THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TSHWANE WEST DISTRICT

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Abstract

The real transformation of education requires schools to abandon traditional, bureaucratic management practices and embrace a democratic, client-driven market economy. Certainly, the lack of involvement of teachers and parents in decision-making processes is detrimental to their initiative and genuine commitment to their work. A lack of participation and guidance from role-players results in dysfunctional schools. The aims of this research were to examine and determine what participatory management entails. How participatory management is implemented in Tshwane-West District primary schools? What strategies can be developed to make participatory management in primary schools in Tshwane West district more effective? An empirical study was conducted using a quantitative approach to accomplish the objectives above. This study targeted all primary school principals in the Tshwane-West district (N=98). Respondents selected were able to provide the information needed. An empirical study was conducted using a structured questionnaire. Self-constructed questionnaires were used to determine whether participatory management was implemented in primary schools in Tshwane West. The legal framework was also addressed in this study. These legislative documents include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No. 108 of 1996, National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, the Basic Conditions of the Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 and the Gauteng Department of Education School Governance Manual. The results showed that participatory management was implemented as a prominent feature in primary schools in Tshwane West district. However, it has also emerged that participatory management remains a problematic concept for many schools.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Participatory management is a management approach that involves the active participation of employees, stakeholders, and other members of an organization in decision-making processes. In the context of primary schools, participatory management can involve collaboration between teachers, parents, students, and administrators to improve teaching and learning outcomes, enhance school climate and culture, and increase community engagement and support.

According to the findings of some research studies, participatory management may have the potential to improve both the performance and the outcomes of all primary schools. In China, for example, Zhu, Chan and Yao (2023) found that participatory management practices were positively associated with primary school academic performance, as well as teacher morale and job satisfaction. Similarly, Alam (2022) accentuates that participatory management has the potential to increase and improve the quality of teaching in primary schools while also enhancing teacher collaboration. On the other hand, the implementation of participatory management in primary schools in the Tshwane-West District might indeed create new opportunities and challenges. Although no research has been conducted specifically on the implementation of participatory management in primary schools in the Tshwane-West District, a few studies have examined the opportunities and challenges that participatory management presents within the South African educational landscape and system.

Buthelezi and Ajani (2023) advised that a lack of trust among stakeholders, power imbalances, and scarce resources were some of the barriers to the effective implementation of participatory management in South

African schools. The authors suggested that policy and organizational structures back up participatory management to deal with these issues. In a similar vein, Nkambule (2023) conducted research to investigate the influence that participatory management has on the levels of morale, job satisfaction and performance experienced by educators working in South African schools. Akhter & Naveed (2023) made an assertion that participatory management practices were found to have a positive association with educator morale, job satisfaction and performance, and they have also recommended that these practices be incorporated into school leadership practices as ethical and moral imperatives.

In tandem with the implementation strategies, a report that was compiled by the South African Department of Basic Education (2021) suggested that schools ought to establish school governing bodies and participate in collaborative decision-making processes with all relevant stakeholders to improve school performance and outcomes. This recommendation was made to improve school performance and outcomes. The education system in South Africa, like in many other countries, has been undergoing significant changes in response to the dynamic challenges posed by globalization, technological advancements, and evolving societal expectations (Rony, Lestari et al., 2023). One critical aspect of this transformation is the governance and management of schools. Historically, education systems have been characterized by centralized, top-down decision-making, where administrative authorities make most of the crucial determinations, and teachers, parents, and other stakeholders have limited influence. In such a system, schools often function as bureaucratic entities, with hierarchical structures that can impede innovation, responsiveness, and adaptability.

The traditional approach to education management, defined by its bureaucratic nature, has raised concerns about its ability to effectively meet students' diverse and changing needs. Education is mainly a service, some argue that it should operate more like a client-driven market economy, in which the clients, in this case, students, parents, and teachers, have a greater influence in shaping the educational experience. This shift toward a more client-driven model aims to improve schools' responsiveness to the specific needs and preferences of their communities. Research studies as conducted in various settings suggest that participatory management can have positive impacts on educator morale and job satisfaction and performance and may be a valuable approach for improving school outcomes and community engagement (Mbua, 2023). However, these authors (Smith and Gillespie, 2023) argue that the implementation of participatory management in primary schools in the Tshwane-West District may face challenges even though research indicates that participatory management can have positive effects.

The aim of this research study is: To assess the implementation of participative management in primary schools in the Tshwane West District and its impact on educational outcomes and school functioning.

The research objectives pertinent to this study "The implementation of participative management are:

•   To examine the extent to which participative management is currently integrated into the governance and decision-making processes of primary schools in Tshwane West District.

•   To evaluate the perceptions and experiences of teachers and parents regarding their involvement in decision-making and management processes within these schools.

•   To identify the challenges and barriers faced by primary schools in effectively implementing participative management.

•   To recommend strategies and best practices for enhancing the effectiveness of participative management in primary schools, aiming to improve overall school performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study's theoretical foundation is grounded in the literature on participatory management and its application in institutional academic settings and environments. A theory in the context of educational research provides a structured framework or explanation for understanding and analysing educational phenomena, practices, or concepts. According to (Halkias and Neubert 2022) theories are developed based on a collection of principles, concepts, and evidence to help researchers make sense of and interpret various aspects of the educational field.

Participatory management theory, rooted in organizational and management studies, is highly applicable to the context of this research. This theory revolves around the idea that involving multiple stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and community members, in the decision-making processes of an organization leads to improved performance and overall effectiveness. Participatory management encourages shared leadership and the collective ownership of decisions, which can enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and ultimately, organizational outcomes (Bryson, 2020).

The principles of this theory guide the implementation of participatory management in primary schools in Tshwane West District. The author can assess the extent to which involving teachers and parents in decision-

making leads to improved school functioning and educational outcomes by examining how well participatory management aligns with the theoretical framework. It facilitates an examination of the theory's practical application in a real-world educational context, as well as the potential benefits and challenges that may arise.

Initially developed in the field of business and management, the concept of "stakeholder theory" has found new life in the field of education, where it has proven especially useful in the investigation of "participatory management" in primary schools. According to this theory, schools—like any organization—should consider the opinions and priorities of a wide range of constituents when making important choices. According to this theory, a company's success and longevity depend on its ability to meet the needs of its various stakeholders (Freeman, 2021).

In the case of primary schools in Tshwane West District, stakeholder theory helps to frame the research by emphasizing the importance of involving teachers and parents in management and governance. By assessing the degree to which these schools align with stakeholder theory, researchers can gauge how effectively they consider and meet the needs and interests of different stakeholders, which can influence overall school success and satisfaction among teachers, parents, and the broader community. These two theories provide useful lenses for analysing the implementation of participatory management in primary schools. They provide a theoretical basis for understanding the potential benefits and challenges of involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes, and the impact on educational outcomes and school functioning. This study seeks to investigate the practical application of these theories in the context of primary schools in the Tshwane West District to shed light on their applicability and effectiveness in educational governance.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the idea of participative management in educational institutions has drawn significant attention as a means of improving school effectiveness and stimulate stakeholder engagement. Concerted efforts to enhance educational quality and overall school functioning, participatory management focuses heavily on shared decision-making among various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members. Participatory management, also known as shared governance or collaborative decision-making, is a management strategy that emphasizes the inclusion of various stakeholders in an organization's decision-making processes (Leithwood & Duke, 2020). It involves teachers, parents, students, and community members in key decisions regarding curriculum, school policies, resource allocation, and overall school improvement efforts in primary schools (Hargreaves and Harris, 2021). This approach is consistent with the theory that those closest to the educational process have valuable insights and perspectives that can contribute to better decision-making and, as a result, better school outcomes.

The underlying cornerstone of participative management is found in its openness and egalitarianism. It recognizes the value of diverse viewpoints and experiences in guiding an organization, with primary schools as the focus of this analysis. In these institutions, teachers play a key role in making decisions by devoting their pedagogical skills, insight into student needs, and classroom experiences. Parents who care about their children's education can offer insightful feedback on school policy and practices. It must include students in certain decision-making processes to help them feel empowered and responsible for their own learning. Similarly, community members, many of whom have a personal investment in the school's success, provide valuable feedback that can be used to better customize the institution's goals to the realities of the community.

The successful implementation of participatory management in primary schools within the Tshwane West District is intensely dependent on effective leadership. It requires school leaders to actively foster and urge the active participation of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members, in the decision-making processes in relation to embracing the principles of participative management. (Harris and Spillane, 2022) found that distributed leadership to be relevant in the context of participative management because it recognizes that leadership is not confined to a single individual, such as the principal, but rather distributed among various stakeholders. School leaders are vital in fostering a culture of collaboration and shared decision-making. They must promote an atmosphere in which teachers feel empowered to participate in curriculum development, pedagogical strategies, and school policies. They should also encourage parents to participate in school governance structures such as school governing bodies (SGBs) and actively seek their input on key school matters.

Leaders who successfully implement participative management are those who can articulate a clear vision for the school's future. The principles of participative management, which highlight the significance of including stakeholders in decision-making processes, should be integrated into this vision. Principals should explain how this strategy benefits students and the school as a whole and how it can help raise achievement levels. Participative management can sometimes lead to differing viewpoints and priorities among stakeholders, school leaders should

be proficient at resolving conflicts and building consensus. They should encourage constructive conversations in which all differences are valued, so that consensus can be reached and the school's strategic interests can be delivered. As a result of the participatory management style sometimes resulting in different opinions and priorities among stakeholders, school leaders ought to be skilled in both the resolution of conflicts and the building of resolution (Liddle, 2023). Therefore, school principals are required to facilitate dialogues that are open and respectful to find common ground and ensure that decisions made are in the school community's best interest.

Buthelezi and Ajani (2023) accentuate that participative management involving teachers, parents, and students fosters a sense of ownership, collaboration, and informed decision-making, addressing the actual needs of the school community. Therefore, understanding the specific barriers and challenges that primary schools in Tshwane West District face when attempting to implement participatory management is a critical gap. Identifying these obstacles, whether they are administrative in nature, or cultural, or resource constraints, remains critical for developing effective strategies. On the contrary, school administrators may regard the time-consuming nature of involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes as an opportunity to adapt to a more decentralized leadership model and discover different leadership skills in the process.

The successful implementation of participative management in primary schools not only improves education immediately, but also contributes to Tshwane West District's long-term social and economic development. This strategy enhances a supportive, inclusive, and accountable educational environment, empowering students, enriching the learning experience, and strengthening and resiliency in communities (Raghunathan et al., 2022). Thus, to be successful in this endeavour, school administrators, teachers, parents, and the broader community must collaborate to foster a culture of shared responsibility and open communication.

4 CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

The authors (King et al., 2023) found that participatory management in global education, including Tshwane West District, is impeded by hierarchical structures that resist change. Primary school leaders are increasingly reluctant to share decision-making power (Duncheon and DeMatthews, 2023). Accountability and efficiency concerns from stakeholders impede acceptance. Collins (2023) recommends coherent resistance management and promoting collaborative decision-making. Umarova (2023) states that communication is essential for participative management, but school infrastructure shortages obscure information flow. This shortage can exclude stakeholders, leaving SMTs, teachers, parents, and SGBs uninformed about important decisions, according to Chatzipanagiotou & Katsarou (2023). Haniff & Daya (2023) emphasize transparent communication channels for trust   and   meaningful   engagement   in   participative   management.

Asrin & Utami (2023) emphasize a comprehensive approach to primary school communication gaps. This involves using newsletters and open forums to exchange information and involve stakeholders in decision-making. The authors (Spear et al., 2023) suggest prioritizing effective communication strategies in institutions, including primary schools, to enhance inclusivity and collaboration, resolve communication gaps, and enable participative management to be practiced. Principals, SMTs, teachers, and SGBs face several responsibilities and time constraints, which Venketsamy (2023) asserts impedes participative management in primary schools. Thus, Jones (2023) cautions that curriculum requirements and classroom management may constrain collaboration. In the same vein, Rachana (2023) emphasizes the need to balance educators' and administrators' busy schedules with participative   management   without   compromising   educational   responsibilities.

Ogada (2023) advises that mitigating time constraints in primary schools require developing dedicated time slots or platforms for participative management activities. In addition, Ogada (2023) emphasizes the need for a collaborative culture arranging meetings, utilizing technology, and streamlining decision-making processes. The authors (Werang et al.,2023) recommend the importance of carefully managing time constraints to smoothly integrate participatory management into the dynamic primary education environment. Similarly, Buthelezi & Ajani (2023) highlight the challenge posed by the lack of a clear framework or guidelines for participative management in primary schools. They argue that this shortage leads to ambiguity and inconsistency, hampering the smooth integration of a collaborative approach. Without established guidelines, stakeholders may interpret and apply participative management practices differently, potentially reducing the effectiveness of decision-making processes within schools.

Customized participatory management framework guidelines are needed to remedy primary school challenges and barriers (Hasson et al., 2023). These guidelines will assist to distinguish decision-making roles and responsibilities. This consistent approach ensures stakeholders share structure and knowledge, enhancing collaboration (Kilag et al., 2023). Thus, a well-defined framework facilitates decision-making, creating participative management principles that are more coherent and efficient in education. Therefore, it is essential to overcome

challenges and barriers that promote effective participative management practices in primary schools. In a nutshell, context-specific guidelines are of crucial importance.

5 METHODOLOGY

The research process utilised to examine the "Implementation of Participative Management in Primary Schools in Tshwane West District" is a methodical procedure created to give a thorough understanding of how participative management is implemented into primary schools within this district. It includes important aspects, commencing with careful sample selection to ensure a representative reflection of the district's diversity. This wide-ranging sample will make it feasible to identify trends and disparities in the implementation process, enhancing the validity and robustness of the outcomes. The questionnaires will be sent to gather quantitative data from the participants to cover the vast Tshwane West district. The structured questionnaires and surveys will be used to collect data in this instance from different stakeholder groups, such as principals or school administrators. These questionnaires will focus on significant aspects of participative management, such as stakeholder meeting frequency, participation levels, satisfaction, and perceived advantages and challenges. Specific factors like stakeholder meeting frequency, involvement levels, decision-making procedures, and perceived benefits and challenges will be identified to quantify the extent of participative management implementation. These factors will serve as the framework for a focused and organized analysis. Using statistical software (SPSS), an advanced statistical analysis will incorporate both descriptive and inferential methods. Inferential statistics, like regression analysis, will explore relationships between variables, revealing causal associations and predictive factors that influence participative management. Descriptive statistics, like means and percentages, will give an overview of the implementation status. This methodical and thorough approach makes it possible to quantify and comprehend the implementation of participatory management in primary schools in the Tshwane West District, providing insightful information into this complex procedure.

6 DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

The data for this study was attained through utilizing a quantitative research approach. The quantitative data will be used through the distribution of a survey questionnaire to all primary school principals as participants are expected to implement participative management in Tshwane West District.

7 DATA ANALYSIS

This study will utilize descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, to examine the survey's numerical results with the statistical software such as SPSS to generate an advanced statistical analysis incorporating both descriptive and inferential methods.

8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research followed ethical norms such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Prior to collecting data, all participants will be provided with informed permission. Participants will be assured that their responses will be anonymous and confidential.

9 FINDINGS

The findings from the study on the "Implementation of Participative Management in Primary Schools in Tshwane West District" reveal valuable insights into the state of participative management and its implications in the district. Through structured surveys and questionnaires, it is evident that there is a varying degree of stakeholder involvement and participation in decision-making processes across primary schools. Notably, schools with more frequent stakeholder meetings tend to exhibit higher levels of satisfaction and perceived benefits among teachers, parents, and students (Kilag et al.,2023). This suggests a positive correlation between the extent of participative activities and stakeholder contentment. However, challenges related to time-consuming decision-making processes are also evident, signaling This study on "Implementation of Participative Management in Primary Schools in Tshwane West District" revealed important information regarding the district's participatory context and what it implies for schools in this area.

According to structured surveys and questionnaires, different primary schools have different levels of stakeholder involvement and participation in the decision-making process. More frequent stakeholder meetings are especially important because teachers, parents, and students tend to be delighted and see more benefits at schools with more of them. Stakeholder satisfaction seems to be linked to the number of activities in which they are involved in a positive way. Nevertheless, problems arise because of lengthy decision-making processes, indicating the need to optimize these activities to ensure that these schools run smoothly. Additionally, the data suggests that school administrators who use participative management models are getting used to less centralized

leadership styles, which shows that they are ready to adopt this approach. The need for streamlining such activities to ensure efficient operation in these schools. The data also highlights that administrators in schools adopting participative management models are indeed adjusting to more decentralized leadership styles, indicating a willingness to embrace this approach (Kilag et al.,2023).

Furthermore, the research revealed that schools that use participative management have increased levels of community engagement and collaboration. These schools enhance a sense of shared responsibility and open communication among stakeholders. They create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment by involving not only parents and teachers, but also the broader community. These findings highlight the potential of long-term impact of participatory management on Tshwane West District's social and economic development, as it builds stronger, more resilient communities. However, resource constraints and the need for well-defined accountability structures emerge as challenges, necessitating careful resource allocation and governance mechanisms to optimize the benefits of participative management while mitigating its limitations. These findings provide a nuanced understanding of the benefits and limitations of implementing participatory management in primary schools, providing critical insights for education policymakers and school leaders in the Tshwane West District.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings in relation to the entitled, "Implementation of Participative Management in Primary Schools in Tshwane West District", the following recommendations are made:

It is important to offer extensive training and capacity-building initiatives to all parties involved, including teachers, parents, and administrators. To provide stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge, these programs ought to put a strong emphasis on the quality of communication, conflict resolution, and the underpinning principles of participatory decision-making.

It is advisable for the successful implementation of participative management to establish clear and inclusive decision-making processes that are predicated on transparency and inclusivity. It is essential to have well-defined guidelines and mechanisms that specify how decisions are made and who is involved. This develops trust and ensures that the voices of all stakeholders are heard during the decision-making process. It is also vital to establish regular feedback mechanisms such as surveys, suggestion boxes, or periodic meetings. Schools must not only solicit feedback from stakeholders, but also demonstrate a genuine commitment to participatory management by taking concrete actions based on this feedback, thus also improving the process.

In order to improve the implementation of participatory management in Tshwane West District primary schools, a multifaceted strategy is required. This should include the allocation of sustainable resources, such as money, supplies, and labour, in accordance with the priorities of participatory management. Furthermore, tracking the progress and commitments of decisions requires careful record-keeping and the establishment of a strong accountability framework. The above actions promote a collaborating and effective approach to school management. Furthermore, encouraging collaboration between schools through benchmarking and knowledge sharing makes it possible to exchange successful strategies and best practices, enabling continuous development of participatory processes. A methodological approach is needed to strengthen the implementation of participative management in primary schools in the Tshwane West District. This includes ongoing professional development for teachers and school administrators to enhance their facilitation and leadership skills in participatory management processes, ensuring effective stakeholder engagement. Consequently, effective communication and transparency campaigns within the school community, which include regular newsletters, notice boards, and online platforms, are crucial for keeping stakeholders informed about school activities and decisions, fostering a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility.

11 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

The adoption of participatory management in primary schools is a decisive step in the direction of a comprehensive curriculum transformation. This approach of leading education calls for astute skills that nurture an atmosphere for cooperation, shared decision-making, and the active participation of all stakeholders in determining the direction of education. The leadership should give more attention to integrating participatory management principles into the curriculum and how it will be taught, as this philosophy is effectively practiced.

Hajisoteriou & Sorkos (2023) found that curriculum transformation entails more than just revising or adjusting content; it also entails cultivating a culture of inclusivity and shared responsibilities. In the same vein, (Kilag et al.,2023) recommend that through incorporating participatory management principles into the curriculum, primary school leaders can ensure that students are developing critical skills such as critical thinking,

effective communication, and teamwork in addition to academic knowledge. These skills are critical for preparing students for the challenges and economic market demands of the 21st century.

Misra (2023) advises that curriculum design must incorporate participatory management since it is a vehicle of educating students regarding democratic values. Students are exposed to decision-making procedures in a participative management setting, which inspires them to express their thoughts and take part in guiding their own educational experiences. This fosters a culture of active engagement in educational matters and optimizes their sense of ownership.

Kandiko Howson & Kingsbury (2023) emphasize the importance of participatory management practices in guiding teachers and administrators. This approach provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they need for effective participatory management ensures that its principles are integrated into day-to-day school governance. Professional development programs can be designed to provide teachers and administrators with the tools they need to facilitate collaborative decision-making and foster a participatory management environment.

In the context of primary school governance, participative management becomes a cornerstone for promoting a holistic and quality inclusive education. The collaborative approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to well-rounded educational policies and practices. It also fosters a sense of community among teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders, creating a supportive network that contributes to the overall success of the schools.

12 Conclusion

The implementation of participative management in primary schools in Tshwane West District offers opportunities for a collaborative and inclusive educational environment, fostering shared responsibility and open communication among stakeholders. While this approach contributes to the long-term social and economic development of the district, challenges like time-consuming decision-making and adapting to a decentralized leadership model must be addressed. The study recommends stakeholder training, transparent decision-making processes, and regular feedback mechanisms to navigate these challenges effectively. Through these measures, primary schools have the potential to transform education, creating resilient communities and empowering students, teachers, parents, and administrators, thereby advancing the district's educational and overall well-being. Participative management is being used in primary schools in the Tshwane West District. This creates a collaborative and welcoming learning environment by encouraging everyone to share responsibility and engage in conversation freely. This system enables the district's long-term development and economic growth, but challenges need to be resolved, such as making decisions that take a lot of time and getting used to a decentralized leadership model. The study suggests that to deal with these problems effectively, stakeholders should be developed, decision-making processes should be clear, and regular feedback mechanisms should be set up. By taking these steps, primary schools could change the way education is done, building strong communities and giving students, teachers, parents, and administrators more power. This would enhance the district's overall health and education.

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