is not taken seriously because our principal is bully. He does all things by himself; he does not value us as key components in the day today running of our school. He does not have a heart. As learners we partially participate in SG because we are not called to attend some meetings. For instance, some meetings are called during tuition time. The teachers say that we must focus on our books. They come to report to us what have been agreed in meetings. I feel that is wrong because these people discuss our fate but do not include us. Hence, we are left out in most decision making at our school.

On the other hand, female respondents from the same schools reported the opposite. For instance Susan, FDSA 5, and FDSA 4 share similar views. Susan stated that:

Learner participation is very serious because our views are taken into account. We as leaders of the learners we are sent represent the other learners in SGB meetings. I convey the feedback of the meetings to the other learners. However I am comfortable to engage in debates with my teachers, parents and the principal of the school. I am a shy and reserved learner.

This may be indicative of the fact that males expect a lot in as far as leadership positions is concerned and ladies, by nature, are submissive and are comfortable in being part of the meetings even if they do not actively contribute. It is deducible from the above that the majority of male participants showed dissatisfaction with their participation, unlike females who said they are taken seriously in SG.

The other issue raised by the participants was that learner participation is overshadowed by the presence of elders in meetings, thus making it uneasy to contribute and be part of the governance procedures of the schools. Again, it is clear that male participants from school A and B are the majority who are vocal about this issue; however, some female participants concurred with the same views. For example, Charles endorsed thus:

Our presence is overshadowed by the presence of elders in the meetings...

In support, female respondent FDSA 5 declared:

Ummmm!!! The parents, educators and the principal, because of their number and their age, plumage our existence. We only exist as their shadows in the meetings. This is unfair because we only exist njee, size zithunzela kwi SGB thina. (Frowning).

In view of the above, learner governors do take part in governance, but their grip is rather losing because of the existence of older governors. This makes them unable to freely take part in the deliberations of the meetings. A general sense of unease cripples their contributions in SG.

In the opinion of FDSA 2, the issue of learner participation is not taken seriously because of the docility of learner governors who represent them in SG meetings. This respondent took a totally different angle because to him, it is not the parents,

principal or the system that makes their participation invisible, it is the RCL participants in SG. He reported that learners are side lined by adult governors and advocated that:

The issue of learner participation is not taken seriously because our representatives are not vibrant. How I wish I was the one in the SGB. It takes long to get feedback because of their ineffectiveness. For example, we proposed for the change of uniform last year and we are still using the uniform that was in use since the school opened. Our leaders must be forceful like Julius Malema.

The above sentiments shows that even though learner governance exists in schools, there are issues that make the presence of learners seem inactive, for example, the issue of bullies, centralization of decision making, presence of adult governors in meetings, exclusion from meetings - all these are hindrances to the recognition of active RCL participation in SG.

On the other hand, respondents Rudo, Sihle, FDSC 2, FDSC 3 and FDSC 6 from School C, which is a former model C, reported that they were taken seriously. For instance, Rudo uttered that:

RCL governance is taken seriously. I can say because as learner leaders we are constantly informed about the happenings of the school. Even though we do not attend all meetings, but our TLO and even the SGB members do constantly come and meet with us for briefing us on important matters of the school if we did not attend meetings.

Respondent FDSC 3, when further probed on the reasons why they are taken seriously, pointed out that:

Our principal and our elders are people who understand how things are supposed to be at school. They encourage us to work with them to build our school and maintain the standards of the school and as a result we feel valued participating in SG at all times.

This may indicate that the school structure may have a direct influence on the way learners take part in school governance. If learners are supported by the teachers,

parents and principal, they can easily do their duties and as such, will see and value their participation as well recognized. Former model C school participants noted they are constantly given briefings by the Teacher Liaison Officer who meets with them fortnightly. In addition, the fact that they are understood by the principal and parents shows that the level of education of the SGB members is important.

Notable from the SGB meeting quorum of the two schools A and B's document analysis is the fact that learner governors sometimes form part of the GB meetings and in some, they are excluded. For instance, out of the six meetings from School A, learners were present in three meetings. Issues discussed were nutrition, ways of retaining learners and motivating learners to excel among others. They were not in attendance in two finance meetings as well as a meeting on the profiling of the vacant principal post. From School B, the same trend with regards to finance meetings was observed. Therefore, I can safely say that the idea of learner participation does exist in schools but is not taken seriously.

Comparatively, I can say that black township schools do not value learner participation in school governance unlike their counterparts in former model C schools where the issue of learner governance is significantly given attention. Environmental factors come into play. Most probably the reason the reason that black township schools do not value learner participation is due to the level of parents' level of literacy. Learners from former model C schools are committed in GBs because they are taken seriously.

THE ROLES OF LEARNER GOVERNORS

From the individual and focus group findings, it is clear that the participants, even though they do not execute all the functions in SG, are aware of what their duties. Key to this is that all the six individual participants and eighteen group participants indicated that they are "mouth pieces", going between the learners, parents and educators". From the documents analysed on the meetings of these RCL members, it was found that the principal and the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO) explained the duties to the governors.

Thirteen out of the sixteen participants (eight one percent) from the township schools that School A, and School B indicated that among some of their roles they play at

their schools is to ensure that all learners receive the nutrition program food in the morning and during lunch, ensure that food on the department menu is served, share textbooks, ensure that learners do not vandalize school property and ensure that teachers do attend classes and give learners work. It is imperative to note that some of the duties carried out in the two township schools are similar to those done in the ex-model C, although the magnitude of execution might vary.

For example Maria's stance is that:

As learner governors we are the mouth piece and ears of other learners, we are the middlemen between our teachers, parents and the principal and the other learners. Our duty is to see to it that learners are happy with what is going on at school

In addition to the above middleman duty of ensuring that there is smooth flow channels of communication within the school and parents, Sihle, FDSA 2, FDSA 4, FDSB 3, FDSC 1 and FDSC 6 all agreed they are pillars upon which school discipline rests and that discipline will lead to academic excellence and general cleanliness at all times. Sihle provided evidence that:

We maintain discipline, we communicate information from the teachers to the learners, we ensure that the classroom and toilets are clean, we ensure that the welfare of the learners are catered for, we motivate fellow learners to work hard towards academic excellence and achievement and we ensure maintenance of school rules.

Besides the above mentioned, Susan, Maria, FDSA6 and FDSC 3 who are all female respondents strongly believe in the notion that RCL leaders should be a cut above the rest since they have to be torch bearers and lead by example. This is a feminist stance because ladies want to be recognized as the best whenever they take part in something. FDSA 6 insisted that:

As learner leaders, our duty is to act as role models to other learners, our behaviour and the way we do things must reflect that we are leaders who lead by examples in whatever we do. We have to encourage our fellow learners to behave well and as well and show respect to our teachers and elders.

This shows that the behaviour of learners is important for their functionality in SG to be well recognized because for them to be able to maintain discipline, they must be disciplined themselves, and that is, they must be able to lead from within. All the roles revealed by the participants are in line with the RCL roles stipulated in SASA.

On the other hand, some roles executed are situational. For instance, FDSA 1, FDSA 4, FDSB 3 and Charles from school A and B noted that they form part of the nutrition committees at their schools as one of their roles. Respondent FDSB 3 attested that:

I am in the Nutrition Program Committee and it is my role to see to it that we have decent meals on daily basis, all learners are fed, and food is not stolen and work closely with the nutrition program coordinator Ms. Vuvu (not real name) and the finance officer.

On the contrary Rudo, FDSC 1, and FDSC 5 all from former model C, where they do not have nutrition program, have fundraising programs to supplement fees. They said they are in various school committees to raise fees for tours, farewells, music concerts, drama etc. Rudo gave details:

As a member of the finance committee I mobilize my class representatives, captains of various sporting codes to be actively involved in fundraising programs of the school because it is a way of our school getting additional funds on top of what we paid.

This is indicative that some duties done by RCL members vary depending on schools, with township schools that do not pay fees relying on government funding being involved in less challenging and less costly duties as compared to their counterparts from former model C schools who ensure that fellow learners and sponsors come on board to inject money into the school because they have standards to maintain.

Basically, the RCL governors are there to help educators and parents run the school smoothly, and as put forward by Maile in Xaba (2004), the governors determine policy and rules by which a school is organized, controlled, which includes rules and policies being carried out effectively. In other words, the sole aim of having RCL in

schools is to ensure that schools function in totality through combined efforts among all the stakeholders of the school to develop the learners in totality.

LEARNERS' ROLES IN DECISION MAKING

Evidence from individual, focus groups and document studies indicated that mostly, the principal takes centre stage in decision making. Learner governors, mostly in township schools A and B, indicated that they are seen as pseudo decision makers or window dressers in meetings where they are supposed to be actively involved. Evidence from the documents analysed for School A and B revealed that learners' contributions are hardly mentioned in meetings minutes, rendering their existence to be unfelt in decision making.

Of the sixteen individual and FGD participants from School A and B, eleven are of the view that they do not take part effectively in decision making. This was mostly remarked by male respondents. They are of the view that there is no collaborative decision making and working together between themselves and the other governors. For example, FDSA 2 charged that:

The principal do determine and likes to read from his books to silence parents. So decision making mostly is done by him but sometimes in agreement with all the board members.

Respondents FDSA 1, FDSA2, FDSA 3, Leo and Charles (all males) supported and shared the same sentiments with respondent FDSA 2 above. Charles admitted that:

In most of the SGB meetings I have attended it is the principal who designs the agenda and parents do chip in when it comes deciding on what needs to be done at school. But mostly umphathi wesikolo nguye une final say kwintoyonke yalapha esikolweni. Ungathi abazali bethu bafunakutya kwezi meetings because their contributions are generally not felt more like us.

Therefore, the fact that the principals want to be the overseer of every decision at school, especially in the two township schools, makes most of the decisions to be from him, and this leaves the learner governors as window dressers with little or less grip in the way they contribute to the decisions of their own school.

However, five female respondents from the two township schools challenged the view that it is the principal who controls the show. Maria, Susan, FDSA 4, FDSA 5 and FDSA 6 warned that it is proper for the principal to lead and guide in decision making because he is well versed with the policies and what is needed to run the school smoothly. Susan's stance is that:

We know nothing about the policies of the Department of Education; neither do our parents governors who are illiterate do, so I feel happy if the principal supersedes everyone in decision making. After all he is the one answerable to the EDOs. Therefore I support how he implements decisions at school.

Putting it in the words of FGSA 5, she questions:

Who are we in decision making? Let's focus on our studies leave the principal and the parents decide, our time will come when we are educated and when we are in authority.

This is clear that male governors want to be heard and want to express themselves in the day to day running of their school and do not take no for an answer. This is the reason why they felt that decision making should not solely be in the hands of the principal and elders but rather be a group effort decision making. This is more likely to yield positive results in building the school hence again their views on parent governors as not coming on board. The female respondents' way of thinking further makes principals of schools to take decisions by themselves.

On the other hand, respondents from the ex-model C school testified that decision making is done by all the stakeholders. They announced that they are given a chance to contribute to the decision making and are listened to by the elder governors. For instance, Rudo pinpointed that:

Consensus and combined decision making prevails in my school because in all meetings I attended all members do take part and air their views freely and they discuss in a healthy way until a balanced and agreed upon decisions are reached at.

Respondent FDSC 4 from the same school expressed that:

Even though I do not attend GB meetings, I strongly feel that what we forward as our decisions regarding certain issues we more often get feedback and some of our ideas are put into effect. What more can we expect as learner governors?

This is suggestive that there is collaborative decision making in former model C schools and also reveals that parents, principal, educators and learners work together to decide together towards the betterment of their school. This is most probably because the parents in ex-model C schools are educated professionals and know how things are supposed to be done, unlike in township schools. This gives confidence to learner governors to freely participate in decision making of their schools. This combined decision making where learners take part is important because it gives them leverage to know what is good and how things are done.

Literature from Naidoo (2005); Fareed and Waghid (2005); Harber and Mncube (2013) and Wilkes (2010), among others, notes that there are far-reaching results of collaborative decision making in SG. For instance, Wilkes (2010) observed that listening and involving learners in decision making provides insights into children's capabilities and perceptions in terms of the needs and problems that affect them.

THE COMPOSITION OF LEARNER GOVERNORS IN SG MEETINGS

Evidence gathered from the document analysis, individual interviews and focus group participants indicated that the meetings comprised of the school principal, elected SGB parents and educators and sometimes the two elected RCL members. Data analysed from the meeting documents of School A and B indicated that in most cases, the quorum excludes RCL governors, especially meetings to do with finance of the schools and appointment of educators and other ancillary staff.

Even though this may be the case, individual interviews and FGDs of school A, B, and C reflected that learners unanimously agree on the fact that SGB meetings comprise the principal, teacher governors, and parent governors and, in some instances, RCL governors. For instance, the respondents in school A spoke with the same voice with regards to the composition of the SGB meetings. For example, Maria mentioned that:

In most SGB meetings we have the principal, three educators and mostly parents and sometimes us, two learners. I think this general composition of the SGB is not justified because ababantu bathetha about our lives and we are the minority, in any case if called to attend the meetings. I think that a balanced platform that allows for equal representation is the most ideal one.

Additionally, School B respondents shared the same views as those of school A; Chairperson Susan agreed that the SGB comprised:

The principal, educators and parents however some parents do not attend all meetings and us as learners we are sometimes excluded from attending some meeting. I think that there is need for more learner governors in SGB meetings. Us as learners we hardly attend some meetings during the school time because of school work and some meetings are during the evening and it is dangerous to travel at night.

Responses from School C, the former model C school, were not different from their township counterparts. For instance FGSC 6 pronounced that:

Participation and attendance of SGB meetings is generally well balanced in many cases, with learners, principal, parents and educator components in attendance.

The above responses show that there is a general consensus among the participants from the three participating schools on the composition and attendance of GBs in meetings. Consolidating the interviews is the evidence obtained from document analysis which showed that the quorum of the meetings comprises the principal, teachers, parents and learner governors in some meetings. This shows that SASA principles of democratizing schools through involvement of learners in governance are implemented in schools as piece-meals because of the magnitude and frequency of RCL presence in SG.

Commenting on this, Cockburn (2006) in Mncube (2008) found out that learners' voices are heard when they attend the proposed meetings and more effective when learners actively take part in shaping the agenda of those meetings. He further categorized the types of involvement into three namely: opportunity- where learners are given the opportunity to attend meetings, attendance- where learners take up

that opportunity, and engagement - whereby learners not only attend, but are given a chance to make effective contribution in meetings.

The learners do attend some meetings and are excluded from attending some meetings. It is clear that in these meetings, they do attend but are not part of shaping the agenda. Instead, they are called to be part of an already drafted agenda. This makes them be in the opportunity and attendance type of participation rather than the most productive one whereby they actively contribute to the day to day running of the school that is engagement.

4.2.1. RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What factors affect their participation in SG?

LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE BENEFITS OF LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SG

Data gathered from the individual and FGDs participants showed that there are a lot of perceived impacts derived from the participation of learners in school governance. These include: promoting relations at school, personal growth, sound and improved decision making, academic excellence and achievement, shaping the school tone and culture, airing views, concerns and challenges as well as mapping and marketing the school to the outside world. There are little or no contradictions on the strengths of learner participation in governance. Responses from school A, B, and C, concur with each other in one-way or the other. These responses were arranged in order of frequency.

The following are the varied responses given by the learner governors to this regard. The learners' responses indicated that their participation is of significance because they help in building the well-being of the school, cementing relations, governing experience for adult life and enhancing academic excellence, among other things.

If learners actively participate in school governance, sound decisions raise the flag of the school high. This was suggested by Maria, Sihle, FDSA 2, FDSA 5, FDSB 1 and FDSC 5. Maria claimed that:

It helps us to know what we want as learners and also we are the ones who are affected by decisions taken by the SGB. Learner participation helps to

build the school as well because we get to know what is right for us and communicate to the learners; this contributes to the development of school because all decisions will be taken by all the SGB components.

In support, FDSC 5 from School C extrapolated that:

If learners participate in SG it helps in making sound decision making and it results in boosting moral of all stakeholders since we feel valued if our ideas are taken into consideration.

This is testimony that if learners feel that they are part of the school decision making body like other governors, it makes them feel valued and in a position to motivate other learners to do the right things at school like being disciplined, avoiding vandalizing property etc; and this will help build the school as an environment for effective learning.

Apart from that, Leo, Rudo, FDSA 4, FDSA 6. FDSB 4 and FDSC 1 believed that learner participation helps cementing relations with all the structures of the school through more pronounced channels of communication among all structures. For instance, Leo indicated that:

Learner participation in SG helps us as learners to cement relations with the teachers, parents and the principal. It helps us not to be side-lined in issues about our life because the school belongs to us as RCL on behalf of the learners.

In the opinion of Rudo:

Learner participation is important because it helps us to air our ideas, views, grievances and concerns with regards to what affects us in our school. If we as learners do take part in SG we cement relations and channels of communication with both structures of the school setup that is SMT, parents, learners and the wider community at large. Learner participation helps us with skills on how to live in an adult life for example we are equipped with skills on how to manage and allocate resources equally among individuals. As learners we are equipped with budgeting skills, communication skills and interaction skills.

This shows that the participation of learners in school governance is important as far as strengthening relations among and within all the involved parties in school. This calls for more formal learner active participation in the day to day running of the school to make the relations superb. Wilson (2010) supports this by saying that children who participate in governance appear to benefit from increased confidence, a sense of personal control and better relations with teachers.

Furthermore, learner participation helps in preparing the governors for adult life. Through interaction with adult governors, the learners gain a variety of skills important in adult life. FDSA3, FDSC 2, Charles, FDSB 3 and Susan concurred. Some of the advantages of learner governors of being prepared for adult life have already been captured in Rudo's views above. To this regard, FDSB 3 stated that:

Our strength is to shape our school by adding voice to what concerns us. As learners we gain experience on how to discuss issues with our elder governors and I feel valued qhasixoxa nabantu abadala ngesikolo sethu. I feel being part of the school management.

Likewise, Charles added that:

As learners, if we participate in school governance we give a sense of personal control. We learn how to interact with our leaders and as such we are groomed to be future leaders and we gain experience on how decisions are arrived at and how they are implemented both in schools and in life.

This view of gaining experience for adult life was supported mostly by all the boys in FGD. This is more likely because males like taking leadership roles as politicians, executives etc., hence supporting the patriarch view of leadership that men are born to be the heads not the tails.

Similarly, learner participation helps in working towards academic excellence and mobilizing learners to work to the best of their ability so as to maintain the standards of their schools. For instance Sihle said:

As learner governors we air the learners' ideas, concerns, challenges and suggestions towards achieving the academic goals of the school. We work together with students both current and ex-students towards academic

excellence of our school. For example as student leaders we are tasked to call excelling and well up former students either in sport or academics to motivate us as students.

The same views were shared by FDSA 5 and FDSC 4. FDSB 5 maintained that:

If learners participate in SG it turns to improve the standards of the school and the results of our school. We learn what to priorities in life and we preach to our fellow learners that our mere presence here at school is to learn and be better people in life and this important in achieving results.

Therefore, this suggests that calling ex-students to be motivating speakers shows that RCL members are also concerned in shaping their schools through aiming at achieving the best results. This shows that learner governors are concerned about the pass rates of their schools as well. The same views were shared by Phaswana (2010) and Mncube (2008) that learner participation is associated with greater educational commitment, higher educational expectations, improved practical reasoning and promotion of democratic values and procedures.

The above benefits echoed by the RCL members show that participation of learners in SG is of great importance since it helps governors in holistically. Basically, it is important to note that the learners from both township schools and one ex model C school are in agreement that their presence in SG is of great importance. Consequently, I strongly feel that learner participation should be upheld in all schools, and learners should be given their place in promoting democracy in their respective schools.

RESPONSES AS EVIDENCE OF LEARNERS BEING CHALLENGED IN SG

The information from RCL governors interviewed shows that learners in governance do face challenges in participating in SG. The following responses reflected problems put forward by the RCL governors. These include lack of parental support, educator differences, language barrier, especially for School A and B, lack of skills, fear of intimidation by adult governors and poor timing of meetings. These were raised as common denominators for all the three participating schools.

Male respondents, mostly from school A and B, complained about lack of parental support in school governance as a hindrance to their effective participation in SG.

Leo, Charles, FDSA 1, FDSA 2 and FDSB 4 as well as female learners FDSA 5 and FDSB 6 all shared the view that parents do not adequately give them support in SG. For instance, Leo is of the opinion that:

We do not have support from parents, and we are sometimes excluded from attending some meetings. I think our parents being the majority in SGB should give us support so that we can be able to make meaningful contributions in SG.

FDSB 6, a female respondent justified this by saying:

Our parents because of their literacy levels are also found wanting in SG. The fact that they themselves cannot effectively contribute in meetings, gives them no option but to submit to whatever the principal and educators says. We are caught in this trap as well.

This is indicative that the failure by parents to take centre stage in meetings contributions, decision making and policy formulation leaves the learner governors with no one to support them. This ends up making them ineffective in SG because their illiterate parents cannot back them up. Mncube (2009) identifies sources of lack of participation as being related to the level of education of parents. If parents are illiterate, it is difficult to support learners in SG.

The other issue raised by the respondents was the issue of numbers. The respondents, both from the two township schools and former model C schools, expressed the challenge that there are only two governors compared to the majority parents and educator governors, and they serve for only one term in office compared to others who serve for three years. For example, FDSC 5, Sihle, FDSA 2 and FDSB 1 attested to this problem. Respondent FDSC 5 held the view that:

It is difficult to participate in meetings where the majority of governors are adults. It only needs courage to be able to do so. Also we are only two in meetings compared to the other many governors so I feel intimidated to openly and freely talk even though I know they consider our views.

This is a testimony to that fact that the learners are just two members out of the whole group. This has detrimental effects in as far as their participation is concerned

because even if there are issues that require the voting powers, they will be outdone by the other governors. These weaknesses pose a threat to effective learner participation because parents who are the majority in SG should be the pillar upon which RCL governors lean on. If parents support participation of learner governors, issues of exclusion in meetings and decision making in school activities will be a thing of the past unless otherwise.

Again, learners from school B were all in agreement on the souring relations among the teachers at their school. They raised the fact that the different camps at school use them as learner governors to fight their vendettas. They indicated that these camps try by all means to garner support from governors. They also complained that what the teachers are doing is wrong because they are not directly involved and benefit nothing from taking sides. Charles pointed out that:

It is boring being in the RCL as a governor because you find that bothishala habavhani and bayasisebenzisa thina as learners sibalungiselele inxakizabo and sitoyi-toyele bona because of their issues as learners singenaphi?

This talks to schools whereby teachers resort to mobilizing RCL governors to fight their battles that do not directly involve them. Making learners to be punching bags is unprofessional. Learner governors should be directly involved in matters that concern their welfare, academic success and other important issues that have a bearing on their education rather than being used to settle scores between educators.

Additionally, Susan, Maria, FDSA 1 and FDSB, 4 all from the two township schools, grieved that they lack of skills necessary for them to effectively participate in governance. This lack of skills was also echoed by Sihle and FDSC 4 from School C. For instance, Maria indicated that:

I do not know the procedure and protocols to follow in meetings...

This point out that lack of required and necessary skills and procedures to participate in SG is a challenge that emanates from lack of training of these governors. This is also worsened by the limited term of office that is one year in office compared to the other governors who reign for three years. This leaves them no time to be groomed to be effective enough to gain the necessary skills to govern. Mabasa and Thelmane

(2012) opine that in most cases, SGB members commence their duties before being trained, and this culminates in problems such as unfamiliarity with meeting procedures, difficulties in managing large volumes of paperwork, not knowing how to make contribution, not knowing the appropriate legislation, feeling of intimidation by the presence of elder members who seem knowledgeable and perceiving their roles as simply endorsing what others have already decided upon.

Besides, learner governors from school A and B also complained of the language issue as a threat to their participation in school governance. This was a general problem raised by Leo, Maria and Susan who feel that the principal and teachers sometimes switch from IsiXhosa to English as a way of silencing both the parent governors and the learners. Susan said:

I hate it when the debates are tense and the principal of the school switches off from our home language to English and he resorts to quoting policy documents I do not understand. I end up feeling out of place.

This indicates that the use of English as a medium in meetings, especially in township schools, is a challenge due to lack of proficiency in the language; principals capitalise on that to win the debates. Phaswana (2010) found that the use of English as a language of communication during meetings is one of the forms of excluding learner governors to effectively take part in SGB. Echoing the same sentiments is Mncube (2009) who remarked that the use of a foreign language makes it easy for the educated to argue their case, thus easily neglecting the learners and disadvantaging them.

Apart from the above-mentioned challenges respondents, from all the three schools A, B and C, queried the poor timing of meetings which excludes sometimes. This was reported by Rudo, FDSC 6, Sihle, Maria, Charles and Susan. Sihle noted that:

The only weakness I have experienced is that meetings are called during school time and overlaps the predetermined time.

The fact that some meetings overlap with class times is a challenge because the teachers are teaching and will not have time to compensate for us as governors. So in other words, poor timing of the meetings is a challenge that makes RCL governors not to participate freely because the other governors can attend, but they cannot

sacrifice their class times. The fact that the adult governors want to dictate the pace and reign over the governance process results in learner exclusion from meetings. Phaswana (2010), Steinmann (2013), Hystek (2001) confirm the exclusion of learner governors from meetings. Steinmann (2013) noted this as a politically motivated issue. He attested that power relations between governors and the adult governors' result in lack of collaboration in meetings, thus resulting in principals or management being apathetic about collaborating with RCL and tend to exclude the latter from SGB meetings. On the same footing, Phaswana (2010) protested that in some instances you find out that governors are excluded in SGB meetings, thus preventing them from participating in the day to day running of the school.

Last but not least, FDSB 2 came up with a totally different perspective as he blamed poor election of office bearers as a challenge. He said:

The weakness of learner participation is that if candidates are wrongly chosen to represent learners they will be docile in meetings and will do nothing in meetings, they will exist as scape-goats.

This probably is so in most instances where educators influences learners to vote for a certain learner whom they know will conform to whatever he or she is told. Such learners will tend to represent the educators and not the learners. Even if learners convey grievances to be taken up, they might reach the right ears but because of lack of proper participation by the learner governor, no action will be taken. Hence it is crucial to vote into office candidates on merit to enhance real and genuine learner participation in SG.

PERCEIVED WEAPONS USED BY ADULTS TO SILENCE LEARNER PARTICIPATION

Data gathered through interviews and FDG indicated that there various means used by adult governors (the principal, educators and parents) to silence learners in SG. Among others reported by the participants are: use of policy documents, use of language power (code switching), intimidation, African traditional concept of respect for elders, and the timing of meetings.

Respondents from school A and B stated that the principals of the schools are manipulative and capitalise on the use of policy documents and policies to zip up

their mouths, not only students but also the parent component. Male respondents were more vociferous on this issue. Leo, Charles, FDSA1, FDSA 3, FDSB 4, and FDSB 2 strongly felt that the use of policy documents as a weapon of silencing them is rampant in meetings. Leo had this say:

We are made useless, we are stifled and made to be bench warmers when in meetings the principal usually quotes from his books and after he did that even the parents keep quiet.

Female respondents: Susan, Maria and FDSA 6 concurred with the notion that their participation is made mere involvement because they are in the meetings as listeners because they do not have the knowledge of policy documents and assessment instructions. Maria asked:

How are we going to understand the policy documents? We never get a chance to see them, but are produced in meetings when it is convenient for the boss. This irritates me because I can see that even our parents are lost but will rather nod in agreement when the principal; is reading.

This may mean that the use of policy documents is a tool for destruction of a force that SASA legally recognises to be functional, but rather made dysfunctional by the principals who want to push their agenda. They do so by avoiding questioning and constructive debating in meetings. They, instead, capitalise on their level of competence and understanding of these books and as a result, win arguments, thus resulting in implementation of some dubious decisions or what they perceive as right without consent of the other less knowledgeable stakeholders.

In addition, the principal and educators make use of the language power as a weapon for silencing learners in SG, thus rendering them ineffective. This was most prevalent in schools A and B, where respondent Leo, FDSA2, Susan, FDSA 4, FDSB 3 and FDSB 5 spoke with one voice that educators use the Western language as a tool. Leo warned that:

The principal, mostly when the debate gets tense and hot and when he wants to win arguments and I can see that the parents are fuming and discontented about this behaviour. The principal after quoting the policies starts to speak in English, knowing for sure that some of us are not conversant and hardly

express ourselves well in George. The parents like us once he did that they keep quiet and he will easily go to the next item on the agenda.

Respondent FDSB5 agreed with Leo and said:

English is not our mother language and it is difficult, why is it that the principal speaks in English when he knows we are all Xhosa speakers in the meeting. He makes me feel out of place, he makes our lives difficult. Uzenza ungathi ngumulungu herrrr!!!!

This indicates that the use of English as a medium of communication in meetings makes RCL governors feel out of place, hence failing to contribute effectively to the deliberations of the meetings. The above governors concur with Mabovula (2009) who found out that learners find it easy to express themselves in their own mother language than in English. Again, Phaswana's (2010) study found that learner governors felt that often, teachers realise that most learners can be very articulate in local languages; this challenges their authority during meetings, and they would resort to use of English in SGB meetings. Therefore, it is crucial to take note of Mncube's (2008) recommendation that it is proper to include learners who have a good command of the English language to facilitate easy debating in SGB meetings.

This, however, was not the case in the former model C school where the parent governors are educated and professional people and learners are articulate in the language because they do English as home language. Sihle commented:

Our meetings are done in English to cater for the diverse cultures at our school. As a result we contribute well and communicate well with both parents and the educators.

In addition, male respondents FDSA 1, FDSA 3, FDSB 2, Leo and Charles from school A and B all felt that the elder governors intimidate them by insisting that they must focus on books and leave SG and school politics to adults.

It disheartened me when in a meeting I raised a motion and the principal openly said kanihoye incwadi zenu on top of his voice, he sounded very angry. I was making a genuine contribution about learners not being fed on sporting outings. This made me hate that man.

This is suggestive that learner governors are silenced through threats that they have to focus on their core duty of learning. This can mean that principals are the ones decampaigning against the gains of democracy in SG by instilling fear in learners not to freely raise their voices.

In addition, the African perception of respect is used as a tool to silence learner governors, especially in the two township schools: school A and B. All the respondents in school A and B shared this view that their participation is affected by notion that arguing with adults is seen as being disrespectful.

Respondent FDSA 1 claimed:

We are not allowed to contribute after an adult said something, and also arguing with adult governors is a thing not allowed at home. I grow up knowing that, I take orders, instructions and decision made by my parents at home so, likewise at school I do so.

Susan noted:

I believe in respect and the SGB meetings we have parents, teachers and the principal, we only talk when asked to do so

This is expressive that the African culture moulds minors in such a way that they listen and respect the voice of their parents; this way of socialisation has a bearing even in SGB meetings. Duku (2006) asserts that learners are expected to follow rules as opposed to the field of democratic school governance. The school governance terrain is a level terrain where mutual respect is a two way thing in meetings.

In contrast, respondents from school C, a former model C school argued differently against this tool of silencing learners. Rudo noted that:

Even though I don't feel comfortable being in debate with adults, we are and engage in debates and make contributions after adults.

This again may mean that former model C schools, because of the diverse level of education of the parents, have an SGB that believe in modern and Western democracy where by minors can debate freely with adults. The research feels this is a proper way of doing things because it gives room for proper growth of RCL in SG.

Furthermore, it is crucial to note that even though SASA advocates for learner participation in governance, some sections make learners ineffective. This was observed by governors from school C who indicated that the principal and TLO officer explained to them the reason why they do not have to be part of some meetings like finance meetings, appointment and drafting of contracts for educators and supporting staff. Sihle explained:

The principal and the TLO made it clear to us that in some meetings we will be excluded because the law says so. They mostly emphasises on meetings where monies of the schools are discussed.

This is suggestive that SASA, though it is meant to empower learners, does not do so in totality because it gives them room for participation in some matters and excludes them in some. That way, it works as a stumbling block to effective learner participation in SG. For instance, section 32(1) of SASA stipulates that learners may not contract on behalf of the school. Section 32 (2) notes that learners may not vote on resolutions of GB which imposes liabilities on third parties of the school. The White Paper (1995) coins it as inappropriate for learners to participate in decision making pertaining to contracts of performance of currently employed staff because of the legality of their contracts. This shows that learners' hands are cut off in some GB issues, and this paves way for only adult governors (parents, educators and the principal) to be liable for contracts signing and finances of the school. Therefore, the law acts as a weapon against effective learner participation in SG.

These weapons to silence the fruits of democracy should be wiped away to maintain and encourage learners, parents and teachers equal and active participation in SG. For this happen, there is need for an independent training from a neutral training board in policy documents, assessment instructions and adult recognition of learners as equals in SG. The modern way of doing things should take centre stage in SGB meetings rather than being blind folded, thus limiting learner potential in governance. Respect is paramount, but it should not be a factor to refuse RCL governors their legislated right to effectively function in SG of their schools.

EXPERIENCES OF RCL GOVERNORS IN SG

Participants had varied experiences in their different schools, with some having heart soothing experiences and some having frustrating and de-motivating experiences in as much as their participation was concerned.

The participants mostly from the township schools A and B signalled their dissatisfaction in them not being accorded time to speak after adults. This stifled their participation because they tend to fear raising their contributions on issues of importance. On this issue, the responses were fairly balanced on gender lines, with both male and female participants not happy the fact they cannot raise issues after adults have spoken. Leo, Maria, Charles, Susan, FDSA 3, FDSA 6 FDSB 5 and FDSB6 share the same view. Essentially, Leo expounds on this by saying:

I was so furious in one of the meetings when I raised my hand to give an opinion emeetingini. I was told that you cannot say something if an adult have suggested a view. I felt bad because that was not what we were told by the TLO with regards to our participation in SG. The TLO said that we are allowed to make contributions in meetings but the experience of that day made me lose interest in taking part in meetings and from that day on I make excuses for me not to be part of the SGB meetings. I fear the principal for what he did to me on that day.

In the same manner, female respondent FDSB 6 agreed:

Growing up in a Christian family that also values our cultural values and beliefs it's a taboo to argue with adults, as a result we tend to be submissive and listen to whatever they say. Respect is the pillar of our family.

This suggests that learners, as minors in meetings with adult governors, are by some African standards not allowed to raise a concern or query after an adult governor has said something even if there is need to challenge a view. This disheartens learner governors in their participation. For instance, the African culture tends to make learner governors docile when it comes to their participation in SG; this is based on the notion that children are supposed to respect adults. This makes learners to lose confidence to actively contribute in SG, thus giving adult governors a platform to dominate. Atinyelkin (2010, 167) claimed that: "...in traditional Ugandan culture,

children are brought to respect adults and those in authority. Questioning them or challenging them is not considered appropriate behaviour". These cultural issues compromise the gains of democracy that stipulate that learners should participate in governance with adult governors.

Moreover, the respondents from the two township schools A and B indicated that they do not feel comfortable to raise their voices because of fear of the principal. Mncube (2009) refers to this as fear of victimization. Susan noted that:

Our principal generally is a harsh person and he likes intimidating learners at school. In this one meeting I was asked to give a report on the sporting activities at school, I felt tongue tied because of the way the principal eyed at me.

This is expressive of the fact that it is difficult for learner governors to freely participate in a meeting where there are parents, teachers and the principal whom they, in a way, fear and respect.

In addition, respondents FDSA 2, FDSA5, FDSB 4, Charles and Maria indicated that in some meetings, debates become tense to an extent that they feel uncomfortable being part and parcel of the meetings, thus rendering them to be in meetings for window dressing purposes.

Maria added that:

It is frustrating to be in a meeting when there is heated debate that no one wants to listen to one another and in the end the principal rules all of them. It really pisses me off because it's not his school he bullied us as members in SGB meetings.

Concurring with this was Charles who maintained that:

The debates in SGB meetings when they go up among parents and teachers makes me feel out of place. As learners I do not usually enjoy it when the quarrels among elders of which sometimes we will be asked to go out of the meeting venue.

This is indicative that the flaring up of tempers makes RCL governors uncomfortable to be part of the debates. They are rather intimidated instead of being part of the decision making board, and this makes their presence not being felt.

This lack of freedom to express themselves due to African culture requirements of respect of elders also has a negative bearing on learner participation in SG. This is because learners have to be seen as good or disciplined children. When further probed, Charles vented out:

It frustrates me when some parents' decisions are taken as laymen's points. As a result you find that most debates you find out that it are the principal and the educators who are actively involved. It frustrates me because we are all supposed to be fully taking part in everything irrespective of our education status.

In light of the above sentiments, this shows that learners do not take part effectively in SGB meetings due to intimidation and fear of being labelled as disrespectful. Basically, if parents in SGB are silenced in participating, what more would one expect of the young governors? Obviously, they will just exist in principle but in reality, their voices are flattened by the voice of the principals in schools.

On the contrary, respondents from School C indicated that there are no frustrating instances that they have experienced. This is most likely because the other SGB components are educated professionals whom the principal cannot take as illiterate and semi-illiterate parents as is the case in township and rural schools. In the Western culture, which exists in their school, they can freely debate with adult governors. Sihle happily said:

In meetings when we attend we are treated as equals, therefore we are free to air out our views freely without fear.

On the same note, research from individual interviews, focus groups and documentary analysis indicated that the learners do value recognition and praise for their contributions. They feel impressed when they contribute and their points are taken into consideration. Praising learners basically motivates them to keep doing good work and work together with adults towards achievement of a common goal of academic excellence. This was echoed by the majority of respondents from across

the three schools. Female respondents appreciated this praise in SG. For instance, Maria noted that:

The most memorable experience was when I contributed in a meeting about giving learners an opportunity to take part in sports, a thing that was last done years back at school and this was implemented and agreed upon by all teachers, parents and the principal who gave me a hand shake. I felt valued and great. I relayed the idea to the other learners and was in full support of that

Susan added:

The memorable thing I have witnessed in the SGB was when I was tasked to be part of the fundraising team of the teacher I loved most. My role model. I did the task whole heartedly and we managed as the school to raise a lot of cash for the event and it went well. I was praised by the principal and the teachers for that.

Rudo justified the idea of praise for good work by saying:

I enjoy all my stay in SGB because at all times we are given an opportunity to take part in all issues at hand. This motivates me to be a learner representative. I also realized that whenever a learner governor speaks the parents' particular attention to whatever raised...

Male respondent Sihle, in the same line of argument, noted that:

My greatest moment was when he suggested that new kits be bought the so called black sporting disciplines, that are soccer and netball and that was done. This shows that learner governors need to be praised for good work and ideas that they bring into the decision making of their schools.

The above shows that praises from the teachers, principal, parents and fellow students on good work done by the governors motivates them to keep doing. This is so because generally, youngsters value praise and recognition. Interesting to note is the fact that most female participants do value praise a lot more than male respondents.

In contrast, Leo, FDSA 1, Charles FDSB 2 and FDSB 4 all from School A and B were adamant that there are no heart soothing experiences in school governances. Instead, Leo claimed that:

Besides the fact that me and my adult parent component we enjoy food and snacks during and after meetings there is nothing soothing. I cannot point to anything as being enjoyable in SG. I feel a lot more needs to be done to let our voices be heard. We need to be taken as equals with other members of the SGB.

This is an indication that even though other governors speak highly of praises, recognition, some governors feels that their ideas are not well received. A lot more needs to be done to ensure that there is equal treatment among all the SGB members. This is true of robust and vibrant males who want to see equality existing in governance.

4.2.2. RESEARCH QUESTION 3: On the basis of their participation, how can learners' participation be enhanced?

RESPONSES ON WHETHER THERE IS TRAINING OF LEARNER GBs

Responses from the individual respondents and focus group discussions indicated that the learners did get a once-off training session by the TLO upon election into office and thereafter, there were no follow up, ongoing training seminars given to them. The respondents from the three schools A, B and C indicated that they do not get training sessions to equip them with the relevant and necessary skills that will make them to effectively function in SGB. All the participants lodged their displeasure at the lack of capacity building. FDSA5, FDSA 6, FDSC 4, FDSB3, Charles and Leo unanimously pointed to the issue of a once-off training given at school level by the TLO and principal. To this regard Leo posited that:

I can say the department does not give us enough training at all because we only attended a workshop once at school the day we were elected to be office bearers. From then on we did not have any training. The marathon workshop was conducted by the TLO, the deputy head and the principal.

The same sentiments were shared by Susan and Rudo who blamed this lack of capacity building on the Department of Education. Susan stated that:

We do not have enough training from the DoE to equip us with the necessary skills to actively engage in the SGB meetings. We need to be trained to be actively and take part in the SGB.

This is suggestive of the fact that the RCL governors do not get training after being ordained into office from both the school and the Department of Education. This, therefore, makes them unable to actively take part in meeting procedures with adult governors and educators who are constantly called to attend sessions; further complicating this is the limited term of office that they have. Besides, it is important to note that training at school was done by the educators (whom they indicated they do not trust because some educators tend to transfer and compare their participation to the classroom performance). This makes the whole process to lose credibility because a number of respondents indicated that they do not trust their principals. The researcher is of the view that there is need for an independent, neutral panel of trainers to train RCL governors so that they will carry out their duties with confidence.

Furthermore, the participants, both individual respondents and FGDs, indicated that they also need training sessions to improve on issues like conflict management, decision making and vision formulation. FDSC 6, FGSA 1 and Sihle went on to give to clarity on the issues they felt they need training on. FDSC 6 is of the opinion that:

I think it is proper for the DoE to equip us with the skills on how to engage with parent governors and the teachers in meetings, in debates in SG. Some of our supposed duties need us to well verse with content before we execute them. For example the appointment of teachers, general stuff, and managing conflicts between learners, teachers and learners, teachers and parents.

This is understood to mean that there are some governance issues that learners are not familiar with which they need to be educated on. Examples of such pertain to terminology to enable them to formulate the school vision or to be involved in handling conflict related issues. The responses were almost uniform for all the participants from the township and former model C school; this is a clear indication that the DoE must train the learner governors. This shows that training sessions are

important for RCL governors to be actively involved. This is testimony that the Department of Education should have programmes meant to capacitate learners on how to effectively take part in school governance.

From the above statements, it is clear that the training of RCL governors is needed in both township and former model C schools. If training is not given to governors, their lack of skills becomes a hindrance because they need to be trained on issues such as finance handling, appointment of educators, selection and short listing, curriculum issues and so on. This will enable them to be at par with the other GBs in terms of knowledge and execution of their duties. Tsoketsi (2008) cited in Mncube and Mafora (2013) maintains that training must be provided for the SGB to enable them to function effectively. In agreement, Welgemoed (1998) in Mncube (2008) cited in Kamla-Raj (2013) identified the training of learners as key to successful implementation of democratic structures in a school in South Africa. Therefore, the fact that RCL members are elected to serve in the SGBs does not necessarily mean they know about the role of the SGB, hence Davies et al (2002); Traffard (2003); Davies and Kirkpatrick (2003) in Mncube cited in Kamla-Raj (2012) noted the importance of preparatory training in successful implementation of more democratic forms of school organization and governance.

RESPONSES ON RCL GOVERNORS WORKING IN COLLABORATION WITH ADULT GOVERNORS

Data gathered from data analysis as well as from individual and FGDs showed that it is crucial for learner governors to work in collaboration with adult counterparts, that is, educators and parents because it helps in information sharing, grooming, sharpening their debating skills, decision making skills as well as how to come up with the best decision for implementation at school. Data indicated that when RCL governors work together with their adult counterparts in SG, they share information on building and shaping the school in all aspects. However, some male respondents from the two township schools A and B felt otherwise. In support of collaboration, Maria's interpretation was that:

It is fair because the idea of sharing information is crucial in life. No one possesses the best ideas ... great things come through group effort and as far as I am concerned age is a number so as leaders of tomorrow we must be

able to air our views where adult governors participation. Therefore I say learner participation together with adults is key.

Sihle and FDSC 3 equally agree with Maria above. In the opinion of respondent FDSC 3:

As a way for us to grow it is important to learn what is right from our adult leaders. As young leaders we learn good things through interaction with our parents and teachers. This helps us to develop in totality.

This is expressive of the view that the interaction between or among RCL governors and adult governors is of great essence since it helps them to acquire necessary skills for them to be groomed into adult life. These skills will enhance and help them at school, society and in the work life as they grow; so, collaboration and sharing ideas should be encouraged at all costs. The department should inject cash for such seminars whereby both young and old are taught of such crucial aspects.

Apart from that, there are some learners who indicated that they have an interest to pursue studies in politics and, of course, take it as a career. Such respondents strongly believe that sharing the stage with adult governors is a confidence booster and gives them skills to express themselves when arguing with others. Respondents FDSA 4, FDSA 3, FDSB 2, FDSB 4 and Charles shared this view. For instance, Charles stated:

I aspire to pursue a career in Political Science so I can safely that mixing with adult governors' gives me a platform to sharpen my skills as a leader. I get to know what is good and what is wrong and why, this also give me courage to express myself.

This shows that the idea of adult governors working together with learners is crucial because once people work together, team spirit is built. Team work results in working towards the achievement of common goals at school. Sprague (2004) points out that team work is often imperative for organisational success. Through learning with adult governors, learners do gain wisdom in whatever they do. What is important is to set a platform where discussion and debates are constructive so as to nurture the young GBs into adult governors and paving their career path.

On the other hand, some respondents disputed the idea of collaboration with adult governors' reservations because they cited the issue of discomfort in working with adults. These were male governors from schools A and B. Respondents Leo, FDSA 1, FDSA3 and FDSB 3 view adults as suspects with regards to collaboration, working together and sharing ideas. Respondent FDSA1 alleged that:

Its fair, but I become uncomfortable being in discussions with adults and my teachers. What is important is that learner governors should be trained to interact with their senior adult governors. This is also because elders most of the time they dominate the meetings, leaving us to be bench warmers in the meetings.

This suggests that as long as the interaction between elders and young governors is guided by the African traditional view of respecting elders, the young governors will still be taken as inferiors, hence the need to adopt the Western culture of equal and fair participation in meetings and all spheres of life. Mabena (2002) acknowledges that various members of the SGB must work collaboratively with each other to achieve a common goal; they must participate in the activities of the school, which is the development of the school as a whole. Supporting her is Sterfointein (2010) who argues that this helps in sound school governance, democratic values and promotion of accountability by all stakeholders learners included. Commenting on collaboration, Phaswana (2010) remarked that collective decision making and joint action can enhance children's evolving capabilities and provide opportunities for children and develop social competence.

This shows that collaboration helps learners to develop holistically, socially, politically and academically. However, it is important to note that DoE (2003) in Duku (2006) gives a varied view to this regard. She noted that in principle, parents accepted learners as their partners in SG but imposed conditions on their participation. They expected learners to follow their (parents) rules as opposed to the rules of the field of a democratic SG. She further elaborated that they expected learners to behave in a manner befitting 'children' as defined by tradition and clearly showed irritation and frustration when learners reflected their subject positioning. This shows that even though there are attempts to make learners equal partners with adult governors, collaboration are often hindered by the African view of adult versus

minor interaction. This, therefore, makes learners to be ineffective in their participation in SG.

RESPONSES ON WAYS OF EQUIPPING RCL GOVERNORS

The data gathered through individual and FGDs indicated for the RCL governors to be effectively functional like other GBs, the following emerging ideas should be effected: there should be parental and educator support, training from DoE should be done more often, democratic principles, as enshrined in SASA, have to be respected, respect of individual views, orientation of governors and timing of meetings have to be improved.

Almost all the twenty four respondents subscribed to the notion that learner governors need to be trained in order for them to be able to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. For instance, Maria said that:

As learners we need to be adequately trained on the protocols and procedures of attending meetings and contributing in meetings...

In support, FDSC 2 noted that:

We must be given training and we must be allowed to be involved in all school activities including finances, recruitment of teachers and other staff....

As mentioned earlier on, this suggests that if learner governors are trained, they will be useful because they are made aware of the meeting procedures, how to construct the agenda for a meeting, how to engage in debates and how to absorb pressure when debates are tense. Mabena (2002) notes that for learners to be effective participants in school governance, all stakeholders need to be trained, that is, parents, educators and learners, so that they can have equal representation when it comes to all aspects of governance, including decision making.

Furthermore, respondents mainly from schools A and B indicated that for them to be effective, they need to be supported by both parents and teachers. These views were shared by Leo, FDSA 3, Charles, FDSB 1 and FDSB 2 - all male governors. Leo uttered that:

I think the school principal, teachers and parents should give us support to take part in SGB meetings. If such be the case we won't feel intimidated...

Male respondent FDSC1 from a former model C had this to say:

The School Management Team (SMT) must give us support for us to be able to do our duties. There must be open communication between us and the educators so that we don't feel intimidated to take part in SG.

This points out that the elder governors, instead of instilling fear in learner governors, should try and help nurture them to be bold when taking part in governance. As a support measure, the roles of the principals in SGB meetings must not be those of fiery figures but they must be accommodative to ensure that the values of democracy, as enshrined in SASA, are executed.

Female respondents Susan, FDSA 4, FDSB 6 and FDSC 6 agreed to the notion that the principals of the schools should be friendly for learner governors to be visible in meetings. Respondent FDSB 6 understands this to mean that:

The principal of the school should be approachable and allow a smooth flow communication between us as learners and adult governors.

This also helps the governors to respect one another, irrespective of age, gender or creed. The ideas should be taken for debate and if that occurs, learner governors will be effective leaders.

Likewise, when getting into office, the TLO and the principal should make the governors to go under rigorous training rather than merely assuming that they will learn as they go. The learners do need clarity on what they are supposed to do. This issue of orientation of RCL goes with the fact that the learners' term of office is limited, hence the respondents Rudo, FDSA 5, FDSB 2, Leo, Charles and FDSC 2 pointing to the fact that they need equal terms of office like the other GBs. For instance, Rudo suggested that:

I suggest that we should be given the same term of office as the other governors who reign for three years.

Respondent FDSB 2 equally added that:

I think it is important for our term of office to be the same as that of the other governors. Only one term of office is limited hence we get out of office before

we acquire relevant skills to effectively function unless you are lucky to be chosen in consecutive years.

This suggests that one term in office for RCL governors means that these learners will leave office without acquiring the required necessary skills. This result in them failing to execute their duties properly, especially considering that capacity building only exists in the utopian world for them.

4.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In conclusion, this chapter presented the study's findings obtained through individual interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. In this chapter, various opinions on various themes drawn from the main questions, as indicated in the introductory section chapter, were demonstrated. There were different perspectives and conceptions regarding learners' views regarding their participation in school governance. The learner governors voiced their views with regard to their participation in school governance. The majority of learners reported participation of learners in governance as of importance. However, they also indicated that there are problems hampering effective participation. Finally, they came up with strategies as to what can be done to enhance effective learner participation in governance.

The next chapter discusses the findings, recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter aims to summaries important findings of this study present the analysis and suggests directions for future studies.

The study aimed to find out the learners' views regarding their effective participation in school governance. The problem that inspired me to undertake the study was dealt with in Chapter 1. A review of related literature and the theoretical framework used to support the arguments of the study was done in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 focused on the research methodology, that is, the approach, the paradigm and the research design used. In this chapter, data collection methods, that is, semi structured interviews, FGD and document analysis were detailed. The sampling strategy, data site selection, the sample size and research participants were identified. In Chapter 4, data was tabled and discussed. To deduce meaning of what the participants said, data was analysed.

The following section discusses the summary of the findings that have emerged from this study.

5.1. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

This section presents a summary of the research findings which triggered certain emotions and patterns that emerged from the RCL governors and class representatives. These findings confirm findings by various researchers on the area of study (Magadla, 2007; Mabovula, 2009; Duku, 2006; Mncube, 2009; Mafora, 2013; Mncube & Harber, 2013; Kumalo, 2011 & Phaswana, 2010). Their studies revealed that learners' voices are not heard in SGB because they are regarded as minors, they are not given the platform to air their views, and they are not well-versed with meeting procedures due to lack of training among others.

5.1.1 Summary of chapter 1

This chapter introduced the reader to the background of the study. This is the introductory chapter that identified the gap in the literature on how RCL learners effectively participate in SG. This is the chapter that forms the foundation of what is to be expected in the entire study. The problem statement outlines that learners participation is crucial and that it is crucial to hear the voices of learners themselves rather than relying on parents' and educators' voices on how learners participate in

SG. This is the reason that this study chose to give learners a platform to raise their collective voice on the effectiveness of their participation in SG.

5.1.2. Summary of chapter 2

This chapter gives a detailed discussion of the literature used. Learner participation was conceptualised, and the roles of learners in school governances were outlined. A detailed explanation of the theoretical framework used was given, namely: Wilcox's (1994) ladder of participation that comprises five rungs namely: information, consultation, deciding together, acting together and supporting independent community interests.

Furthermore, the challenges faced by learner governors in school governance were given, and these include lack of skills, language barrier, lack of parental support and exclusion from some meetings. The ways of equipping learner governors to be actively involved were given, and these include having adequate training, support from adults, developing trust through collaboration, just to mention a few. This explains the study's exploration of how learners effectively participate in school governance.

5.1.3. Summary of chapter 3

In this chapter a detailed account of the research methodological framework considered the best in this study was discussed. The qualitative approach was used in the study and an interpretive paradigm was also used. Data was collected from twenty four (24) participants through the use of semi structured individual interviews and FGDs and document analysis. Convenience sampling was used for the two township schools, and snowballing was used for one former model C school. The researcher resorted to note-making and phone recording; thereafter, data was transcribed into themes.

Ethical issues were also considered, hence use of pseudo names for the participants and the data sites. Letters of consent were written to parents to seek consent for their children to take part in the study. Permission was also sought from the Research Ethics at UFH and from the DoE.

5.1.4 Summary of chapter 4

This chapter presented and discussed the study's findings or data. It made connections between the study's findings and the existing body of literature on learner participation in school governance. The profiles of the data sites and the participants were presented. Thereafter, data was analysed based on the emerging themes from the research questions. The themes answered the research questions.

The next section deals with the findings from the literature.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the data findings based on the research questions.

5.2.1. What are the underlying assumptions regarding learner participation in SG?

Research indicated that learner participation is important and yields positive results (Mncube, 2009; Mabobula, 2009; Phaswana, 2010; Mncube & Harber, 2013). However, learners are not accorded space to participate maximally in SG. This study found that:

- ❖ The majority of learners gave varied responses including not being taken seriously and being overshadowed by adult governors. The responses varied between township schools and the former model C school to this regard, as explained below.
- ❖ Results indicated that learners do participate in SG, but the degree of participation differed between township schools and the former model C school.

It was evident that there is pseudo learner participation in township schools as indicated by the responses showing that learners were not taken seriously with regards to their contributions in SG. This was most pronounced by male governors from the two township schools under study. Support of them not taken seriously was mentioned as: exclusion from meetings and not being part of agenda formulation. However, respondents from the former model C school indicated that they are taken seriously because they constantly get feedback on the school proceedings. They indicated that the principal and TLO constantly call meetings to brief them. These governors also pointed out that they felt encouraged to work towards maintaining their school.

This is different from township schools where learners tend to be window dressers instead of being real participants in SG.

- ❖ Results indicated that the gains of democracy brought about SASA 1996 are not felt with regards to RCL participation in SG. This because the presence of learner governors is overshadowed by the presence of adult governors. This stifles active learner participation in governance since tradition forces them to respect and not to argue with adults.
- ❖ It was evident from the interviews and documents analysed that even though learners take part in SG, in most cases, they do so with limited knowledge of what they are expected to do. That was due to lack of skills to actively interpret policies and documents. This is further worsened by exclusion of learners from agenda formulation and exclusion from some meetings dealing with finances and drafting of contracts for school educators and other workers.
- ❖ The participants blamed the principals as rendering them ineffective in decision making. This was more evident in township schools where respondents indicated that the principals dominate and oversee everything with regards to the functionality of the three pillars of governance. It was also found out that they stifle learner participation in SG. They do so through instilling fear and intimidating learners, thus creating docile participants who cannot raise their voices. Learners, therefore, exist in SG in principle but in reality, they are toothless barking dogs.

5.2.2. What factors affect their participation in SG?

- ✓ Data collected through interviews indicate that learner participation is of significance. Maile, in Xaba (2004), said that RCL governors are there to help educators run the school smoothly since they determine policy and rules by which a school is organized and controlled; this includes rules and policies being carried out effectively. Learners help in building the well-being of the school, thereby cementing relations between parents, teachers and learners. Learners also gain adult life experience, are able to maintain discipline, and achieve academic excellence, among others. Phaswana (2010) and Mncube (2008) share the same view that participation is associated with greater

education commitment, higher education expectations, improved practical reasoning and promotion of democratic values and procedures.

- ✓ Data revealed that the majority of learners expressed the fact that they do face challenges in SG. The following were some of the challenges identified by the participants: lack of parental support, lack of skills and poor timing of meetings, exclusion from some meetings, language barriers, and educator differences.
- ✓ It was evident from the data, mainly from female respondents, that learners value praise as a motivating factor for them to keep going in SG. Learners value their participation if their ideas are implemented in their schools. However, some male respondents indicated otherwise; they said they were not happy because their contributions are rarely recognized.

5.2.3. On the basis of their responses, how can learners' views be enhanced?

- Responses from almost all the participants indicated that learner governors lack capacity to govern. The participants indicated that they have a once off training session. These sessions do not do much to familiarize the learners to effectively participate in SG. Mncube and Mafora (2008), cited in Kamla-Raj (2013), identified the training of learners as important to the successful implementation of democratic structures in a school in School Africa.
- Data from the respondents showed that there are great benefits derived from learners working with adult governors. Working with adult governors was found to help in building the school in all respects. It also helps them to acquire the necessary skills in preparation for adult life. Phaswana (2010) notes that collective decision making and joint action can enhance learners' evolving capacity and provide opportunities for them to develop social competencies. Mabena (2002) pointed out that various members of the SGB should work collaboratively with each other to achieve a common goal; learners must participate in the activities of the school, namely, the development of the school as a whole.
- Evidence from the study indicated that RCL governors need educator and parental support; training from DoE should be done more often and the timing of meetings should be flexible to accommodate learner governors.

5.3. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

This chapter demonstrated different views of research participants on the various themes drawn from the research questions, as indicated in the introductory section of this chapter. The study made a contribution to the growing body of knowledge of education management and governance. Participants' views regarding learner participation in SG were analysed. Learners voiced their views on their participation in SG, challenges and suggested some ways of improving and enhancing effective participation in SG. The majority of learner governors indicated the importance of learner governors in SG, irrespective of the challenges they face. As such, it is important that the DoE and other stakeholders have seminars and workshops to capacitate RCL for learner participation in SG to be effective.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

For learner participation to be effective and for the gains of SASA to be realized with regards to learner participation in SG, it is important that learners are treated like other stakeholders in governance. It was realised that learner governors fail to perform their roles effectively, as reported by the participants in this study hence the following recommendations:

-  The learners should get a once off training session at school level, but since it is done by the TLO and the principal, elements of mistrust do exist. Therefore, this study suggests that learners attend seminars or workshops during weekends or school holidays to capacitate them in their participation in SG. The workshops should also give learners pamphlets or books written in their mother language for them to easily comprehend. This will boost their confidence with regard to their participation. The training should be done by an independent panel to counter mistrust and boost learners' confidence levels.
-  The principals of schools, even though they are accounting officers in many school aspects, should give RCL governors room and platform to freely

participate in SG. They should not intimidate learners; instead they should treat learner governors as equals.

- ✚ Learner governors should be treated as equals to be at par with the rest of the governors that is parents and educators. They should not be overshadowed by the African traditional culture. By African standards, minors are supposed to respect adults; as such, they cannot argue with them or speak after an adult has spoken. Hence, a level \$play field is required for learners to freely voice their concern in meetings where they engage with adult governors.
- ✚ Learner governors need to be supported by parents, educators, other stakeholders and the DoE. If supported, this makes them to gain confidence to actively take part in the day-to-day running of the school.
- ✚ For learner governors to effectively fulfill their roles, it is important to encourage dialogue in meetings to ensure that learners contribute to the decision making of their schools.
- ✚ In addition, a fair and balanced representation should be encouraged in SGB instead of making adults constitute 51%, with only two learners. This study suggests that more learners should sit in the SGB. This has an advantage of boosting their confidence.
- ✚ Learners should not be excluded from some meetings, especially those to do with school finances and signing of contracts of educators and supporting staff. The sections in SASA dealing with these should be revisited.
- ✚ Last but not least, this study recommends that the term of office for learner governors should be similar to that of other governors. This will give learners more time to get used to the demands of SGB rather limiting their term of office to only one year, whereas others get three years in office.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Follow up studies need to be conducted to contribute to the empowerment of learner governors in SG. It appears that if RCL governors are better equipped and trained, their roles in SG will be substantial. They will be able to raise their voices instead of existing as window dressers. Further research should be done on the perceived weapons used to silence learner participation in school governance.

Likewise, research of a similar kind could analyse stakeholders' views regarding capacity building (training) of SGB programmes.

REFERENCES

- Arnstein Sherry, R.A. (1969). Ladder participation. *Journal of the America Planning Association*, 35(4): 216-224.
- Arthur, J. & Cremin, H. (eds). (2012). *Debates in Citizenship Education*. USA: Routledge.
- Babbi, E. & Mouton, J. (2013). *The practice of research*. Cape Town: ABC Press.
- Babbie, E. (2008). *The basics of social research* (4th Ed). Cape Town: ABC Press.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2012). *The practice of research*: Cape Town: ABC Press.
- Backman, E. & Trafford, B. (2006). *Democratic governance of schools*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Bragg, S. (2007b). Student voice and govern mentality: The production of enterprising subjects? *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of Education*, 28: 343- 358.
- Briggs, A.R.J. & Coleman, M. (2007). *Research methods in educational leadership and management*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Buhere, K. (2008). *Boarding Schools not the cause of riots' Daily Nation*. Nairobi: Nation Media.
- Burns, N. & Grove, S.K. (2009). *The practice of nursing research: appraisal, synthesis and generation of evidence* (6th ed.). St Louis: Saunders Elsevier.
- Brown, B. & Duku, N. (2007). Parents' participation in school governance in South Africa social identities and policy implications, *Journal of Educational Studies*, 6 (2): 139-178.
- Brown, B. & Duku, N. (2008). Negotiated Identities: dynamics in parent participation in school governance in rural Eastern Cape schools and Implication school leadership. *South African Journal of Education*, 28 (3): 431-450.
- Buhler, U. (2001). *Participation 'with justice and dignity: Beyond the new tyranny'*. United Kingdom: University of Bradford.
- Bush, T. & Heystek, J. (2003). School governance in the new South Africa. *Compare*, 33 (2): 127-138.
- Carr, I. (2005). *From policy to praxis: a study of the implementation of representative council learners in the Western Cape, from 1997 to 2003*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis: University of the Western Cape.

- Carrim, N. & Tshoane, N. (2000). The holy state? Values, legitimatisation and ideological closure in South Africa education. *Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa* 7.12-29.
- Carter, C, Harber, C. & Serf, J. (2003). *Towards Ubuntu: Critical teacher education for democratic citizenship in South Africa*. Birmingham: Development Education Centre.
- Chaka, T. (2008). School governance: Issues in education policy series. Braamfontein: Center for Educational policy development.
- Chiwela, G.M. (2010). Participatory school governance: Children in decision making in the Zambian context. In Cox, S., Robinson-Paint, A., Dyer, C. & Scheweisfurth, M. (eds). *Children as decision makers in education*. London: Continuum: 59-68.
- Cockburn, D. (2006). Mapping student involvement. Paper presented at the Sparqs Conference on Student Involvement. *Lauder College: Dunfermline*.
- Cornwall, A. (2008). Unpacking 'Participation': models, meanings and practices. Oxford University Press. *Community Development Journal*. 43(3) p 269-283
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design. Qualitative and Quantitative and Mixed Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.
- Denzin N.K. & Lincon, Y.S. (2011). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* (4th ed). London: Sage.
- Des Vos A.S., Strydom, H, Fouche, C.B. & Delport, C. (2013). *Research at Grassroots: For the social science and Human services professions* (5th ed). Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Descombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide for small scale social research projects*. (3rd ed.). Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.
- DoE (Department of Education). (1999). *Guides for representative councils of learners*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Duku, N. (2006). *The exploration of parent's negotiation of their identities in school governance participation in six selected villages*, unpublished thesis: University of Cape Town.

- Duku, N. & Mavuso, M.P. (2009). *Participation of Parents in school Governance: A case study of two Eastern Cape schools: A view from Below. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5 (3).
- Duma, M.A. (2010). Silent leadership: Educators' perceptions on the role of student leaderships in the governance of rural secondary school. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(4).
- Durreheim, K. & Terre Blanche.M. (2006).History of present: Social science research in context in Terre Blanche, M. Durreheim, K. and Painter, K. *Research 1: Practice*. (p. 217). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press (Pty) Ltd.
- Ezeanyika, E.S. (2011). Can Western democracy models be institutionalised in Africa? Reviewing contemporary problems and prospects. *Ufahamu*, 36(2).
- Fayemi, A.K. (2009).Towards an African Theory of Democracy: Thought and Practice. *A Journal of Philosophical Association of Kenya (PAK)*.Premier issue, New Series, 1(10).101-126.Retrieved 1 August 2011.
- Fischer, F. (2005). *Reframing public policy: Discursive policy and deliberate practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fletcher, A.(2003). Meaningful student involvement: a guide to inclusive change. olympyia
- Friedman, C.P., Wong, A.K. & Bluemethal, D. (2010). *Achieving a National Learning Health System (Unknown)*
- Gray, D.E. (2009). *Doing research in the real world*. London: SAGE
- Hannam, D. (2003). *A pilot study to evaluate the impact of student participation. Aspects of citizenship order on standards of education in secondary schools*. London:CSV.
- Harwood, N. (2006). An interview based study of the functions of citations in academic writing across two disciplines. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(3), 497-518.
- Heystek, J. (2004). School governing bodies: The principal's burden or light of his /her life? *South Africa Journal of Education*, 24(4): 308-312.
- Huddleston, T. (2007).From student voice to shared responsibility: Effective practice in democratic school governance in European schools. London: Citizenship Foundation.
- Jamson, J. (2007). *Bridging the gap with teamwork: Collaboration leadership for communities of practice in the lifelong learning sector*. Paper presented at the British

Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, 3-6 September 2008.

Jourbert, R. & Bray, E. (eds). (2007). *Public school governance in South Africa*. Pretoria: CELP.

Jourber, R. & Squelch, J. (2005). *Learner discipline in schools* (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Center for Education Law and Policy.

Jeruto, T.B. & Kiprop, C.J. (2012). Decision making in schools in Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, 1(21). P92.

Kamla-Raj (2014). School governance, finance management, and learners' classroom needs: Perspectives of primary school teachers. University of Kwazulu Natal: *International Journal of Education*, 7(3), 465-470.

Kamuhanda, B. (2006). *Student power in Africa's higher education: A case of Makerere University*. Kampala: CRC Publishers.

Kumalo, X.S. (2011). The benefits of student participation in transformation and university governance strategy. Available at www.saassap.co.za/.../kumalo%20the%20benefits%for%20student%20pa...Accessed 16 October 2015.

Kumalo, J. & Mestry, R. (2012). Governing bodies and learner discipline: managing rural schools in South Africa through a code of conduct. *SA Journal of Education*. Vol 32(1).

Leady, P.D. & Omrod, J.E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning and design* (8th Ed). New Jersey: Pearson Education International.

Leedy, P.P. & Omrod, J.E. (2013). *Practical Research; Planning and Design* (10th ed). New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

Lemmer, E. & van Wyk, N. (2004). Schools reaching out: Comprehensive parent involvement in South African primary schools. *Educational Review*, 1(2). 2004.p 259-278

Mabena, T. (2002). *Learner involvement in school governance as an aspect of school management: implication for whole school development*. Master's thesis. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

Mabasa, T. & Themane, J. (2002). Stakeholder participation in the school governance in schools. *Perspectives in education*. 20:111-116

- Mabovula, N. (2009). Giving voice to the voiceless through deliberate democratic school governance. *South African Journal of Education*, 19:219-233.
- Maeshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rded) London: SAGE.
- Mafora, P. (2013). Learners' and teachers' perceptions of principals in Soweto secondary schools: A social justice analysis. *SA Journal of Education*, Vol 33(3).
- Magadla, M. (2007). *The role of the learner in school governing body: Perceptions and experiences of principals, educators, parents and learners*. Unpublished Med Thesis: University of Kwazulu–Natal.
- Mager, U. & Nowak, P. (2012). *Effects of student participation in decision making at school*. A systematic review and synthesis of empirical research. *Educational Research Review*, 738-61.
- Mahlangu, R. (2008). The effective functioning of School Governing Body: A case study in selected schools. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Maree, K. (2007). *First step in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mckenzie, N. & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, 16.
- McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in Education: Evidence based Inquiry* (6thed.). USA: Pearson.
- McPherson, G. (2000). *Governance in Public Schools: Four case studies of Education Monitor*, 11:1-8.
- Mncube, V.S. (2007). Perceptions of the principals' role in the democratic governance in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, 20(3): 111-116.
- Mncube, V.S. & Harber, C. (2010). Chronicling educator practices and experiences in the context of democratic schooling and quality education. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30:614-624.
- Mncube, V.S. & Harber, C. (2013). Learners' democratic involvement in school governing bodies in South Africa: Making the voice of the voiceless heard. *SA-Educ Journal*, 10(1).
- Mncube, V.S. & Naicker, I. (2011). School governing bodies and the promotion of democracy: a reality or pipe dream? *Journal of Educational Studies*, 10(1): 142-161

- Mncube, V.S. (2005). *School Governance in the Democratization of Education in South Africa: the interplay between Policy and Practice*. PhD Thesis, unpublished University of Birmingham.
- Mncube, V.S. (2008). Democratization of education in South Africa: issues of social justice and the voice of learners. *South African Journal of Education*, 28: 77-90.
- Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. London: Oxford.
- Motimele, M. (2005). *School Governing Bodies*. Wits, Johannesburg: Education Rights Projects.
- Naidoo, J.P. (2006). *Educational decentralization and school governance in South Africa*. IIEP.UNESCO.
- Ngidi, D.P. (2004). Educators' on the Efficiency of School Governing Bodies. *South African Journal of Education*, 24: 260-263.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques in Maree (ed) *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Nongubo, M. (2004). *An investigation into perceptions of learner participation in the governance of secondary schools*. Unpublished Master's dissertation, Rhodes - University: Grahamstown.
- Nyerere, J. (1997). *Reflections, in Haroub Othman - Reflections on Leadership in Africa: Forty years after independence*. VUB: University Press.
- O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London: SAGE.
- Okeke, C.& van Wyk, M. (ed). (2015). *Educational Research: An African approach*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Oosthuizen, I.J. (2003). *Aspects of Educational Law*. Pretoria: van Schaik.
- Pendlebury, S. (2010/11). *Children as Citizens: Participating in social dialogue*. South African Child Gauge; Children's institute: university of Cape Town
- Oxfam/Emergency Capacity Building Project. (2007). *The good enough guide: Impact measurement and accountability in emergencies*. <http://ecbproject.org/publications-2.htm>
- Phaswana, E.D. (2008). *Youth participation: The influence of approaches and settings on youth's experiences in South Africa*. Unpublished PhD thesis. London, South Bank University.
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). *The South African schools Act 84 of 1994*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Raburu, A.P.(2015).Motivation of women academics and balancing family and career. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 5(1).

Ramfol, A. (2011).*School governing bodies: A survey of perceptions of members and principals in selected schools in Chartsworth District*. Durban. Tshwane University of Technology.

Rubin, H.J. (2005). *Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Sayed, Y. & Soudien, C. (2005).Decentralisation and the construction of inclusion education policy in South Africa.*Compare*, 35:115-125.

Shank, G. & Villiella, O. (2004).Building new foundations. Core principles and new directions for qualitative research. *Journal of Educational Research*, 98(1): 46-55.

Schmidit, N.A. & Brown,J.M.(eds) (2009). *Evidence based practice for nurses: appraisal and application of research*. New York: Jones and Barlett.

Sinclair, M.J. (2001). Concise dictionary. Glasglow, Harper Collins Publishers

Sithole, S. (1995).*The participation of students in democratic school governance: Democratic governance of public schooling in South Africa*. Durban: The Education Policy Unit.

Smit, M.H. & Oosthuizen, I. (2011).*Improving school governance through participative democracy and the law*, *South African Journal of Education*, 31: 55-73.

Steinmann (2010).An investigation of factors affecting student participation. 09,Issue 2

Sushila, P. & Bakhda, M. (2006).*Management and evaluation of schools*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, P.C. & Medina, M.N (2013).Educational Research Paradigms: From Positivism to Multi-paradigmatic. *Institute for meaning centred Education*. 1(3), 1-16.

Trafford, B. (2003).*School council: School democracy and school improvement*. Leicester: SHA.

Trepper, T.S. & Franklin, C.(2012).The future of research in solution-Focused Brief therapy in Cynthia Franklin, Terry S.Trepper, Wallace,J, Gingerich, &Eric E. McCollum (eds). *Solution Focused brief therapy: A handbook of evidence –based practice*. New York: Oxford University Press

- Tsoketsi, S., Van Wyk, E. & Lemmer, E. (2008). The experience of and need for training of school governors in rural schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 28: 385-400.
- Turesky, E.F., Cloutier, S.K. & Turesky, M.F. (2011). Feminine paths to leadership in Italy. *Perceptions of female in a masculine society*, 26(15), 10-35.
- Van Wyk, N. (1998). Organization and governance in Education in South Africa. In Pretorius, F. & Lemmer, E. (Eds). *South Africa education Training: Transition in a Democratic era*. Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Van Wyk, N. (2004). School governing bodies. The experience of South African Educators. *South Africa Journal of Education*. Vol.24 (1), pp. 4.
- Welgemoed, A. (1998). Democratising a school in South Africa. In Harber, C. (Ed). *Voices for Democracy: A North-South dialogue on education for sustainable democracy*. Nottingham: Education Now, in association with the British Council.
- Wilcox, D. (1994). *The guide to effective participation*. UK: Partnership Books. www.partnership.uk.guide/index.
- Wilkes, J. (2010). Child-friendly cities: A place for active citizenship in geographical and environmental education. *International Research in Geographical and environmental Education*. 19 (1), 25-38
- Willis, J.W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.
- Wilson, L. (2009). Pupil participation: Comments from a case study. *Health Education*, 109:86-102
- Xaba, M.I. (2004). Governors or watchdogs. 'The role of educators in the schooling bodies. *South African Journal of Education*. Vol 24(4)
- Xaba, M.I. (2011). The possible causes of school governance in South Africa. *Journal of Education*, 31:201-211.
- Zainal, Z. (2007). Case study as a research method: *Jurnal Kemanusiaan* 9.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INDIVIDUAL/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDETERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS

OPENING

Good morning. I am Munikwa Julius, a Master of Education student at UFH. As indicated earlier on I am conducting this study as part of my Master of Education degree in which I seek to understand the learners' views regarding their effective participation in school governance. Feel free to respond to my questions and let me know in instances where the question is not clear.

STUDY GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	PROMPTS, PROBES, CLARIFYING QUESTIONS
What are the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation in SG?	➤ To begin with, how serious is the issue of learner participation in your school? ➤ What are the roles of learner governors in SG? ➤ Does SASA adequately cater for learner participation in school governance? ➤ Do you view the roles of learner participation in your school as of importance? ➤ Who determines decision making in the SGB meetings ➤ Who constitutes the attendants of the SGB meetings? Is this attendance justified?	➤ How do learners participate in the day to day running of schools? ➤ Do they effectively execute these roles? ➤ How justified is the participation of learners in school governance? ➤ What are the shortfalls of the law in as far as participation of learners is concerned? ➤ Are learners accorded enough time to express their views? ➤ Is the composition of the SGB fairly distributed in your view?

	➤ Explain the attendance rate of meetings.	➤ What interactions have you had with parents, teachers and SMT in school governance?
What factors affect their participation in school governance?	➤ What are the strengths of learner participation in SG ➤ What are the weaknesses of learner participation in SG? ➤ Is the participation of learners in school governance positive or negative? Why? ➤ What, in your view are the heart soothing experience in SG? ➤ What are the frustrating experiences in serving in the SGB?	➤ Does learner participation contribute to school development? ➤ What are the challenges facing learner governors in SG? ➤ Justify your views with regards to how you view things. ➤ Explain why the experience was enjoyable. ➤ Give detail as to why you say so.
On the basis of their view, how can learners' views be enhanced?	➤ Do learner governors get adequate training from the DoE? ➤ Is it fair for learner governors to mediate in issues concerning adults' governor stakeholders? ➤ How is your participation silenced in SG? ➤ How would learner governors be involved in decision making, conflict management and vision formulation of their schools? ➤ What do you suggest the schools do to equip learners to be effective participants?	➤ How often do you get training to carry your duties in SGB? ➤ What skills are required when learner governors are dealing with adults stakeholders? ➤ What skills are required for you to take part in school decision making, vision formulation etc? ➤ What do you think SASA should do to encourage accommodative and shared stakeholder participation as equals?

CONCLUSION

I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else about the learners' participation in school governance in schools that you may want to shade light to?

Thank you very much for your time. We have come to the end of the interview. If I have any follow up issues I will be in contact with you.

APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT LETTERS

7 Prestwich Place

Gala Mews, Haven Hills

East London

5247

07 October 2015

Dear Sir (EDO)

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SELECTED SCHOOLS IN EAST LONDON DISTRICT

I am a registered M.Ed student at the University of Fort Hare. My student number is 201106593

The purpose of my study is to examine the learners' views with regards to their effective participation in school governance.

I will be grateful if you can allow me to conduct research in the selected schools that are in your district. The research participants would be learners in SGB and GET and FET class representatives.

Should you have any concerns about the study please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Prof N. Duku on 043 704 7222. Confidentiality with regards to data collected will be highly observed. Thanks in anticipation

Yours faithfully

Munikwa Julius 0738433784

7 Prestwich Place
Gala Mews, Haven Hills
East London
5247

07 October 2015

Dear Parent

RE: REQUEST TO INVOLVE YOUR CHILD AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a registered M.Ed student at the University of Fort Hare and my student number is 201106593.

The purpose of my study is to examine the learners' views with regards to their effective participation in school governance.

I will be grateful if you can allow me to conduct research in the selected schools that are in your district. The research participants would be learners in SGB and GET and FET class representatives.

Should you have any concerns about the study please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Prof N. Duku on 043 704 7222. Confidentiality with regards to data collected will be highly observed. Thanks in anticipation

Yours faithfully

Munikwa Julius 0738433784

7 Prestwich Place

Gala Mews

Haven hills

East London

5247

07 October 2015

The Principal

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a registered M.Ed. student at the University of Fort Hare and my student number is 201106593.

The purpose of my study is to examine the learners' views regarding their participation in school governance.

I will be grateful if you can allow me to conduct research in the selected schools that are in your district. The research participants would be learners in SGB and GET and FET class representatives.

Should you have any concerns about the study please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Prof N. Duku on 043 704 7222. Confidentiality with regards to data collected will be highly observed. Thanks in anticipation

Yours faithfully

Munikwa Julius 0738433784

APPENDIX 3: APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE: HUMANS

JULIUS MUNIKWA



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE: HUMANS

Please indicate (x)

New application	x
Re-submission	
Renewal application	

SECTION 1: DETAILS OF APPLICANT/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Name: JULIUS	Surname: MUNIKWA	Professional Status: EDUCATOR
University Division / Faculty and Department: EDUCATION		
Complete Postal Address: 2 TRAFALGAR ROAD CAMBRIDGE EAST LONDON 5201		
Telephone No: N/A	Fax No: N/A	Cell No: 0738433784
E-mail: <u>juliemunikwa@gmail.com</u>		
SECTION 2: TITLE OF STUDY		
Title of Research Project:		
LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL		

GOVERNANCE		
Sponsor's Protocol No (if applicable) N/A		
Sponsor's Details (if applicable) N/A		
SECTION 3: STUDY FOR DEGREE PURPOSES	Not applicable	
Name of Degree: Master of Education	Supervisor: Professor N.S Duku	
Division/Department: EDUCATION	E-mail: <u>nduku@ufh.ac.za</u>	
Contact No: 0722600656		

SECTION 4: DETAILS OF SUB-INVESTIGATORS		
Name and Title	Position	Division/Department
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
SECTION 5: DETAILS OF COLLABORATING INVESTIGATORS		
Name and Title	Position	Division/Department
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

SECTION 6: WHERE WILL THE STUDY BE CONDUCTED?			
1. East London			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
SECTION 7: STUDY TYPE			
1. Industry Sponsored		2. Self Initiated	
3. Retrospective Record Review		4. Laboratory-Based Research	
5. Qualitative Research	X	6. Prospective Descriptive Study	
7. Other		8. Please state type if 'Other':	
SECTION 8: HOW IS THIS RESEARCH FUNDED? STATE APROXIMATE TOTAL BUDGET			
1. Industry	R	2. NIH	R
3. Internal/Self	R 16 000	4. Other/ US Fed Agency	R
5. External SA Grant	R	6. Internat. Grant	R
SECTION 9: SIGNING OF APPLICATION			
Applicant: Supervisor: *Departmental Head: * Or the Dean of the Faculty or the Chairperson of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee			

The following obligatory documentation must be attached to this application form:

PROTOCOL SUMMARY / SYNOPSIS (Obligatory)

Please provide a protocol synopsis or summary of the proposed research, **in addition to the full Protocol**, that is between **800 and 1 000 words** long. The Protocol Synopsis or summary should contain the following:

- **Title:** LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING TO THEIR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

- **A short introduction, motivation and literature overview (1 paragraph only)**

The participation of learners in school is paramount since they are part of the other stakeholders who compliment the work of parents, teachers and the community at large in school governance. SASA of 1996 recognised the participation of learner governors in SG and this was legislated. The issue of learner participation is a world wide phenomenon that doesnot only happenin South Africa but the rest of the world as already pointed out in the proposal. Learner participation in school governance improves the quality of education and alsoinfluences decision making in schools. It also enhances the children's evolving capacities and provides opportunities for children to develop competence, independence and shared responsibility. There are a number of challenges faced by learner governors in SG including among others lack of capacity, training, short term in office, language barrier, issues of adult respect. Though being the case leraners need empowerment to actively and effectively participate in SG. Wilcox's 1994 ladder of participation is going to used in this study.

- **Research question or hypothesis**

What are the learners' views regarding their participation in school governance?

What are the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation in school governance?

What factors affect their participation in school governance?

On the basis of their views, how can learner participation be enhanced?

- **Aims and Objectives**

To examine the views of learners in relation to their effective participation in school governance.

To identify the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of learner participation as envisaged by SASA.

To establish how learner participation in SG can be enhanced.

To suggest a comprehensive stakeholder participation model.

- **A concise summary of the methodology**

The research paradigm to be used is the interpretive paradigm the looks at how people make decisions and act in accordance with their subjective understanding in whih they find themseves. RCL members' responses are going to be the cornerstone of the study in an attempt to examine their participation in SG. The research approach is going to

be qualitative, as it examines the views of learner governors in relation to their participation in SG. Case study design is going to be made use of, to get the learners' views, thoughts, opinions regarding their participation in SG.

- **Description of subject population including characteristics, age range and number of subjects**

Convenience sampling is going to be employed since the study will draw data by selecting people because of their availability and ease of access. Non probability sampling to be employed, two township schools are going to be under study. The sample is going to comprise of 6 RCL members from both school and 3 focus groups consisting of GET and FET class representatives of 6 to 8 per group. The age range will start at fifteen to twenty years.

- **Anticipated risks as well as the precautions taken to minimize risk**

There are no anticipated risks since issues with regards to ethical issues are going to be considered.

- **Anticipated benefits**

To unearth and question the incomplete profiles of the world of education whereby adult governors dominate participation in SG and helping map strategies that will make learner governors be fully empowered to participate in SG, as equal partners with their adult counterparts.

- **Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent

Confidentiality

Anonymity

Private and respect. All these principles are to be considered.

- **Intellectual Property Rights Considerations (IP)**

Not applicable.

Checklist (Obligatory):	X
Investigator Declaration for principal, co- and sub investigators (Obligatory)	X
Investigator CVs	X
Protocol	X
Supervisor's declaration, where applicable	X
Questionnaire / list of questions	X

Recommendation from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Chairperson:..... **Date:**.....

Recommendation from the University Research Committee

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Chairperson:..... **Date:**.....

OFFICE USE ONLY

Approved by UREC				Project ID
Conditional				
Provisional				

Final				



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The completed form must be submitted with the application. An incomplete checklist form will result in the return of the whole application to the originator

CHECKLIST-GENERAL

Section A. To be completed by Applicant and checked by GMRDC Office

PROTOCOL TITLE:

PROTOCOL NUMBER		PROTOCOL VERSION		PROTOCOL DATE	
----------------------------	--	-----------------------------	--	--------------------------	--

	CV (max 2 pages)	Investigator Declaration	Conflict of Interest statement signed.	Admin Office Comments
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	X	X	X	
SUPERVISOR:				
CO- INVESTIGATORS				
1.				
2.				

3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
OTHER STAFF				

	Applicant	Comments	Admin Office
	Y /N / NA		
Applicant Signature	X		
Supervisor Signature	X		
HOD Signature			
Protocol synopsis	X		
Full protocol	X		
Page numbers on protocol?	X		
Budget	X		
Informed Consent Form	X		
Questionnaires			
Other measuring tools/instruments	X		
Recruitment material/ Advertisement(s)			
DoH or other letters of approval to conduct research			
Material Transfer Agreement			

Section B: *To be completed by Applicant. The Reviewer will cross check*

INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH CHECKLIST

	Yes / No or NA (PI)	Yes/No/ NA (Reviewer)
That consent is being sought from the participant to participate in research.	Y	
The purpose of the research and where it will be conducted.	Y	
The expected duration of the participant's involvement in the research.	Y	
The total number of participants that will be involved at this site and/or South Africa and worldwide.	Y	
A description of all the processes and procedures to which the participant will be subjected,	Y	
The principal investigator's name and contact details.	Y	
Explanation of participants responsibilities.	Y	
Explanation of any randomization process if applicable).	NA	
Circumstances that may result in the project being terminated or the participant being withdrawn.	NA	
A description of foreseeable risks and discomforts.	NA	
A description of benefits to the participant or others both during and after the research. If there are no expected benefits, the participant must specifically be made aware of this.	Y	
Disclosure of alternative procedures and course of treatments available if applicable	NA	
Description of extent to which confidentiality will be maintained and protected.	Y	
Statement that sponsors of the study, study monitors or auditors or UREC members may need to inspect research records.	NA	
Statement that the UREC has approved the research.		

Contact details of the committee.		
Explanation of how research related injury will be managed and details of insurance if applicable.		
Explanation as to whom to contact in the event of research related injury.		
Participation in the study is entirely voluntary	Y	
Participants are free to withdraw at any point without explanation or any negative consequences. Their routine health care will not be adversely affected.	Y	
Participants must be informed of their rights to be told any new relevant information that arises during the course of the trial and the ICF should be revised, where appropriate to incorporate this information.	Y	
That the study will be conducted according to the International Declaration of Helsinki and other applicable international ethical codes for research on human subject.	Y	
Any expense to which the participant may be liable.	NA	
Explanation regarding payment for participation or out of pocket expenses	NA	
Identity of the funder , where applicable and any potential conflict of interests.	NA	
Where appropriate, the participant should also be requested/advised to inform his general practitioner and life insurance company or medical aid of his/her participation. ☐ Not considered appropriate/necessary	NA	
Simple, clear language has been used (Maximum Grade 8 reading level) and all medical and technical terms have been explained.	Y	

Section C. To be completed by Applicant

	Yes(PI), NA	Yes/No/NA (Reviewer)
--	----------------	-------------------------

Does the study have relevance and scientific or clinical value and applicability to the proposed research population?	NA	
Does the protocol include an adequate literature review?	Y	
Is the selection of subjects equitable and appropriate; adequate consideration and protection of vulnerable research populations.	Y	
Is the design and methodology appropriate to answer the research question?	Y	
Is the methodology clearly described, in sufficient detail?	Y	
Is the statistical analysis plan, including sample size calculations, clearly outlined and justified?	Y	
Are the inclusion and exclusion criteria clearly defined and appropriate?	NA	
Have risks been minimized and is there an acceptable balance between potential risks and benefits?	Y	
Does the PI have the necessary qualifications, expertise, facilities, and time and support staff, to carry out the proposed research?		
Has a section on 'Ethical Considerations' been included in the protocol?	Y	
Has the informed consent process been clearly explained in the protocol?	Y	
Are issues relating to protection of privacy and confidentiality of data adequately addressed, especially if the study involves a retrospective review of clinical records?	Y	
Has a waiver of informed consent been requested if the study involves a retrospective review of clinical records?	NA	
Does the study involve collection of DNA/RNA and, if so, has consent been adequately sought for this?	NA	

MUNIKWA JULIUS



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

The supervisor must sign a declaration for each student project supervised.

A. RESEARCHER

Surname	MUNIKWA	Initials	J	Title	MR	
Department	EDUCATION					
Telephone no.	Cell	0738433784	email	juliemunikwa@gmail.com	Fax	N/A

B. SUPERVISOR

Surname	Duku	Initials	N.S	Title	Prof	
Capacity	Supervisor					
Department						
Present			E-	nduku@ufh.ac.za		
Telephone no.	(w)		Cel	0722600656	Fax	

B. PROJECT TITLE (MAXIMUM OF 250 CHARACTERS FOR DATABASE PURPOSES)

LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING THEIR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

I, Professor NtombozukoStunkyDuku declare that

I have read through the submitted version of the research protocol and all supporting documents and am satisfied with their contents. I am satisfied that the scientific content of the research is satisfactory and up to standard for an educational qualification at this level.

I am suitably qualified and experienced to supervise the above research study.

I undertake to fulfill the responsibilities of the supervisor for this study as set out in the university policy

I take responsibility for ensuring that the applicant is up to date and complies with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of research participants and other personal data, in conjunction with supervisors as appropriate.

I take responsibility for ensuring that the applicant is up to date and complies with all regulatory and monitoring requirements of the UREC

I agree to supervise the described study in accordance with the relevant, current protocol and will only change the protocol after approval by the UREC.

I agree to ensure the applicant maintains adequate and accurate records.

I take responsibility for ensuring that this study is conducted in accordance with the ethical principles underlying the Declaration of Helsinki as well as South African and ICH GCP Guidelines and the Ethical Guidelines of the Department of Health as well as applicable regulations pertaining to health and other research with supervisors as appropriate.

I agree that I am conversant with the above guidelines.

I will ensure that the applicant treats every participant in a dignified manner and with respect.

Supervisor : Professor N.S Duku

(print name)

Signature : Date: 07/10/2015

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION (OBLIGATORY)

The researcher is expected to declare to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) the presence of any potential or existing conflict of interest that may potentially pose a threat to the scientific integrity and ethical conduct of any research in the University.

The UREC will decide whether such conflicts are sufficient as to warrant consideration of their impact on the ethical conduct of the study.

Disclosure of conflict of interest does not imply that a study will be deemed unethical, as the mere existence of a conflict of interest does not mean that a study cannot be conducted ethically. However, failure to declare to the UREC a conflict of interest known to the researcher at the outset of the study

will be deemed to be unethical conduct.

Researchers are therefore expected to sign *either* of the two declarations below:

As the Principal Researcher in this study (name: ,MUNIKWA JULIUS)

I hereby declare that I am not aware of any potential conflict of interest which may influence my ethical conduct of this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _07/10/2015_____

As the Principal Researcher in this study (name:)

I hereby declare that I am aware of potential conflicts of interest which should be considered by the UREC:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

JULIUS MUNIKWA



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

RESEARCHER'S DECLARATION AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

(To be completed in typescript)

The principal investigator, as well as all sub- & co-investigators must each sign a separate declaration.

A. RESEARCHER

Surname	MUNIKWA	Initials	J	Title	MR
Capacity	Principal investigator	X	Sub-investigator		Co-investigator
Department	EDUCATION				
Present position	EDUCATOR	E-mail	juliemunikwa@gmail.com		
Telephone no.	(w)	Cel	0738433784	Fax	N/A

B. PROJECT TITLE (MAXIMUM OF 250 CHARACTERS FOR DATABASE PURPOSES)

LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

I, (MR JULIUS MUNIKWA) declare that

I have read through the submitted version of the research protocol and all supporting documents and am satisfied with their contents

I am suitably qualified and experienced to perform the above research study.

I agree to conduct or supervise the described study personally in accordance with the relevant, current protocol and will only change the protocol after approval by the UREC, except when urgently necessary to protect the safety, rights, or welfare of subjects. In such a case, I am aware that I should notify the UREC without delay.

I agree to timorously report to the UREC serious adverse events that may occur in the course of the investigation.

I agree to maintain adequate and accurate records and to make those records available for inspection by the appropriate authorised agents when and if necessary.

I agree to comply with all other requirements regarding the obligations of clinical investigators and all other pertinent requirements in the Declaration of Helsinki, as well as South African and ICH GCP Guidelines and the Ethical Guidelines of the Department of Health as well as applicable regulations pertaining to health and other research.

I agree to comply with all regulatory and monitoring requirements of the UREC.

MUNIKWA JULIUS

I agree that I am conversant with the above guidelines.

I will ensure that every research subject or other involved persons, such as relatives, shall at all times be treated in a dignified manner and with respect.

I will submit all required reports within the stipulated time frames.

Principal / Sub- / Co-investigator /Supervisor : MUNIKWA JULIUS

(print name)

Signature : Date: 07/10/2015

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION (OBLIGATORY)

The researcher is expected to declare to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) the presence of any potential or existing conflict of interest that may potentially pose a threat to the scientific integrity and ethical conduct of any research in the University.

The UREC will decide whether such conflicts are sufficient as to warrant consideration of their impact on the ethical conduct of the study.

Disclosure of conflict of interest does not imply that a study will be deemed unethical, as the mere existence of a conflict of interest does not mean that a study cannot be conducted ethically. However, failure to declare to the UREC a conflict of interest known to the researcher at the outset of the study will be deemed to be unethical conduct.

Researchers are therefore expected to sign *either* of the two declarations below:

As the Principal Researcher in this study (name: MUNIKWA JULIUS)

I hereby declare that I am not aware of any potential conflict of interest which may influence my ethical conduct of this study.

Signature: _____ Date:
__07/10/2015_____

As the Principal Researcher in this study (name: _____)

I hereby declare that I am aware of potential conflicts of interest which should be considered by the UREC:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

MUNIKWA JULIUS



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Ethics Research Confidentiality and Informed Consent Form

University of Fort Hare (**School of General & Continuing Education**) is asking people from your community to answer some questions, which I hope will benefit your community and possibly other communities in the future.

The University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Education Student MUNIKWA JULIUS (Master of Education) is conducting research regarding LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE. I am interested in finding out more about LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING THEIR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE I am carrying out this research to help EMPOWER LEARNERS IN THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Please understand that you are not being forced to take part in this study and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. However, I would really appreciate it if you do share your thoughts with me. If you choose not take part in answering these questions, you will not be affected in any way. If you agree to participate, you may stop me at any time and tell me that you don't want to go on with the interview. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way. Confidentiality will be observed professionally.

I will not be recording your responses without your consent. The information will remain confidential and there will be no "come-backs" from the answers you give.

The interview will last around 45 minutes. I will be asking you a questions and ask that you are as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. Some questions may be of a personal and/or sensitive nature. I will be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, and which also involve thinking about the past or the future. I know that you cannot be absolutely certain

about the answers to these questions but I ask that you try to think about these questions. When it comes to answering questions there are no right and wrong answers. When I ask questions about the future I am not interested in what you think the best thing would be to do, but what you think should be done to assist or improve the participation of learners in school governance.

MUNIKWA JULIUS

If possible, I would like to come back to you once I have completed the study to inform you of what the results are and discuss findings and proposals around the research and what this means for learner governors.

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding 'THE LERANERS' VIEWS REGARDING THEIR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE'. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the interviews, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

MUNIKWA

Insert

Cover letter requesting for clearance

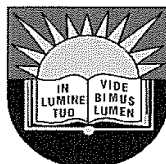
Research proposal

Researcher's CV

Questionnaire

Research questions/interview guide

Budget / total cost of the research e.g. transport, data collection, data analysis etc.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: DUK181SMUN01

Project title: **Learners' views regarding their participation in school governance.**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Julius Munikwa

Sub-Investigator:

Supervisor: Prof N Duku

Co-supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

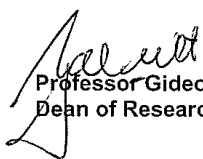
Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely


Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

11 November 2015



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape
Private Bag X0032 • Bisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4773/4035/4537 • Fax: +27 (0)40 608 4574 • Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Enquiries: NY Kanjana

Email: nykanjana@live.co.za

Date: 27 November 2015

Mr. Julius Munikwa
2 Trafalgar Road
Cambridge West
East London
5201

Dear Mr. Munikwa

**PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS THESIS: LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING
THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research in a selected schools under the jurisdiction of East London District of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
 - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educators' programmes should not be interrupted;
 - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;

building blocks for growth

Page 1 of 2



Kamva eliquambileyo!

- g. the research may not be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where a special well motivated request is received;
 - h. your research will be limited to those schools or institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
 - i. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis.
 - j. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.
 - k. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research.
 - l. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
 - m. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
 - n. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation.
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.
 4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
 5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email nykanjana@live.co.za should you need any assistance.


NY KANJANA

DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES

FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION





To whom it may concern:

This document certifies that the dissertation whose title appears below has been edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style by Rose Masha, a member of the Professional Editors' Group whose qualifications are listed in the footer of this certificate.

Title:

**LEARNERS' VIEWS REGARDING THEIR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

Author:

JULIUS MUNIKWA

Date Edited:

02 June 2016

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Masha", enclosed within a faint, light-grey rectangular border.

Rose Khanyisile Masha

082 770 8892

Bachelor of Library and Information Science, Hons (English Language Teaching), HDE,
MA (Hypermedia in Lang. Learning), PhD (Education)