

**EXPLORING EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING OF PRINCIPALS  
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE**

by

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**(i)**

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that:

**EXPLORING EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING OF PRINCIPALS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**S.P. MOKOENA**

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**DATE**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

A task of this magnitude would not have been possible without the help of many individuals and organizations. I therefore wish to express my deep appreciation and heartfelt thanks to the following:

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- 6) Amanda and Kenny, my children who patiently endured a degree of paternal neglect throughout the period of study.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my beloved late Father, Lesihla (1924 – 2003). He would have loved to see this thesis.

## **SUMMARY OF THE THESIS**

In a democratic South Africa, a variety of factors are necessary to ensure effective school governance and management. One of these factors is shared decision-making (SDM). SDM is a process of making decisions in a collaborative manner at the school level. Those responsible for implementing a decision must be actively and legitimately involved in making the decision. In South African schools today, SDM is no longer an option. The new framework of SDM is embedded in the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996). According to the Act, parents, learners and teachers should be given the opportunity of participating in decisions on educational matters.

In this study, the researcher set out to investigate and explore effective decision-making of secondary school principals in the Thabo Mofutsanayana Education District (THMOED) of the Free State Province. In an endeavour to realize that end, an open-ended questionnaire, individual and focus group interviews were used to collect data. The main aim was to find out how teachers, learners, parents and principals experienced decision-making in their schools.

The main findings of this research were that, decisions-making practices in the secondary schools in the THMOED still adhered to pre-democratic formal lines of authority. In other words, the locus of control and decision-making powers resided mainly with the principals, with minimum participation of other stakeholders. Consequently, there were dissatisfactions and concerns raised by the participants. The concerns were directed at the management and included lack of communication, lack of transparency, unacceptable disciplinary procedures, autocratic leadership styles and centralized decision-making.

According to the findings, it would appear that democratic models of governance were insufficiently used or overlooked by the principals. Concerns raised by the respondents were a clear indication that much needed to be done to change the mind-set of the principals.

**Key terms**

Decision-making, school principals, shared decision-making, teacher participation, school governance, democracy, collegiality in education, decentralization, staff empowerment, participative management, power sharing, collaboration, secondary schools.

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Parameters of the study	4
1.3	Problem formulation	4
1.4	Significance of the study	6
1.5	Objectives of the study	7
1.6	Research methodology	7
1.6.1	Literature study	7
1.6.2	Qualitative research methodology	8
1.6.3	Data collection	9
1.7	Research design	9
1.8	Phases of the research strategy	10
1.9	Definition of concepts	13
1.9.1	Decision-making	13
1.9.2	Principal	13
1.9.3	School	14
1.10	Planning of research	14
1.11	Conclusion	16

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE NATURE OF DECISION-MAKING AND DECISION-MAKING STYLES IN ORGANISATIONS**

2.1	Introduction	17
2.2	What is decision-making?	18
2.3	Types of decisions	19
2.3.1	Programmed decisions	20
2.3.2	Non-programmed decisions	20
2.4	Conditions of decision-making	22
2.4.1	Decisions under certainty	23
2.4.2	Decisions under uncertainty	23
2.4.3	Decisions under risk	24
2.5	Decision-making process	24
2.5.1	Introduction	24
2.5.2	The relationship between decision-making process and problem solving	24
2.5.3	Steps in the decision-making process	25
2.5.3.1	Identification and definition of the problem	27
2.5.3.2	Analysis of the problem	30
2.5.3.3	Generation of alternatives	31
2.5.3.4	Evaluation of alternatives	33
2.5.3.5	Selection of the best alternative	35
2.5.3.6	Implementation of decision	36
2.5.3.7	Evaluation and follow-up of decision	38
2.6	Group decision-making	42
2.6.1	Techniques for improving group decision-making	43
2.6.1.1	Brainstorming technique	43
2.6.1.2	Delphi technique	45
2.6.1.3	Nominal Group Technique	48



2.7	Different decision-making styles	49
2.7.1	Introduction	49
2.7.1.1	Decision-making by authority rule	52
2.7.1.2	Decision-making by majority rule	53
2.7.1.3	Decision-making by consensus rule	53
2.7.1.4	Decision-making by minority rule	55
2.7.1.5	Decision-making by lack of response	55
2.7.1.6	Decision-making by participatory rule	56
2.7.1.7	Decision-making by unanimous rule	57
2.7.2	Selecting the appropriate decision-making style	59
2.8	Conclusion	60

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SHARED DECISION-MAKING: REQUISITE FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING**

3.1	Introduction	62
3.2	What is shared decision-making?	63
3.2.1	Clarification of the concept	63
3.2.2	Definition of the concept	63
3.3	Premises and goals for shared decision-making	65
3.4	Purpose of shared decision-making	66
3.5	Benefits of shared decision-making	67
3.6	Components of shared decision-making	69
3.6.1	Participation	69
3.6.2	Accountability	74
3.6.3	Information flow (or communication)	76
(a)	Structure of organisational communication	77
(b)	Formal and informal channels of communication	77

3.7	Role of school principal in shared decision-making	80
3.8	Implementation of shared decision-making	81
3.9	A model of shared decision-making	83
3.9.1	Introduction	83
3.9.2	Hoy-Tarter model of shared decision-making	84
3.9.2.1	The zone of acceptance or indifference	84
3.9.2.2	Mapping the zone of acceptance	85
3.9.3	Summation	89
3.10	Teams in organizations	90
3.10.1	Why are schools using teams?	91
3.10.2	Common types of teams	91
3.10.3	Factors ensuring a quality team	92
3.10.4	Paradigm for shared decision-making process	93
3.11	Governance of South African Schools since 1994	96
3.11.1	Introduction	96
3.11.2	Legal status of school governing body	97
3.11.3	Composition of school governing body	99
3.11.4	Functions of school governing body	100
3.11.5	Governing body and school management	102
3.11.5.1	Difference between school management and school governance	102
3.11.5.2	Relationship between school management and school governance	104
3.11.6	Participation of stakeholders within the school organizational structure	106
3.11.6.1	Role of parents in the affairs of the school	106
3.11.6.2	Role of principal and members of staff	106
3.11.6.3	Role of learners	107
3.11.7	Co-operation at school level	109
3.11.8	Summation	109
3.12	Leadership and management	110
3.12.1	Leadership versus management	110

3.12.2	The need for leaders	111
3.12.3	Principals as school leaders	112
3.12.4	Summation	115
3.13	Decision-making skills needed by principals	115
3.13.1	Establishing shared decision-making structures	116
3.13.2	Setting priorities for action	116
3.13.3	Using power effectively	117
3.14	Conclusion	120

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

4.1	Introduction	122
4.2	Restatement of the research question	122
4.3	Aims and objectives of the study	123
4.4	Parameters of the study	124
4.4.1	Criteria for schools sampling	124
4.4.2	Criteria for participants sampling	125
4.5	Research methodology	126
4.5.1	Qualitative research methodology	126
4.5.1.1	Definition	126
4.5.1.2	Aims	127
(a)	Clarity	127
(b)	Context	127
(c)	Consciousness	128
4.5.1.3	Nature and purpose of qualitative research	128
4.5.1.4	Method selection and justification	129
4.5.1.5	Points of departure	130

4.6	Research design	132
4.7	Data collection	132
4.7.1	Questionnaire	133
4.7.2	Interviews	134
4.7.2.1	Individual interviews	134
4.7.2.2	Focus Group interviews	136
(a)	Definition of a Focus Group	137
(b)	Characteristic features of a Focus Group	138
4.7.3	Observations	140
4.7.4	Documents	141
4.8	Reducing bias by disciplined subjectivity	142
4.9	Piloting the study	144
4.10	Ethical considerations	146
4.10.1	Informed consent	146
4.10.2	Termination	148
4.10.3	Privacy	148
4.11	Data analysis	148
4.12	Standards of rigour	150
4.12.1	Credibility	150
4.12.1.1	Triangulation	150
4.12.1.2	Member checking	151
4.12.2	Transferability	153
4.12.3	Dependability and confirmability	153
4.13	Reporting research findings	153
4.14	Conclusion	155

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

5.1	Orientation	156
5.2	An overview of Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District	158
5.2.1	Alpha and Omega Secondary Schools	159
5.2.1.1	General information	159
5.2.1.2	Learners' information	160
5.2.1.3	Staff information	163
5.2.1.4	Facilities	166
5.2.1.5	Syllabus and curriculum	167
5.2.1.6	School governance	168
5.2.1.7	Financing	169
5.3	Synthesis	170
5.4	Presentation and discussion of the interview results	171
5.4.1	Theme A: Definition of shared decision-making (SDM)	173
5.4.1.1	Category 1: Conceptualisation of SDM	174
5.4.2	Theme B: Decision-making	176
5.4.2.1	Category 1: Participative decision-making	178
(i)	Sub-category 1: Democratic leader	184
5.4.2.2	Category 2: Concern about decision-making	187
(i)	Sub-category 1: Communication	188
(ii)	Sub-category 2: Power sharing	190
(iii)	Sub-category 3: Resources	191
(iv)	Sub-category 4: School policy	192
5.4.3	Theme C: Strategies for effective decision-making	195
5.4.3.1	Category 1: Delegation of decisions / duties	195
5.4.3.2	Category 2: Changing school structure	197
5.4.3.3	Category 3: Communication	198

5.4.3.4	Category 4: Involvement	199
5.5	Synthesis of emergent patterns	201

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY, ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, CONCLUSION, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND APPENDICES**

6.1	Introduction	203
6.2	Summary of chapters	204
6.3	Synthesis of the major findings	206
6.3.1	Need for racial and cultural tolerance	206
6.3.2	The need for greater decision-making powers	206
6.3.3	The need for proper understanding of SDM	207
6.3.4	Call for greater participation in decision-making processes	207
6.3.5	Enabling leadership	208
6.3.6	Pivotal factors for dissatisfaction with regard to decision-making	208
6.3.7	Strategies for effective decision-making	208
6.4	Recommendations	209
6.4.1	Recommendations for the secondary school principals	209
6.4.1.1	Intergroup development	209
6.4.1.2	Communication	209
6.4.1.3	Create a climate for risk-taking	210
6.4.1.4	Provide an opportunity for collegiality	210
6.4.1.5	Networking	210
6.4.1.6	Avail professional development opportunities	211
6.4.1.7	Access to resources	211
6.4.2	Recommendations for the Department of Education	211

6.4.2.1	Sensitivity to diversity	211
6.4.2.2	Greater autonomy to schools	212
6.4.2.3	Flattening the hierarchical school structure	212
6.4.2.4	In-service training of principals	213
6.5	Limitations of the study	213
6.6	Fulfillment of the research objectives	214
6.7	Issues for further research	214
6.8	Concluding remarks	215
<b>REFERENCES</b>		216

## **LIST OF TABLES**

3.1	Premises and goals of SDM	66
3.2	School-based decision-making levels	72
3.3	Roles of management and governing body	103
4.1	Individual and focus group interviews	137
5.1	Number of learners at Omega and Alpha	160
5.2	Subjects pass rates in 2001 across all the grades at Omega and Alpha	162
5.3	Teaching staff at Alpha and Omega	163
5.4	Qualifications of teaching staff, 2002 at Alpha and Omega	164
5.5	Teaching facilities at Alpha and Omega	166
5.6	School governing bodies and their responsibilities at Alpha and Omega	168



## **LIST OF FIGURES**

2.1	The steps in decision-making process / problem solving	26
2.2	Decision-making flow chart	41
2.3	Different decision-making styles	51
3.1	Zone of acceptance and decision situations	86
3.2	Paradigm for SDM process	94
3.3	Relationship between management and governance	105
3.4	Participation of stakeholders in the organizational structure of the school	108
5.1	Teaching experience of teachers at Alpha and Omega	165
5.2	Socio-gram: communication flow leading to the decision taken	182

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS USED**

THMOED	Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District
SGB	School Governing Body
SASA	South African Schools Act
SMT	School Management Team
LRC	Learner Representative Council
SDM	Shared Decision Making
SMD	School Management Developer
FSED	Free State Education Department
MEC	Member of the Executive Council

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Questionnaire	235
Appendix B: Individual interview schedule	254
Appendix C: Focus group interview schedule	255
Appendix D: Transcribed verbatim report of Alpha	256
Appendix E: Transcribed verbatim report of Omega	275
Appendix F: Application for permission	301
Appendix G: Permission letter from the Free State Education Department	302
Appendix H: Affirming letter from the promoter	303