

**ANALYSING STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVITY IN STRATEGIC  
DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF THE HLANGANANI  
SOUTH CIRCUIT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored the necessity of stakeholder inclusivity in the planned decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit in the Vhembe West district of Limpopo. The study is relevant to Hlanganani South Circuit as it is found in rural area with a high population of elderly illiterate people. Leaders in rural communities and schools tend to lead autocratically, with a perception that the people they lead are old, illiterate, and not interested in decision made. As a result, leaders do not see the necessity of employing an inclusivity approach in decision making processes. Hence, it was deemed necessary for the study to present a different perception that the current and argue based on empirical evidence that even elderly people and illiterate are interested in decision making process and that it is necessary to practice inclusivity in this regard. The sustainability of any modern school is characterised by collaboration which incorporates the inclusivity of all related parties in the resolution-making processes. However, one of the challenges facing the education sector is the lack of an understanding of engaging stakeholders. When communication sent to stakeholders lack two-way interaction it results in the organization failing to implement its mandate accordingly. The literature views stakeholder inclusivity as a key element in strategic decision-making processes. However, the current body of knowledge does not highlight the issue of stakeholder inclusivity in basic education. The study, therefore, maintains that documenting a study that focuses on adopting a consultative approach in the strategic decision-making processes of basic education schools bridges that gap. Through a qualitative approach that employed semi-structured in-depth interviews, the study found that stakeholders like teachers and school governing body (SGB) are included in decision-making processes, but parents are not participating in the resolution-making processes. The interviews conducted were fifty-four (54) in six (6) schools of the Hlanganani South Circuit. The study recommends that all stakeholders including parents form an essential part of the decision-making processes of their children's school and should, therefore, be included in decision-making processes.

## DEDICATION

I thank God, the Almighty who made it possible for me to study this Degree to completion. This output is dedicated to my late parents and grandparents who taught me that my family background does not determine my future and that if I put my mind to something, I can achieve it.

To my wife Ntsakiso Ruth, thank you for your firm and absolute support. We know that I would not have managed to complete this program (study) if it were not for your unconditional support. It was very difficult for you to have an inattentive partner during my endeavours in this study. We never had a normal relationship with love dynamics but thank you for understanding.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>GET</b>	General Education and Training
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Cooperation
<b>LEAPFROCS</b>	Leaders Engaging in Acceleration Performances Finding Retrospective Operation Corporate Sustainability
<b>LUP</b>	Life Urban Proof
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>SASA</b>	South African Schools Act
<b>SDM</b>	Shared Decision Making
<b>SDP</b>	School Development Plan
<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Motivating, Attainable, Relevant and Attainable
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>ToFs</b>	Theories of the firms
<b>WSE</b>	Whole school Evaluation

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Stakeholder inclusivity is an essential concept in stakeholder management (Rensburg, 2012; Haataja, 2020; Jeffrey, 2009). However, there is a paucity of stakeholder inclusivity research in the field of basic education. Although some scholars have considered stakeholder inclusivity in the context of tertiary education (Maria, Dimitris & Garyfallos, 2014), few similar investigations have been conducted in the field of basic education (Ho, 2001; Barratt, 2016). The lack of research alluded to above ignore the significance of including stakeholders in issues that affect their mandate (Owenvbiugie & Lyamu, 2014). Past studies have shown that the issue of inclusivity in primary and secondary education has focused on the inclusivity of learners with special needs in mainstream schools (Hurtado, Alvarado, Guillermo, 2018; Locks, Hurtado, Bowman & Oseguera, 2008). Therefore, the involvement of educators, the school governing body (SGB) and parents in the strategic decision-making processes acquired inadequate consideration. It is against this background that, this research explores how teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents are engaged in the resolution-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit. The research outcomes are expected to assist educational specialists and practitioners to engage educators, HODs, Principals, SGBs and parents in educational decisions. This chapter presents the problem statement, the context and background of the research problem, research questions and objectives, a brief reconsideration of the literature, research design, and research methods.

### **1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

There is growing evidence that illustrates that educators, school governing bodies (SGB), and parents play a decisive contribution to the evolution of a high-quality education system (Organization for Economic Corporation and Development, 2011; Alsubaie, 2016; Henard, 2012).

The Communicators' Handbook (2014), Smith (2015) and Holland (2009) stipulate the importance of the government's ability to recognize its employees as ambassadors in the strategic decision-making processes and implementing its vision. However, one of the challenges facing the education sector is that bureaucracy and a top-down approach drives policy development processes. Most of the stakeholders are only consulted at a public comment phase of the policy development, this is viewed as asking for their endorsement as opposed to genuine and constructive inputs. As such, educational policy developer's end up missing an opportunity to engage and learn from stakeholders and ultimately the policy reaches the implementation phase with loopholes. Implementers of the policy (teachers and parents) fail to implement it because, they do not understand it as they were not part of its development (Mabusela, 2017). Hence, there is an increasing awareness of the necessity for involving stakeholders accordingly in the system of education. This cross-sectional qualitative study intends to assess the inclusivity of stakeholders in the decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit.

### **1.3 THE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

During the colonial era, the education administration system was based on authoritarian leadership and a one-sided, top-down approach (Mchunu, 2010; Sibanda & Mathwasa, 2017; Naidoo, 2005; Williams, 2011). The principals and deputy principals were seen as reliable contributors to the leadership of the schools (DoE, 2000; Maja, 2016; Chitamba, 2019). The principals and deputy principals had the essential skills and experience to run the institutions without consulting other stakeholders like teachers, SGBs, and parents (Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2001). The responsibility of SGBs and parents in the education system during the apartheid regime was to spectate while schools were being led by the school principals, deputy principals and heads of department (HODs). Their contribution was deemed unnecessary, irrelevant, and invalid. Through the legacy of apartheid, teachers, SGBs and parents were strictly orientated to take orders (Mchunu, 2010). However, the inception of a democratic governance in South Africa in 1994 contended that the autocratic decision-making practice in education was not pertinent.

Such practices weakened the justifiable responsibility of the other stakeholders, which includes teachers, SGBs and parents to manage schools. The new system of education motivates schools to be their own managers (Onjoro, 2015; Mulford, 2003). The tasks and roles of leaders have been transformed in the new education era where principals, deputy principals, and heads of departments act as proactive participants in the education system with SGB, and Parents. The system of leadership in schools also changed with the introduction of the School Management Team (SMT). The purpose of the school management team (SMT), according to the DoE (2000), Ntuzela (2008) and Molefe (2013), is to work with other stakeholders such as teachers and other related stakeholders like the school governing body (SGB), and parents to develop School Development Plan (SDP), which is a tool for complementary change. Although the new system is in place, there still exists an exclusion of certain education stakeholders where unilateral decisions are still taken without engaging relevant stakeholders such as parents. It is against this background that this study aimed to analyse stakeholders' inclusivity in the resolution-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit.

#### **1.4 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To explore how educators, HODs, principals SGBs, and parents are involved in resolution-making processes.
- To describe the type of communication used to engage with educators, HODs, Principals, SGBs and parents on decision-making.
- To explore which approach is used to make decisions in the circuit.
- To explore the step in the decision-making processes which mostly engages teachers and other related stakeholders.

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study encourages a sense of democracy as in schools. Stakeholders have a right to participate in the education system through making contributions that can shape or change the system of education.

The new democratic laws and education policies also highlight the engagement of the stakeholders in the education system as a notion shift from the legacy of apartheid to democratic dispensation (DoE, 2000). The study shows the importance of stakeholder management and strewn the leadership as a point of departure in giving stakeholders an opportunity to use their capabilities, potentials, and expertise (Bell, 2004). This further encourages a sense of ownership of the schools by all stakeholders. The engagement of all stakeholders in decision making minimizes the risk of resistance to change by other educational stakeholders as they realize their recognition. Lack of resistance promotes teamwork and improves the quality of education.

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.6.1 Stakeholder Inclusivity**

Stakeholder inclusivity is the mutual engagement between the organisation and its stakeholders (Pedersen, 2006; Thabethe, 2017). It is the reciprocal approach of an organisation to its stakeholders that benefits both the organisation and stakeholders equally. This is possible by creating a platform for all stakeholders to participate with no fear of being dismissed or misjudged. The inclusivity of Stakeholders is an efficient tool that ensures that crucial participants are included and add to the decision-making processes (DoE, 2007). Innovation in the education sector is unlikely to prosper without the contributions of teachers, SGBs, and parents (Gichohi, 2015). Therefore, involving educators, SGBs, and parents in the decision-making process allows a mutual generation of the social ability needed for quality decisions in schools (Somech, 2010; Gemechu, 2014; Hayes, 1994). Hence the research focuses on the decentralisation of power and the creation of opportunities for teachers, SGB and parents to participate in the tactical resolution-making processes.

### **1.6.2 Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are groups or individuals whose contribution requires an organization's survival (Mori, 2010; Rawlins, 2006).



Stakeholders in education include everybody who can impact or be affected by an educational organisation, plan, or program (Abukari & Al-Hassan, 2016). The Department of Education (DoE, 2000) describes stakeholders as significant key players in the organisation like schools. Stakeholders are key players that can inspire the organisation and be inspired by the organisation. Descriptions by Nguyen (2010), Jager (2014) and Jefferey (2009) show stakeholders as active participants in the organization's survival. For the purposes of this study, stakeholders are individuals that are extensively affected by or can affect specific programs and policies of a school, this includes teachers, parents, teacher unions and legislators. Stakeholders contribute to the quality of decision-making processes used in the organisation. Hence it was to explore how they are given an opportunity to make valuable contributions to the education system.

### **1.6.3 Theoretical Framework**

The stakeholder theory centres mostly on the value of a created relationship between an organisation with its stakeholders (Friedman, 2009; Aaltonen, 2010; Khoza, 2015). The stakeholder theory suggests that engaging stakeholders is an instrument that recognises the magnitude of their association with the organisation (Hillman, 2001; Jeffrey, 2009). By involving stakeholders, organizations are showing dedication to stakeholders in a meaningful way (Mori, 2010; Boaz, 2018). Bal, Bryde, Fearon and Ochieng (2013) contend that an effective involvement of stakeholders includes clearly opening access to stakeholders, allowing their contributions and working together to plan and develop new organisational strategies. Therefore, educators, SGBs, and parents must be involved in the planning and tactical resolution-making processes of school plans. The theory guides the study on how school managers should manage relationships with their stakeholders. The theory of the firm on the other hand is a microeconomic conception stresses that an organisation survives and make decisions to extend profits (Murphy, 2020).

The theory of the firm advocates for collective decision-making approach and that excellent performance is an outcome of engaging all related stakeholders in a shared making processes within the network system of the employees' relationships with the organisation (Holmstrom & Tirole, 1987). The theory guides the study to chieve excellency through adopting the collective decision-making approach.

#### **1.6.4 The role of communication in stakeholders' inclusivity**

Communication is a fundamental approach to consolidating individual deeds to accomplish Organisational aims (Angelopulo & Barker, 2013; Abrahamsson, 2013; Mbhele, 2016). Communication appears as a connection between the organisation and its stakeholders (Mannya, 2012; Slabbert, 2015; Khoza, 2015). Effective communication proficiencies develop a significant idea for effective leadership in the organisation (Angelopulo & Barker, 2013). Through communication, an organisation creates a sustainable relationship with its stakeholders to attain collective organisational goals. The study conducted by Wang (2011) and Mbhele (2016) reveals that organisations possess two categories of communication which are symmetrical communication for deliberations and negotiations and asymmetrical communication mainly focusing on conveying instructions and guidelines. Symmetrical communication concentrates on fostering the exchange of ideas between an organisation and its stakeholders and assists an organisation in realising the concerns and needs of its stakeholders (Mertinelli, 2012; Mbhele, 2016). Grunig (2001) and Mathee (2011) describe symmetrical communication as cooperative communication where an organisation and stakeholders discuss ideas. Asymmetrical communication on the other hand is a unilateral kind of communication (Duffett, & Wakeham, 2016; Mathee, 2011) used to give and not negotiate orders. The study argues that one-way asymmetrical communication does not support the purpose of stakeholder inclusivity. Involving teachers, SGBs and parents in a decision-making process through collaborative symmetrical communication in the education system creates a foundation for inclusivity.

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS**

### **1.7.1 Research design**

The study adopted the qualitative, cross-sectional, and exploratory design which according to Creswell (2013) focuses on examining and acquiring insight into an unknown phenomenon in a short space of time. This design allowed the study to increase a comprehensive understanding of how stakeholders of the Hlanganani South Circuit are included in the decision-making process within a short space of time.

### **1.7.2 Data collection techniques**

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted through Zoom. The semi-structured interviews were deemed as a reliable approach whereby the researcher tried to understand educators, HODs, principals, SGBs, and parents when they discussed their comprehension of issues regarding decision-making processes (Seidman, 2006; Boyce & Neale, 2006).

The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask questions with follow-ups from the inputs of the respondents. The role of the interviewer was to create a dependence atmosphere and to advise respondents to talk about the topic in a wider manner (Mchunu, 2010). Semi-structured interview were suitable for capturing a nuanced perspectives and experiences of educators, principals, HODs, SGBs, and parents through acquiring in-depth information and evidence related to stakeholder engagement. The semi-structured interview was a vital tool to discover knowledge through interaction, conversations, and subjects from different life experiences. Furthermore, the shared information and experiences about stakeholder engagement were negotiable interpreted to enlarge the knowledge on the topic. The educators, HODs, principals, SGBs, and parents had more access to share their personal experiences related to stakeholder engagement.

### **1.7.3 The sampling methods and population**

#### **1.7.3.1 *Sampling method***

Purposive sampling was applied whereby the researcher's views were employed to keenly choose participants that could respond to the research questions and assist in meeting the aims of the research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). A purposive sampling technique was employed to get a sample from educators, HODs, SGBs, principals, and parents (Mabasa, 2018). The purposive sampling technique is normally utilised in qualitative investigations to identify and select the information-rich grounds for the most proper use of accessible resources (Tongco, 2007). This involves the recognition and choosing of people or groups of individuals who are competent and knowledgeable about the incidence of attention (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016; Lopez, Atran, Coley, Medin & Smith, 1997). A purposive sampling method placed the key stress on gaining a broader understanding by persisting to sample until no new important information was obtained.

#### **1.7.3.2 *The population and unit of analysis***

The population of the study included teachers, HODs, SGBs, school principals and parents of schools in Limpopo. The target population of the study were educators, SGBs, and parents of Vhembe West District. While, the accessible population of the research included teachers, SGBs, and parents situated in the Hlanganani South Circuit in the Vhembe West. The unit of analysis for this study consists of individuals: teachers, parents and SGBs of the Hlanganani South Circuit. The motive for choosing educators, HODs and principals is grounded on their full-time engagement with learners and their knowledge of producing quality results. The School Governing Bodies and parents are the main role players in the education system, they bestow most of their time with their children and their responsibility in nurturing them is significant to how they behave and learn in school.

Therefore, there is a need for engaging parents, and SGBs in children's education. Parental engagements and partnerships with related stakeholders are considered to enhance learners' educational performance from a deprived socio-economic circumstance (Edwards & Alldred, 2000). The engagement of parents, SGBs and association with interconnected and relevant educational stakeholders empowers learners' education unconditionally.

The population of this study comprised of six (6) schools in six (6) villages with 3 primary and 3 secondary schools of Hlanganani South Circuit of Vhembe District of Limpopo province. The population comprised of four (4) teachers per school (with one (1) HOD included per school), six (6) principals, twelve (12) SGBs (2 per school), 12 parents and a total of 54 participants was piloted.

## **1.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Information was analysed and interpreted with a computer program called Atlas-it. The data was accumulated in the form of an oral recording. Thematic analysis as per the qualitative technique of analysing qualitative data that recognises themes was used (Wagner, 2012). The data was coded with aliases to preserve privacy and anonymity.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

One of the problems that schools are encountering is a bureaucratic approach to decisions making. The principals and deputy principals manage schools alone, while educators take orders and instructions from the school managers. The purpose of this study was to explore how stakeholders are included in the decision-making process of the Hlanganani Education South Circuit. The orientation to the study, problem and context of the study, research objectives, and significance of the study, research design and methodology were presented in this chapter. The next chapter reviews the literature on stakeholder inclusivity.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section intends to present the theoretical framework and literature of the study. The study explored how educators, HODs, Principals, SGBs, and parents are involved in the decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit and the importance of engaging all related stakeholders in strategic administrative processes of schools in the circuit. The literature helped the researcher to focus on the topic, explain the issues, contextualise research, and lay a foundation for good research outcomes (Mbhele, 2017; Botha 2012; Latoree-Medina, 2013). The chapter describes the inclusion of educators, HODs, principals, SGBs and parents in strategic decision-making. The research maintains that stakeholder inclusivity plays an important role in the outcome of high-quality results. This chapter discusses the stakeholder theory, social system theory, theory of the firm, stakeholders, stakeholder inclusivity leadership style, and stakeholder management.

#### **2.2 STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVITY**

Stakeholder inclusivity is the process of exchanging information, modifying activities, sharing resources, and improving others' capacity for a reciprocated benefit and achieving a common goal (Mashego, 2000; Basson & Mestry, 2019). Stakeholder inclusivity can be perceived as a social and effective process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of practices that are planned and tend to make connections and lasting relations between the stakeholders (Serrano, 2021). Stakeholder inclusivity improves the quality and execution of decisions, contributes to public awareness of discussed issues, gives stakeholders a chance to express their concerns and empowers such stakeholders to take due account of such concerns, aiming thereby to promote accountability and transparency in the decision-making process and consolidate support for decisions taken (OECD, 2015).

Stakeholder inclusivity allows partnership for the promotion of the best interest of the school and anticipation of quality education for all learners at the school.

### **2.2.1 The roles of teachers in stakeholder inclusivity**

Miled (2019) and Boison (2020) define teachers as important stakeholders, who inspire the nature of education. Teachers are the minority in the governing body but they have an ultimate contribution to the decision-making processes which places them below the principal, parents, and SGBs in the power balance in the governing body (Van Wyk, 2007; Boison, 2020). Teachers play a fundamental role in the development of pedagogies, physical and online classrooms, and curricula that are reliable with learners' needs and their proficiency (King, 2011; Boison, 2020). The teachers' expertise is required in the decision-making processes for the mutual benefit of learners and schools at large. Teachers use their knowledge of the cultural configuration of their classes, their proficiency, institutional capacity, and learners' interests to coordinate stakeholders and design teachings that are significantly inclusive (Eras, 2016; Boison, 2020). Therefore, involving teachers in a strategic decision-making process empowers their roles and skills in mentoring children accordingly.

### **2.2.2 The roles of parents in stakeholder inclusivity**

The role of parents in stakeholder inclusivity is endorsed by the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996 Section 29) which asserts that only a parent member who is not employed at school can become a chairperson of the governing body. Parents may bring power and status from other backgrounds to their governing body's responsibilities (Van Wyk, 2004; Selamolela, 2019). Fish (2020) maintains that while the role of parents is said to be elusive, its central principles are asserting the cultural identities of their children, providing moral support to schools in some instances, providing resources and guiding schools to implement proposed programs. Parents are people who understand children's problems and their abilities (Sambo & Gumbo, 2015). This affirms that parents have a fundamental role in participating in the decision-making processes of their children's

education since contribute from the early childhood stage. Parents play a vital role in the development of stakeholder inclusivity in education although their part is noticeable at the primary and secondary levels of education (Mild, 2019; Boison, 2020).

### **2.2.3 The roles of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

The governing body (SGB) is in a position of trust as specified in the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996 Section 16). The relation of trust should filter all the activities of the governing body (Selamolela, 2019). Governance denotes the action or a way of governing, while management is the process of managing, treating and caring for the people in an organisation (Concise Dictionary, 1999). The basic rule of governance in a true democracy nevertheless is optimum service delivery at an ideal cost to realize the ultimate goal of creating a good quality of life for every citizen or stakeholder (Mabusela, 2017). The functions of SGBs form part of drawing a policy and skills for executing such policies (Mabusela, 2017; Ngidi, 2004). The SGBs are regarded as the main channel through which parents are allowed to participate in educational planning and decision-making processes (MoE, 2005). The SGBs are also expected to allow for quick reactions and actions regarding setbacks and opportunities that occur at schools, thereby improving the learning situation and consequently the quality of education (Simuyaba, 2022).

The roles of SGBs in the effective governance of public schools studied by Selamolela (2021) concentrated on how women can contribute to children's education, while the other roles of SGBs studied by Mohlala (2021) concentrated on the implementation of safety policy. The teacher involvement in the curriculum development studied by Alsubaie (2016) and the teacher-parent partnership in early childhood education curriculum development studied by Halimah and Mirawati (2020) focused on the roles of teachers and parents in curriculum development. However, these studies did not focus on the role of SGBs, parents and teachers as valuable stakeholders in strategic decision-making processes for both primary and secondary schools.



## 2.3 STAKEHOLDER THEORY

The stakeholder theory focuses on the organisation's obligations to build relationships with related stakeholders (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar & De Colle, 2010; Thulkanam, 2014). The theory was developed by Freeman (1984), Donaldson (1995), Harrison (2015) and Haataja (2020). The theory is related to strategic management, enlightening organisations to meet the needs of their stakeholders as an avenue to maintain a rapport with them. Organisations engage with stakeholders in various approaches and for diverse reasons. Freeman (1994), Kaler (2003) and Harrison (2015) present these reasons as normative, descriptive, and instrumental.

With the normative approach, organisations go into relationships with their stakeholders in response to the ethical and moral responsibilities they have towards stakeholders (Thulkanam, 2014; Harrison, 2015). Stakeholders are believed to have intrinsic value, regardless of their capacity to assist the organisation in strategic decision-making processes (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman & Miles, 2006). Therefore, this approach contends that one stakeholder group cannot be superior to the other, because each stakeholder has inherent value (Free, 2010; Evans & Freeman, 1993). This suggests that the normative approach stresses the significance of a collaborative approach where all stakeholders have innate importance, and their inputs and views are needed to enhance the strategic decision-making process. When the school management makes use of unilateral decisions without consulting and engaging with teachers, HODs, SGBs, and parents who have intrinsic value as stakeholders, they are working contrary to the normative stakeholder theory approach. They also ignore the significance of the collaborative approach in achieving quality education but pursue their power and personal interests in strategic decision-making (Atkinson, 2007; Wanat, 2010; Zayaeva, 2014).

The Descriptive approach focuses on stakeholder salience or the importance of each stakeholder group in the organisation. The theory recognises that stakeholders have their own interests that influence the organisation in different ways, and the organisation must

find a fair system to balance the interests of each group (Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2012; Donaldson, 1995; Haataja, 2020). This approach encourages empowerment, entrusting, and confidence in all related stakeholders in the education system including educators, SGB, parents and the community (Mestry, 2017; Kilicoglu, 2018; Mulford, 2003). The instrumental approach maintains that organisations involve stakeholders to maximise profit (Mainardes, Silva & Drug, 2011; Garard, 2017). The engagements of an organisation with its stakeholders focus mainly on achieving financial goals. Stakeholders are involved to assist the organisation in foreseeing future opportunities and fears and consequently plan new strategies for survival (O'Higgins, 2010; Jeffery, 2009; Thabethe, 2017).

The study adopts the normative and descriptive approach of the stakeholder theory as it attests to the arguments of the study that organisations could not be justifiable if they do not satisfy, to some magnitude, the needs of related stakeholders. The stakeholder theory is mostly used to guide studies on corporate matters, this study uses the theory from a different perspective of education arguing that teachers, HODs, SGBs and parents are also stakeholders that need to participate in strategic decision-making processes.

## **2.4 SOCIAL SYSTEM THEORY**

Social system theory is mainly a remarkable high-quality theory as it looks back upon a history portrayed by superior theoretical ambitions, concentrations of difference and paradigm change (Luhamann, 1984). Bertalanffy (1968), Mayrhofer (2004) and Brazhnikov (2017) defined social system theory as a general science of totality. Barker and Angelopulo (2013) and Baraldi (2017) explain the social system theory as a set of interrelatedness components that form a unity or involve a whole. The concept of 'holism' alludes that the whole is more significant than the sum of its parts. This theory views an organisation as comprising sections or parts of a system such as stakeholders that should work together for the success of an entity. Adams (2012) argues that each system function is supported by subsystems with special responsibilities.

Adams (2012) adopts the view of Sawyer (2005) where he compared the system's functions and subsystem's roles to the structure of the human body's organs. This implies that stakeholders of an organisation are dependent on each other to either fit well together and function efficiently or fit inadequately and create problems and malfunctions that cause the organisations to perform below their expected potential. This study focused on stakeholder inclusivity and argued that stakeholder inclusivity allows components of the organisation that are stakeholders to function well as one system (Palmius, 2010; Abeysekera, 2005).

In the past, organisation philosophers considered organisations as a closed system, while presently organisations are viewed as an open system with continuous interaction with stakeholders. The open system offers many novel solutions to the organisation. The open system concept forms the first of the two parts of the system theory (David, 2008; Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010; Chikere, Cornell & Nwoka, 2015). The first part of the system theory is an acceptance of the participatory approach which requires stakeholders' contributions and accountable participation in resolution-making processes.

The second part focuses on the effect of changes in the organisation. According to Mutwiri (2015), Ohlson (2007) and Abbas (2010) any change in one part of the organisation has an impact on the other parts of the organisation. Therefore, its changes occur, and stakeholders are not engaged in those changes, this will affect them and the components that depend on them are the learners and quality education. Mutwiri (2015) and the OECD (2005) sustain that the achievement of schools is inspired by the successful interaction with related stakeholders. The systems theory suggests that systems of education have one common goal, which is to achieve learners' academic performance as an outcome of successful stakeholder engagement (OECD, 2000; Lewin, 2015; Ndaruhutse, 2019). The study argues that inclusivity allows the manifestation of the systems theory in schools.

## **2.4.1 Elements of Social system theory**

### **2.4.1.1 Cultural system**

Cultural inclusion focuses mainly on the organisational situation that permits people with diverse cultures, beliefs, and ways of thinking to work efficiently together and perform to their highest capacity to achieve organisational objectives (Maak & Pless, 2004). In such situations, diverse views are heard, and respected, various perspectives and approaches are esteemed, and every stakeholder is encouraged to make meaningful contributions. People who feel recognised and equal while diverse and who know that they can be their true selves, particularly in the workplace, are motivated to give their best (Maak & Pless, 2004).

When people work together, they share values, beliefs, and habits, and build a new identity as a group. Bozkus (2014) and Guglielmi (2007) believe that culture is the greatest noticeable feature of an organisation's life which differentiates it from other organisations. Culture meaningfully influences behaviour by ascertaining commitment to collective norms amongst the people. Members of the organisations have attitudes that inspire them to behave favourably (Rokeach, 1972). Therefore, each member's attitudes are collected in a pool known as culture (Bozkus, 2014; Guglielmi, 2007). This further maintains that various attitudes of people constitute a culture which motivates them to interact. Through these interactions, people start to share norms and values.

The cultural system element informs this study about the importance of collective attitudes, beliefs, and values in forming a unified culture which also inspired interactions between individuals of the Hlanganani South Circuit. Culture determines the stakeholder inclusivity implementation (Schein, 2016; Freeman, 2010; OECD, 2015). Valuing the diversity that each stakeholder member brings will encourage teachers, SGB, parents and other related stakeholders to play a significant role when participating in the strategic decision processes. They will participate constructively because they will be in an environment where their differences are respected and valued.

### **2.4.1.2 Individual system**

Individuals have various kinds of needs and beliefs that affect their conduct (Bozkus, 2014; Baskerville, 2011; Jaradat, 2014). Through stakeholder inclusivity, the stakeholders or individuals have a platform to express themselves which allows their potential to be realised. Hoy and Miskel (2005) further maintain that social conduct is created by the communication of administrative prospects and people's needs. The interactions of stakeholders in the strategic decision-making processes impact self-growth that further extends to the collective growth of the organisations or schools. The attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, motivations, habits, and expectations of human beings are essential components of the social system, their positive feelings toward the organisation meaningfully affect the inclusive health of the system.

Their needs, perceptions, beliefs, expectations, and motivation form the basis of interpretation. This element of the social system theory informs the study about the diversity of people in relation to needs, beliefs, attitudes, habits, expectations, and perceptions which contribute to the success of the organisation. Stakeholder inclusivity allows the stakeholder to express their self, and expectations, create perceptions with other stakeholders, and form a belief system and a habit of doing things together. Such practices contribute to the successful functioning of an entity because different ideas get to be shared for better strategies, and stakeholders realise themselves and grow in the process which ultimately grows the organisation. Common perceptions and beliefs about the organisation are formed and the organisation achieves integration or uniformity.

### **2.4.1.3 Political system**

Politics certainly appear in the organisation (Almond, 1969; Senge, 1990; Sysdykov, 2016). Politics develops from the interactions of leadership experts and power within the organisation (Bozkus, 2014; Senge, 1990). According to Bozkus (2014) and Sysdykov (2016), the political system has three sources of power in the organisation.

Formal power comes from the organisational system, the cultural system creates informal power and individuals also have the power of capacity. Bozkus (2014) and Helderburg (2020) believe that politics is a platform where individuals use their influence to forward their appeals to the relevant organisation. The political system usually focuses on individualistic needs and ignores the organisational role prospect and therefore, it benefits individual interests only. Mintzberg (1983) and Dzuniga (2019) further maintained that politics can provide many advantages. This includes accountability in the execution of the policy and other responsibilities. Politics further encourages the respect of rights, consultations, stakeholder engagements and appropriate application of the rules. Bozkus (2014) and Helderburg (2020) affirmed that the political system forces schools to be accountable to their environment.

This element guides schools to consider external forces and act towards their appeals to produce academic results. For this reason, schools are obliged to an open system by political forces. Essentially when the political system is related to an open approach and shares many similarities. Politics are informal and dishonest, yet an unavoidable factor affecting organisational behaviour (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Janezi, 2020). This element of social system theory informs the study to consider the role and importance of politics and how politics emphasise accountability and legitimacy of which stakeholder engagements are an outcome of.

#### **2.4.2 Theory of the firm**

The theory of the firm in neoclassical economies is a method for economic institutions concentrating on the resolve of goods, outputs and income distributions in markets (organization) through supply and demand (Murphy, 2020). A theory of the firm is a microeconomic notion that asserts that a firm survives and makes decisions to extend profits (Murphy, 2020). The nature of decision-making within the firms is more collective than individual members in the organization. The firm performance is the result of complex shared decision-making processes within a network system of employees' relationships with the organisation (Holmstrom & Tirole, 1987).

The role of the neoclassical approach in attracting its stakeholders fits in stakeholder inclusivity through engaging such stakeholders to maximize profits. Theories of the firm have the responsibility of answering four questions on the nature of firms: Why do firms exist? Why are their boundaries as they are? Why are they organized the way they are? And why are they so heterogeneous? (Coase, 1937; Spender & Kraaijenbrink, 2011). The theories of the firms (ToFs) have two steps of comparison thereby steps reveal the differences between the ToFs and summarise the groups of ToFs that are parallel (Kraaijenbrink, 2011). The first family of ToFs respect the firm as a package of assets. Kraaijenbrink (2011) discovered two families in the theory of the firm.

The first family of ToFs deems the firm as a collection of assets. These theories mainly concentrate on the means that firms use as a basis for their feasible advantage, including tangibles, intangibles, capital, and capacity. Such theories fundamentally answer the question of why firms are heterogeneous. Such theories emphasize that obtaining asserts alone is not satisfactory, but also needs to be combined and integrated (Kraaijenbrink, 2011). The second family of ToFs at the atomistic level considers firms as a bundle of contacts. The family shifts the central fact of analysis away from a firm's assets to the different human interests and the current intentions of the firm (Kraaijenbrink, 2011). The ToFs deem the firm as an interest alignment system that involves stakeholder theory, political theory and principal-agent theory.

The interests of the organisation and interests of the stakeholders drive the theory of the firm to adjust its programmes accordingly and this is feasible through stakeholder engagement. The political theory is further possible through engaging with workers' unions on the interests, concerns, and rights of the employees. The theory emphasises supply and demand and fits well in organisations that are profit-orientated. The study argues that the theory also fits in an organisation that is legitimacy-focused like a school where there is a demand for transparency and participation from stakeholders and the organisation being the school in this context needs to supply inclusivity to meet the demand from stakeholders. This theory guides schools to operate like profit-based entities and adhere to the supply-demand principle existing in their field.

## 2.5 DIALOGIC RELATIONS THEORY

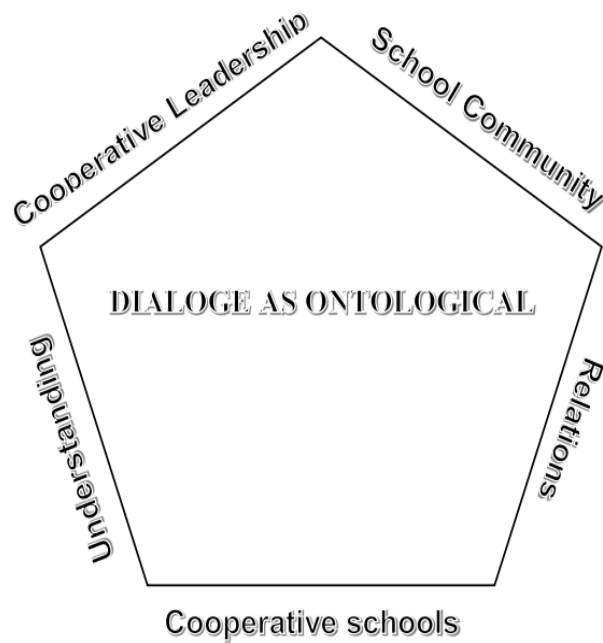
The dialogical framework is focused on the principle that dialogue is central to humans and is, therefore, ontological. Dialogue is ontological in the sense that it is a way of life where people are open to each other irrespective of different views (Bakhtin, 1984; Kriegel, 2019; Parvizi, 2015). Dialogue is an effort to engage teachers, HODs, SGBs, Parents and other related stakeholders in strategic decision-making and allows management and teachers to be open to each other on issues that affect or need special attention in their working environment. According to Bakhtin (1984), "To live means to participate in a dialogue". In supporting Bakhtin (1984), Shields and Edwards (2005) believe that dialogue, like relationship and understanding, is a basic of life and allows growth and change. Therefore, dialogue is a fundamental unit for social relations and engagements of stakeholders to participate in the 'I-You relationship'. This relationship respects and recognises the views of others, management and stakeholders treat each other as human beings regardless of different views. Therefore, school leaders need to strive for this relationship (Giles, 2008; Matusov, 2014; Murphy, 2020). Through the creation of a mutual relationship, dialogue acts as a basic unit of stakeholder inclusivity, Reitz (2017) and Hersted (2013) believe that successful collaboration starts from dialogue. This forms part of mutual engagement among educational stakeholders.

Through the 'I-You relationship' Buber (1970) asserts that people engage in a dialogue involving each other's entire being and therefore, encourage mutuality. Freire (2000) and Scott (2009) also support the notion 'I-You relationship' by stating that dialogue is the 'I-You relationship' and therefore essential in a bond between two subjects. In other words, relationships cannot fulfil their purpose when leaders disregard mutual engagement between the organisation and its stakeholders. Consequently, dialogic relationships grow, change and learn through respecting other people's views and inputs. This further shows that dialogic relation is not a biased and inequitable viewpoint, but it is a cooperative and two-way view that allows other teachers as stakeholders to make their submissions to the school management without fear and being intimidated or undermined.



Gadamer (2004) and Shirkhani, Nesari and Feilinezhad (2015) alluded that understanding is important to human existence, and dialogue aims for it. Gadamer (2004:143) maintains that “To understand is to participate immediately in life, without any mediation through concepts”. This suggests that understanding is centred around participation. Through participation stakeholders like SGB, teachers and parents acquire more experiences and information and in return bring more experiences to the school management team (SMT). This means that for one to comprehend, one must be honest, positioned, committed and willing to ask for clarity and this is possible through participating or stakeholder inclusivity (Jeffery, 2009; Bourne, 2016; Jooste, 2010).

**Figure 2.1** Dialogic relations theory



*Source: Orzel (2012)*

As per Figure 2.1, The dialogue relations theory combines the notions of cooperative governance, community and dialogue to view school leadership from various perceptions (Mulford, 2003; Tobin, 2014; Leithwood, 2003).

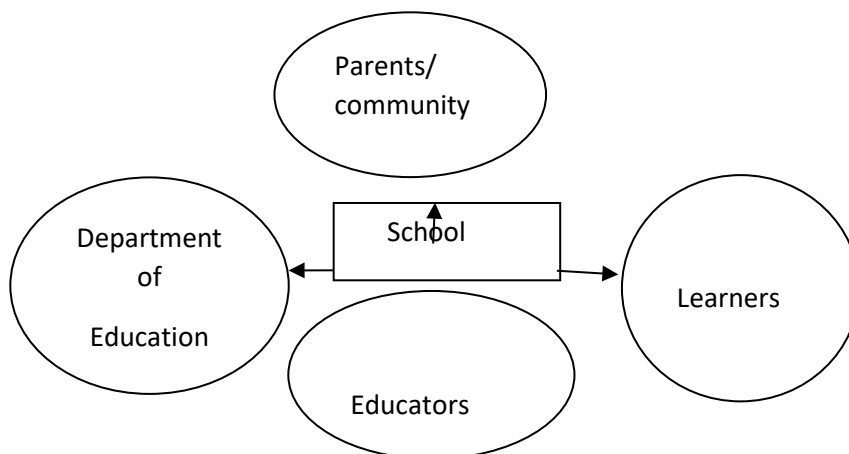
School principals concentrated on social justice, equity and access, treating all stakeholders with absolute respect (Gilman, 2005; Schroeder, 2019; Jones, 2007). School leaders, when concentrating on cooperative leadership, can create a sense of community with differences, to create access to dialogue and stakeholder inclusivity. The dialogue was studied focusing on interaction and digital approaches in the leadership pedagogy which concentrated mainly on national education leadership by McCarton, McNaughtan, Jackson and Olesova (2020). However, it was not studied within education as a tool for quality education and successful academic performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.6 STAKEHOLDER

The International Finance Cooperation (2007) and Freeman (1984) describe a stakeholder as an individual who is directly or indirectly affected and can affect the interests of an organisation positively or negatively. According to the model presented in Figure 2.2, the school acts as a kingpin of all education stakeholders. The education system has various stakeholders that can influence the mandate of schools. The stakeholders are the school principal who represents the education department, parents, educators, and learners.

**Figure 2.2: Input-Output Model**



*Source: Donaldson and Preston (1995)*

## **2.6.1 Categories of stakeholders**

### **2.6.1.1 *An Influencer stakeholder.***

Influencer stakeholders according to Miles (2017), Liang (2017) and Bourne (2005) have the power to motivate the actions of the organisation and have an operational plan to do so. The influencer stakeholders have a high ability to damage or cooperate with the organisation. They have the power to impact an organisation (Miles, 2017; Bourne, 2017). Phillips (2003) and Jeffery (2009) also attest that the influencer stakeholders can assist or impede the achievement of the organisation's objectives. The influencer stakeholders have the power to either manipulate or empower programmes and issues to be executed. The possibility and capacity of stakeholders to influence depend on the extent of stakeholders' networks. Educators are the implementers of the curriculum and without them, the curriculum cannot be implemented. Therefore, teachers have the power to influence the education system positively when they implement the curriculum and negatively when they do not implement the curriculum. They are, therefore, the influencer stakeholder group. According to Miles (2017) and Bourne (2017), the management of the organisation should be transparent with the influencer stakeholders to build trust and great teamwork. Therefore, schools should practice transparency through stakeholder inclusivity to manage their influencer stakeholder.

### **2.6.1.2 *A Collaborator stakeholder***

A Collaborator stakeholder collaborates with the organisation but lacks motivating strategies (Miles, 2017; Ferro-Soto, 2018). Collaborator stakeholder helps to reduce or bridge the gap in the interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders. The main purpose of the collaborator stakeholders is to work together with an organisation toward sustainable goals (Ayala-Orozo, Rossell, Mercon, Bueno, Alatorre-Frenk, Langle-Flores & Lobato, 2018). An example of collaborator stakeholders, according to Freeman (1994), are participants in the individual process of shared value creation. This includes parents of learners who work together with schools in disciplining and guiding the learning of their children according to the strategies of teachers.

They work together with schools so that the goal of good academic performance is achieved. Therefore, including them in the resolution-making process of schools will enable them to align their participation with the decisions and strategies of schools.

### **2.6.1.3      *A Recipient Stakeholder***

A recipient stakeholder is affected by the procedures of the organisation (Miles, 2017). Recipients are obstructed involuntarily through more existence, such as local community members suffering from air pollution (Miles, 2017; Jeffery, 2009; Nguyen, 2010). According to this perception recipient stakeholders do not have the capacity to submit claims to the organisation or choose to remain silent if they think the issue is not serious. An example of a recipient is Clarkson's (1994) conceptualisation as stakeholders are positioned at risk as an effect of the organisation's activities. Recipient stakeholders in the education system are learners who receive education and motivations from various stakeholders (Logermann, 2014; Mchunu, 2010). Learners are taught by educators daily, encouraged by the Department of Education and other related stakeholders for example companies through bursaries and other incentives. The collaboration of teachers, SGBs, and parents plays a significant role in bringing quality collaborative leadership and quality education with quality results for learners.

## **2.7      THE PURPOSE OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Stakeholder engagement involves the sharing of information, consultation, and participation in decision-making (Khodyakov, Bromley, Evans & Sieck, 2018; Jeffery, 2009; Silviu, 2019). Stakeholder engagement is engaging relevant stakeholders to create a mutual association between the organisation and its stakeholders. This is possible through requesting inputs, knowledge and information sharing, creation of formal and informal partnerships and teaming up with each other in resolution-making processes. Gichohi (2015) identified the intentions of stakeholder engagement which were discovered by Koopman and Wiersdman (1998) as humanistic or democratic.

According to Gichohi (2015) and Fitzgerald (2016), individuals have a legal right to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Gichohi (2015) further recognised the second motive of stakeholder engagement as human relations which was also discovered by O'Hair and Reitzug (1997). From a pragmatic point of view, involvement improves the quality of educational decision-making processes (Gichohi, 2015; Usman, 2016; Mupa, 2015). Stakeholders' involvement is believed to provide administrators access to essential information closer to the source of problems of schooling, for example, classroom management strategies (Gichohi, 2015). He further argues that enlarged access to and the use of this information increases the quality of curricula. Furthermore, the engagement of different professions can also advance the quality of decisions taken using different experts' knowledge and information (Henard, 2012; Gichohi, 2015; Durisic, 2017). This further shows that teacher inclusivity with curriculum development teams, school management and other related stakeholders contributes positively to the quality of education and meeting learners' needs.

## **2.8 STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT**

According to Luoma-aho (2008) and Jeffery (2009) stakeholders are made up of groups that affect and are affected by the actions, policies and proceedings of the organisation and their support is exclusively required by the organisation. Through stakeholder management, organisations can acknowledge, analyse, and evaluate the interests and concerns of stakeholders or groups that can inspire and be inspired by the organisation (Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2011; Luoma-aho, 2008). Teachers, SGB, parents and community members as education stakeholders are concerned with the actions, policies, and proceedings of the schools. Therefore, schools have the responsibility of recognising, analysing, and assessing the interest and distress of teachers, SGB, and parents since they have a direct influence on learners' academic performance and their efforts are legitimately inspired by the leadership of the schools.

Many academics and philosophers propose stakeholder management as a planned role for public relations (Johanston & Sheehan, 2014; Doorley & Garcia, 2011; Harrison, 2011; L'Etang, 2008). Other academics argued that it is the ability of organisations to safeguard that stakeholders are fully involved, knowledgeable, and have a gist of significance in an organisation (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014; Dickie & Dickie, 2011; KPMG, 2013; Audi, 2009). Carroll and Buchholtz (2014) outline that stakeholder management is centred on preserving stakeholders in constructive relationships with an organisation to attain organisational goals. The leadership of schools or school management should, therefore, focus on the creation and maintenance of a mutual long-term relationship with stakeholders to collectively improve learners' academic performance. This is possible through engaging and consulting teachers, SGB, parents and other related stakeholders in a strategic management team or school management of issues.

Relationship management skills are an interdisciplinary function and start a foundation of knowledge transference between organisation and stakeholders (Johanston & Sheehan, 2014; L'Etang, 2008). The maintaining of reciprocal relationships between the school management and stakeholders acts as a basic unit of transparency. This inclusivity is further guided by consultation and respecting the contributions and capacity of other stakeholders like teachers, SGBs, and parents in the education system. Stakeholder inclusivity significantly attempts to support stakeholders' conduct and performance with a status interest of an organisation and is mostly achieved through open and strategic organisational communication (Garcia, 2011; Gill, 2014).

Stakeholder engagement meaningfully tried to bring teachers, SGB, parents and other related stakeholders' conduct and performance in line with the interests of schools moreover, this encourages honest and fair engagement in the strategic decision-making process. Contributions of educators, SGBs, and parents in resolution-making processes play a meaningful role in improving collective school performance through mutual and open interaction with the leadership. This symbolises ethics and if implemented continually, it forms a moral belief of the school.

## **2.8.1 The principles for effective stakeholder engagement**

### **2.8.1.1 *Commitment***

Is shown when the need to understand, involve and recognise a stakeholder is acknowledged and acted upon immediately. Commitment is mainly focusing on the extra efforts of the management to involve stakeholders in decision-making processes.

### **2.8.1.2 *Integrity***

Occurs when engagement promotes reciprocal respect and faith. It's an exercise where organisations engage stakeholders with respect and form a trustworthy relationship with them. This means that manipulation, exploitation, and undermining should be avoided during engagements.

### **2.8.1.3 *Respect***

Respect is established when human rights, traditional faiths, interests and ideals of stakeholders are acknowledged. The acknowledging of the constitutional rights of teachers, SGB, parents and other related stakeholders to participate meaningfully in stakeholder inclusivity acts as a key point in implementing respect as a principle of stakeholder engagement.

### **2.8.1.4 *Transparency***

Is shown when stakeholders' concerns are given the necessary attention in a timely, open, and effective way. Transparency implies openness and honesty when involving stakeholders. The school managers and SMT need to be honest and not withholding issues to be discussed by all related stakeholders including teachers, HODs, SGBs, and parents.

### **2.8.1.5      *Inclusivity***

Is attained when comprehensive contribution is encouraged and maintained by suitable contributions of all related stakeholders. Neglecting or isolating some or other stakeholders on issues that need their attention could impede the effective implementation of stakeholder inclusivity. The stakeholders' contributions in a strategic decision-making process are an efficient execution of stakeholder engagement.

### **2.8.1.6      *Trust***

This is accomplished through an open and significant exchange of ideas that respects and supports stakeholders' beliefs and views. The school managers and the SMTs needed to have confidence in the capacity, knowledge, skills, and experience of teachers, SGB, parents and other related stakeholders to be relevant in decision-making processes. The above principles inform the study about the importance of integrating all these in strategic management and stakeholder inclusivity. The commitment of the management through recognising and respecting teachers, SGB, parents and other related stakeholders as significant stakeholders for participating in strategic decision-making processes plays a significant role in the success of stakeholder inclusivity. This encourages both the organisation and stakeholders to trust and respect each other and to be honest and transparent during stakeholder inclusivity exercises. Krumovgrad Gold Project (2014) and Osborne (2017) also confirmed that effective stakeholder engagement forms a "social science" to function and rely on reciprocal trust, respect and transparent communication among the organisation and its stakeholders. And finally, this mutual relation enhances the organisation's decision-making processes.

## **2.8.2            *Stakeholder engagement approaches***

### **2.8.2.1        *One-on-one meetings***

One-on-one meetings allow participants to directly share experiences (Du Plooy, 2009). One-on-one meetings are naturally done in a face-to-face context and need allocation of



time (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). One-on-one meetings present a harmless platform where stakeholders can discuss affairs without having to take or defend their positions. This confirms that day-to-day individual meetings with main stakeholders are the most appropriate ways whereby expectations and disputes are deliberated.

#### **2.8.2.2      *Focus group***

A Focus group is a typical collection of participants that share a related experience, but such a group is not innately established like a surviving group (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2010). Focus groups focus mainly on engaging 6-12 participants concurrently who are sharing the same experiences and values (Du Plooy, 2009). Focus group is an effective and flexible means of getting response, on the organisation's treatment of different issues or to learn how stakeholders view issues. The main advantage of focus groups is that leaders of groups have an opportunity to notice a large number of interactions on a topic in a short space of time (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). Teachers, SGB, and parents as educational stakeholders can be engaged for the management to apply an effective resolution-making processes effectively and quickly.

#### **2.8.2.3      *Inviting written response from stakeholders***

Stakeholders have an opportunity to voice their concerns and make suggestions and inputs without attending formal meetings but through writing (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). This assists in making a list of committed stakeholders for further engagements. The suggestions, concerns and inputs of all stakeholders are given equal attention by the organisation (Du Plooy, 2009; Walliman, 2011).

#### **2.8.2.4      *Telephone hotlines***

Telephone conversations save money and time (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). The other essential factor is that personal safety on the telephone can be ensured (Dillman, 1978; Babbie & Mouton, 2011). The stakeholders using this approach react to the subject

presented by the organisation through telephone communication (Babbie & Mouton, 2011; Walliman, 2011). This prevents a comprehensive dialogue but allows stakeholders to receive information and react too quickly in a confidential way (Du Plooy, 2009).

#### **2.8.2.5      *Online engagement mechanisms***

The stakeholders are required to acquire relevant skills and knowledge to use technology (Krick, Forsaker, Monaghan & Sillanpaa, 2005). An online engagement system reaches across the distance and allows stakeholders to participate without attending formal meetings. Nevertheless, it is so significant to notice who can and who cannot meet technological requirements to participate responsibly in a system. Mainly when organisations are engaging with less advanced communities where technology is a challenge, it will be a disadvantage to engage with all stakeholders using online mechanisms.

#### **2.8.2.6      *Involving stakeholders in investigating issues, and drafting reports and policies***

According to Krick, Forsaker, Monaghan and Sillanpaa (2005), stakeholder groups are hired to write on important matters or to comment on drafts prepared internally. This shows that stakeholder groups are not members of the organisation but are given a responsibility to participate in activities of advising the organisation on how to apply organisational policies. The multi-stakeholder groups consist of internal and external stakeholders who may work collectively in developing a report or policy. The obligation of the organisation is to ensure that the aim of the policy or report and a way to interpret it into action output cannot just be a paper but serve its purpose accordingly.

#### **2.8.2.7      *Surveys***

A survey technique for stakeholder inclusivity means a method of communication where participants respond to questions based on issues related to the interaction of an

organisation with its stakeholders. The basic objective of surveys is to accumulate consistent data that present guidance for action (Krick, Forsaker, Monaghan & Sillanpaa, 2005; Zikmund, 2013; Kotzab, 2005). As for its one-way communication approach, it does not precisely encourage the creation of trust among organisations and stakeholders. The responses of participants which act as feedback will be communicated to survey stakeholders. Surveys can be piloted online, via post, telephonically and personally. The decision-making processes cannot adopt this approach since it mostly focuses on one-way communication and disregards the creation of reciprocal relationships, while decision-making processes focus on mutual interactions of stakeholders.

#### **2.8.2.8 Stakeholder advisory**

Stakeholders are requested by the organisation to submit advice and remarks on certain issues or reassess views (Krick, Forsaker, Monaghan & Sillanpaa, 2005; Kotzab, 2005). With reference to this study teachers, SGBs, parents and community members as stakeholders are asked to make submissions and advice to the organisations (unions) or schools through any platform of communication on issues. Stakeholders offer guidance and understanding as individuals, not as delegates of their organisations or constituencies (communities), this makes understanding of terms of reference easier. The members of the panel act on behalf of the group, a key task of the organisation is to ensure that the panel is representative and has sufficient skills to report back to their constituencies and warrant support. The advisory panel is made up of members from different groups or with a single participant signifying a single organisation (Krick, Forsaker, Monaghan & Sillanpaa, 2005; NHREC, 2012). The educational advisory panel is formed by SMTs, SGB and Unions that offer guidance to teachers and other related stakeholders on educational issues. The members of the advisory are not on their own but representing their groups and are responsible for submitting feedback in the meetings unbiased. Members of SMTs, Unions, SGBs and parents represent people and serve the interests of the people and therefore participate and give feedback to their constituency.

For stakeholder inclusivity to be achieved in schools, the representation should focus on balancing delegation and be cautious that excluding other members could devalue the whole process, its mandate, and its mission.

### **2.8.3 The levels of stakeholder engagement**

Stakeholder engagement is a consultation process of attending to shared problems by seeking and considering stakeholder inputs to arrive at a justifiable decision outcome (Nile Basin Initiative, 2016). According to the Nile Basin Initiative (2016), the process safeguards those decisions centred on the shared knowledge and experience of stakeholders, allowing sufficient opportunities for stakeholders to inspire the process and outcome of the decision-making process. The stakeholder engagement according to Life Urban Proof (2016) comprises the following levels:

#### **2.8.3.1 Collaborative**

Stakeholders signified at this level are the most beneficial for the programme and they are recognised as possible providers of information, permissions and resources that may be meaningfully impacted by the outcome of the programme. This includes the Provincial Head of Department (HOD), District Senior Managers (DSM), Circuit Managers and school Principals. These people have more authority in the implementation of education policy and programmes and the level of stakeholder inclusivity affects them. Their inclusion in the strategic decision-making processes of schools also affects them. Therefore, at a collaboration level of decision-making teachers should be included.

#### **2.8.3.2 Involve**

Stakeholders shown in this level of engagement are highly influential but have little interest in the programme or low ability or resources to be involved. As a result, they might have a positive influence over the success of the programme or project, but difficult to participate throughout the programme.

According to Life Urban Proof (2016), a certain attempt is essential to engage this group in a programme and such efforts should start as early as possible in the programme process. In reference to this study, provincial School Governing Bodies (SGB) have a high influence in various schools, but less capacity in the direct implementation of school decisions. At the involved level of engagement, schools should strive to involve SGB members in decision-making processes.

### **2.8.3.3 Consult**

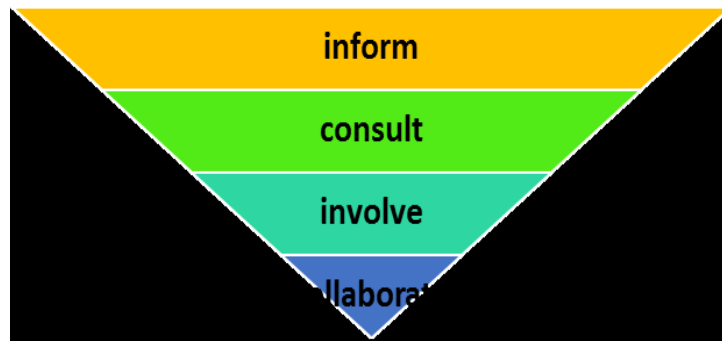
Stakeholders represented at this level have interest with low influence in the programme and even though they could support the programme, they lack the competency to meaningfully participate in the programme. These are borderline stakeholders who are hard to reach and might need special attention to safeguard their involvement and to empower them to equally engage in the programme process with more influential stakeholders. The curriculum and Head of Department in schools monitor and advise on the implementation of education, they, therefore, fall under the consult level. These people mostly are not teaching, but advice and monitor the work done by the teachers and learners. Therefore, they should be consulted when decisions are made in schools. So that their advice falls within the parameters of policies.

### **2.8.3.4 Inform**

The stakeholders here have little interest in a programme or project outcome. It is not important to involve them in much detail or to accomplish certain attempts to engage with them when programme resources are limited (Life Urban Proof, 2016). Learners have little interest in the education system outcome. Learners particularly have fewer interests in participation in learning situations. Therefore, they are normally informed of decisions taken. The levels of stakeholder engagement in educational perspectives will be different but the intentions of levels will still be the same. The participation of educational stakeholders in strategic decision-making will assist management in redirecting the policy implementation on issues that affect both learners and teachers.

Teachers are significant stakeholders who directly interact with learners and directly implement educational policies through teaching learners daily.

**Figure 2.3: Levels of stakeholder engagement**



*Source: Life urban proof: Climate Proofing Urban Municipalities (2016)*

## **2.9 STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVITY**

The literature on the stakeholder-inclusive approach received worldwide attention Langeni (2018), Engelbrecht (2009) and Solomon and Maronn (2012). In South Africa, the King 111 Report on business governance, amongst other publications was published in response to recognising the significance of stakeholder inclusivity (Rensburg & De Beer, 2011). According to Slabbert (2016), stakeholder inclusivity allows organisational stakeholders to be listened to and have their concerns considered. Stakeholder inclusivity can be defined as a different communication practice, processes, and activities that an organisation is required to implement to involve stakeholders and safeguard their participation (Bourne, 2015). Stakeholder inclusivity signifies the organisation's venture to include strategic stakeholders in a decision-making process, to extrinsically motivate participation in organisational events and to acknowledge the potential inspiration that one's action may have to another (Magee, 2012). Stakeholder engagement will be free of exploitation, obstruction, intimidation, and oppression when managed based on well-timed, relevant, reasonable, and accessible information, in a culturally appropriate structure (Krumovgrad Gold Project, 2014).

Stakeholder inclusivity highlights the necessity for engagement to be far-reaching, comprehensive, and stable (Amaeshi & Crane, 2006:249). This affirms that engagement acts as a kingpin for stakeholder inclusivity. The literature describes stakeholder engagement as a process of including people and groups that are affected by the actions of the organisation constructively (Greenwood, 2007; Sloan, 2009). Educators, SGBs, and parents as educational stakeholders have a right to participate in the strategic decision-making processes of schools since they are affected by the outcomes of schools. The Institute of Stakeholders' Studies defined stakeholders' engagement as a shared relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders and indicates that both associates have a significant role to play (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Baran, 2020).

**Table 2.1: Stakeholder-inclusivity approaches**

Author(s)	Inclusivity concepts	Definition
Katz & Kahn (1996:388)	inclusivity in general	Enhances collaborative behaviour outside the need of the role but in the service of organisational objectives.
Kahn (1990:694;1992)	Personal inclusivity	The connecting of the employees to their work responsibilities.
Maslach Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001: 416)	Job inclusivity	Branded by participation in job-related issues.
Hewitt Associates LLC (2004:2)	Employee inclusivity	A positive mindset is held by the employee towards the organisation and its morals.

*Source: Welch (2011)*

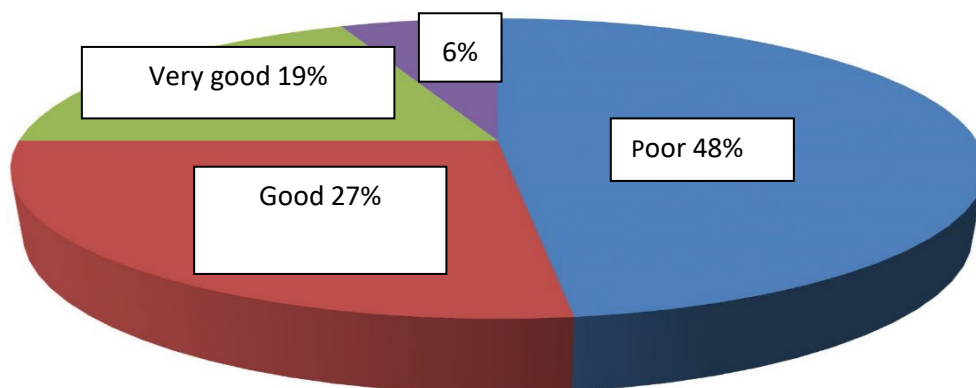
### **2.9.1 Stakeholder inclusivity in education**

Stakeholder inclusivity in education is a well-known concept among education leaders across Northern America (Joyce, Epstein, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn & Voorhuis, 2002). They believe that the involvement of stakeholders plays a significant role in the effective leadership of education.

DoE (2000) defined stakeholders as role players in the education system, these are people who have an interest in education, this includes teachers, SGBs, and parents. Education stakeholder inclusivity was defined as an ongoing technique whereby educational leaders significantly connect, learn from each other, and interact with individuals and groups that have an interest in education (Joyce, 2002). This includes parents, teachers, learners, and staff. This definition emphasises that engagement must be purposeful and systematic, and stakeholders should be effective throughout the decision-making processes and not just at the end.

The research by Joyce, Epstein, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn and Voorhuis (2002) only focuses on involving stakeholders in primary schools and disregards secondary schools. This study focused on both primary and secondary schools of the Hlanganani South Circuit. Another education research conducted by Gichohi (2015) in Nakuru Municipality in Kenya shows that high academic performance depends on the capacity of schools and their stakeholders' competence to use both human and material resources available. The managers of public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality were asked by the Ministry of Education to research the usefulness of school management structures and the results are given below in Figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.4: Usefulness of the school committee structures**



*Source: Gichohi (2015:18)*



The findings show that 48 per cent of principals explain the usefulness of committee structures (representatives) as poor and 52 per cent of respondents explained it as extending from good to excellent. This suggested that committee representatives (Stakeholders' engagements) were not playing a valuable role in the management of schools. The understanding was that the school management committee was as efficient as desired, nonetheless, 48 per cent of school principals made no reflection of a committee helpful and this was an indication of the unwillingness of school principals to accept sharing management.

School management committees take decisions on the effective use of schools' resources for the fulfilment of an eminent education, determined by learners' academic outcomes in local and national examinations (Gichohi, 2015). Therefore, endorsing the contribution of school representatives was essential, Otunga, Serem and Kindiki (2008). The research further showed that academic performance in government schools is depreciating regardless of the government's effort to finance schools to implement free education accordingly. According to Gichohi (2015), the main cause of this problem was a lack of involvement by the stakeholders. This informs the study about the importance of involving stakeholders in the education system to achieve good academic performance. Stakeholder inclusivity refers to working with people and utilising resources that assist with collective work in achieving agreed ends and goals (Bartle, 2007). This shows that an experienced manager looks for various ways to cater for the interests and capacity of everyone for the collective benefit of an organisation. With reference to this research, school principals must embrace a participatory management approach to achieve quality education for the benefit of learners through engaging educators and other stakeholders in strategic decision-making.

### **2.9.2 The aim of stakeholder inclusivity in education**

The aim for stakeholder inclusivity can generally be classified into two kinds: the first is the democratic objective (Koopman & Wiersdman, 1998). This aim affirms that people have the right to participate in the taking of decisions which affect their lives.

It accepts that people have the capacity to participate intellectually. The second aim is related to a realistic approach to stakeholder inclusivity (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997). From the pragmatic viewpoint, the inclusivity of the educational stakeholders is to enhance the quality of educational decision-making processes (Newton, 2020; Kelly, 2020).

### **2.9.3 The effects of stakeholder inclusivity**

Research studies showed that enhanced directives, better learning environment and improved school efficiency are the most usually quoted reasons for implementing collective school practices such as stakeholder inclusivity (Anderson, 1998, Cooperman, 1999; Quezada, 2003). This suggested that the main objective of collaborative leadership in the education context is to achieve better academic performance. Other scholars of stakeholder inclusivity in education believe that stakeholder inclusivity in education creates a high level of extrinsic employees' and other related stakeholders' motivation, morale, and commitment (Beyerlin, Freedman, McGee, Moran, 2003). This informs the study to focus fully on the impact of motivating teachers, SGBs, parents and other related stakeholders by involving them in the strategic decision-making processes. Involving teachers in decision-making results in employee satisfaction, motivation, self-esteem, and morale being affected constructively (Gamage & Pang, 2003). Equally so, commitment and loyalty in the school system are encouraged by involving stakeholders like SGBs, and parents in a strategic decision-making process. This maintains that involving stakeholders ensures the empowerment and loyalty of such stakeholders. Gamage and Pang (2003) maintain that consistent decisions are accomplished, and greater effectiveness is achieved as matters are discussed widely through an open communication system approach where people with different viewpoints are engaged in stakeholder inclusivity.

## **2.9.4 Stakeholder dialogue**

### **2.9.4.1 *The dialogue definition***

Dialogue has been signified as engagement, consultation, involvement, collaboration, partnership, and negotiation (Laasonen, 2010). Beckett and Jonker (2006) describe dialogue as a process where stakeholders can articulate their views, attitudes, and needs free from fear and being undermined. A dialogue demands a certain amount of participation and shared influence from all stakeholders, safeguarding the combination of various opinions, and arguments. According to Thulkanam (2014) and Zheltukhina (2016) dialogue is interactive and does not include inducement and manipulation strategies. Dialogue is further described by Johansen and Nielsen (2011) and Bonial (2020) as a focused use of collaborative interaction by the organisation to fulfil its mission, which is to attain and sustain its licence to operate. Dialogue combines different opinions resulting in the exchange of ideas.

Contrary to the genuine dialogue definition which is centred on collaboration, information sharing, cooperative learning and problem-solving, convincing dialogue is focused on the dissemination of rhetoric, aimed at satisfying all participants (Thulkanam, 2014). This further maintains that dialogue involves the breaking down of fixed positions and the untying of assumptions (Burchell & Cook, 2008). The organisation can execute the process of dialogue to create communication channels with stakeholders to support healthy stability between the organisation and its stakeholders (Stead & Stead, 2000).

In dialogue, stakeholders are not merely expressing views, but have ample time to listen to each other to foster communal agreement (Hemmati, 2002). Dialogue is a way of improving stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes and cooperative means of resolving conflicts through studying different viewpoints (Kaptein & Van Tulder, 2003). Dialogue needs the eager involvement of all stakeholders but one person whose main direction is not collaborative can ruin dialogue. Genuine dialogue in stakeholder inclusivity allows cooperative participation of the stakeholders by voicing their concerns and views and this enhances and sustains constructive interaction with the organisation.

**Table 2.2: Types of interaction dialogues**

Interaction type	Purpose/ aim	Situation	Form or examples
Information providing	The purpose is to update those who need information. No effort is made to listen to the stakeholders' views.	When the effect of the case is minimal, and the initiator has been authorised to make a decision.	Messages are disseminated through cell phones and direct contact.
Information gathering	This is to get collective inputs of information for decision-making processes.	It is suitable in the orientation phase when it is essential to understand the kind and size of the problem.	Focus groups and interviews.
Consultation	To get up-to-date feedback on the proposal. The main purpose is to get input and suggestions from all stakeholders. The main significant point is to listen to the inputs that might lead to amendment of the plan.	Consultation is applicable where hesitations on the proposal require attention. There is a wider opportunity for stakeholders to participate, but the danger is through manipulation by stakeholders by expecting their inputs to be relevant in the decision-making process.	Collaborative workshops and presentations.
Open dialogue	Collaboration in problem analysis with relevant stakeholders. The purpose is to reach agreements and find ways for strong	When there are complicated issues whereby partnerships and assigned tasks is	Collaborative meetings where the creation of mutual trust is considered a fundamental role.

Interaction type	Purpose/ aim	Situation	Form or examples
	cooperation in the execution of conjointly.	an essential item for solving problems.	

Source: Harris (2002)

#### 2.9.4.2 *The nature of stakeholder dialogue*

Stakeholder dialogue suggests being involved, comprehensive and accountable in interaction with stakeholders (Green, 2001). The stakeholder dialogue's aim is not to support, but to investigate, not to debate but to explore, not to persuade but to ascertain (Burchell & Cook, 2008). Stakeholder dialogue is regarded as interactive and as contrasting with asymmetrical communication where information is distributed to stakeholders (Burchell & Cook, 2006; Kitchen & Schultz, 2009). Through collaborative communication, Johnson-Cramer, Berman and Post (2003) declare that stakeholder dialogue facilitates the formation of a common understanding. This informs the study of the significance of collaborative communication as a key element in stakeholder inclusivity. Stakeholder dialogue involves a search for win-win situations, an investigation for mutual results and building and reinforcing of relations (The Environment Council, 1999). The stakeholder dialogue should emphasise the creation and maintenance of the mutual relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders through considering and attending to the needs, anxieties, and disputes of stakeholders. There are three reasons for stakeholder dialogue discussed below:

- **Pragmatic reason**

Stakeholder dialogue portrays a more effective policy. Engaging stakeholders in strategic decision-making makes them more accountable for it. Engagement of stakeholders fulfils the interpretation of the needs, attitudes, and opinions of the stakeholders in the operation of the organisation (Barker & Angelopulo, 2006; Angelopulo, 2013).

Furthermore, it prevents decisions from being challenged or protested in a later stage and creates value creation to all stakeholders (Angelopulo, 2006, Van Tulder, Kaptein, Van Mil & Schilpzand, 2004; Angelopulo, 2013). Crucially the view of many stakeholders safeguards that the decision taken is supported by the collective.

- **Moral reason.**

Stakeholder dialogue increases the validity of a decision due to democratic decision-making processes.

- **A reason concerning content**

Stakeholder dialogue develops a more and better argument to base a decision on. The anxieties about a decision are better because the process is not a one-man show, concerns, and viewpoints of the various stakeholders shape the decision. The table below shows the most important principles of strategic stakeholder dialogue.

**Table 2.3 The Instrumental principles of strategic stakeholder dialogue**

Cooperation	Working together and participating in partnerships, forming networks, resolving disagreements, working towards one goal, creating possibilities for all stakeholders, and sharing tasks.
Effectiveness	Goal-orientated, working towards practical solutions and pre-emptive strategies in an organised manner.
Flexibility	Ability to adjust own opinion, the process and outcome to new conditions and understandings.
Inclusiveness	Engaging a wide and various group of stakeholders with different viewpoints, values, knowledge, and perceptions, includes winners and losers.
Legitimacy	A clear and honest dialogue process directed by collective agreements safeguarding all stakeholders view the outcome as being legitimate.

Learning	Reflective abilities and new insights lead to new principles and new approaches to life, and communal information transfer to avoid information gaps on essential matters.
Ownership	High level of engagement, all stakeholders can identify with the dialogue process and feel accountable for the execution of the results.
Participation	Inspiring active, abreast, and dedicated participation of all stakeholders voluntarily without applying pressure.
Fairness	Equality, impartiality, justice, objectivity, without prejudice, fostering equal participation of all stakeholders in decision-making, avoiding power differences, power abuse and power manipulation.
Accountability	Obligation for living up to accords about dialogue process and outcome conforms to ethical and relational tasks.
Transparency	This focuses on being open in relation to viewpoints, opinions, perceptions, and expectations, supplying all stakeholders with all relevant information.
Voices do not vote	All the stakeholders have equal opportunity to voice their concerns and their views are regarded as genuine. Opinions do not lose their validity when the majority is in favour of certain issues.

**Source:** Van Tulder, Kaptein, van Mil and Schilpzand (2004:10)

The above principles inform the study to focus on the working together of schools with its stakeholders to achieve goals. This is possible through clear and honest interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders. Through collaborative dialogue, valuable ideas can surface and direct the organisation in innovative strategic management practices.

### **2.9.4.3 Strategic dialogue**

Strategic dialogue is a planned, collaborative and most of all proactive process directed at creating justifiable strategies (Van Tulder, Kaptein, Van Mil & Schilpzand, 2004). This process aims to find the state of equilibrium between moral views and collective values of a group, the pragmatic approach to solving strategic problems.

The stakeholder dialogue is about concrete issues and responsibilities whereby stakeholders look for communal, appropriate, and credible solutions that are interpreted into proactive and proper policy. The stakeholder dialogue has the following characteristics and objectives:

- Finding good solutions for complicated problems by joining inputs and views from a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Integrating various understandings and creating new understandings, letting go of existing conflicts of interest to create inclusive support.
- Bringing together all related stakeholders and creating a shared trust. All the stakeholders accept and appreciate each other's contributions and expertise to serve a collective objective.
- Building efficient long-term win-win situations implies that stakeholders will have to persevere in a win-lose condition. A strategic stakeholder dialogue acknowledges that prospect losers should also be involved in the dialogue in order not to face unnecessary resistance.
- Preventing information irregularity between the stakeholders instigated by lack of transparency.
- Sharing obligations by treating each other as valuable stakeholders.

#### **2.9.4.4      *The role of communication in the engagement of stakeholders***

Communication is a transactional and representative method for exchanging and interpreting information with the purpose of creating a shared relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders (Angelopulo & Barker, 2013; Van Tulder, Kaptein, Van Mil & Schilpzand, 2004). Communication can be considered a symbolic "pipeline" along which information is transmitted from one person to another (Alqaisi, 2018). Alqaisi (2018) further maintains that communication is a basic need in any system of human relations, without it, no important activity can take place, although communication does not affirm agreement.

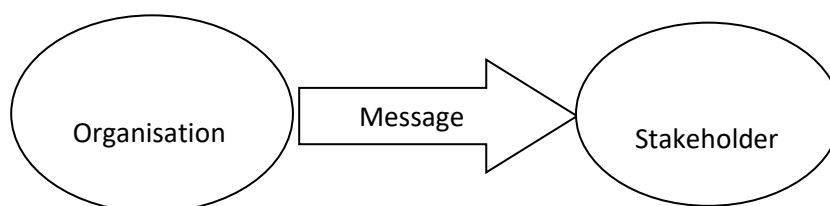


The purpose of communication is to ensure that stakeholders have access to important information, to reduce nervousness about issues, to offer feedback either positive or negative, and to solve problems (Bourne, 2015; Angelopulo & Barker, 2013). Communication acts as a vehicle for organisational success. Without communication, there is no interaction with stakeholders (Angelopulo, 2006). Communication is a pillar of the organisation from which other parts of the entity survive, and without it, all the process of interaction which includes update, assurance and others cannot exist. The study of Mertinelli (2012) and Mukhudwana (2015) indicate that organisations have two forms of communication which are symmetrical and asymmetrical. According to them a symmetrical form of communication is suitable for discussions and negotiations, while an asymmetrical form of communication is relevant in giving instructions and orders.

- **Asymmetrical communication (one-way communication)**

Asymmetrical communication attempts to persuade and exclude stakeholders from actively participating in negotiations and limits a sense of accountability from both the organisations and stakeholders (Willacy, 2016). According to Willacy (2016), a long-term impact of asymmetrical communication is discouraging an organisation's socially responsible approach to stakeholder relations.

**Figure 2.5: One-way communication model**

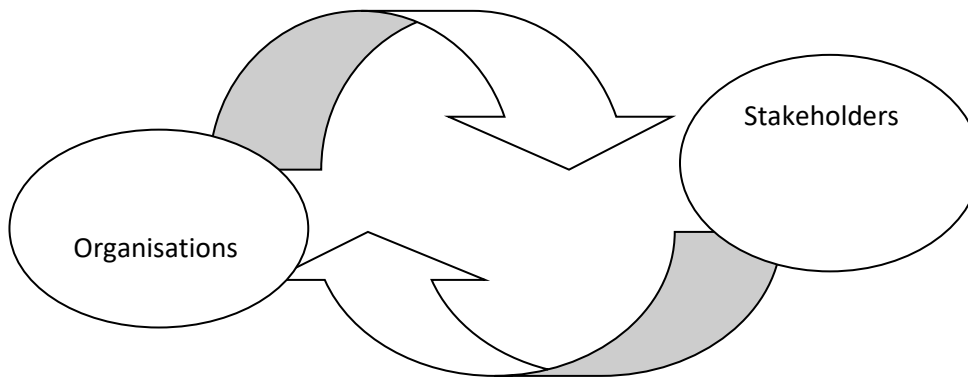


*Source: Willacy (2016)*

- **Symmetrical communication (two-way communication)**

Symmetrical communication allows stakeholders to engage in negotiations with their organisation and its main objective is the creation of mutual relationships rather than influence (Willacy, 2016; Angelopulo & Barker, 2013).

**Figure 2.6: Two-way communication model**



**Source:** Willacy (2016)

The necessity for more symmetrical interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders received more attention as it is acknowledged that creating a long-term reciprocal relationship with stakeholders is an essential element in the communication strategy of the organisation (Hassink, Bollen & Steggink, 2007; Angelopulo & Barker, 2013). The difference between these forms of communication is that asymmetrical is about disseminating information, giving orders and instructions, and announcements, while symmetrical communication solely needs an exchange of information or interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders (Heino & Anttiroiko, 2015; Angelopulo & Barker, 2006).

## **2.9 TEACHER INCLUSIVITY**

Teachers' participation was inspired by the South African government's change to democracy especially the developmental tendency of the post-apartheid state and politics of compromise that supported the political transition (Govender, 2008; Adewumi, 2019). Teachers' involvement acts as a development and outcome of democracy in the education system. This shows that teachers' participation plays a significant role in empowering their profession and the academic performance of learners. Teachers have all the necessary skills required to execute their responsibilities however will always need to be engaged in school activities and strategic decision-making (Lahler, 2006; Chong, 2009 & Nessipbayeva, 2012).

### **2.10.1 The role of unions in teacher inclusivity**

The teacher unions according to Govender (2008), Mafisa (2017) and Ramokgotswa (2015) act as mouthpieces of the majority where members of the unions submit their suggestions and plea to the government. Traditional unionism focuses mainly on labour affairs, such as salaries and conditions of services and has become identical with radical approaches such as strikes (Sang, 2002; Hindle & Simpson, 1993). According to Govender (2008) and Tichenor (2005) teacher unions are not concerned with the professional aspect of teachers' work.

However, a more advanced view of teacher unions acknowledges teacher unions' concern with wider issues of economic and political contestation with the government (Hindle & Simpson, 1993; Sang, 2002; Govender. 2008). The teacher representatives (unions) have appeared to be restraining the variety and content of the government's legal authority over the school system stressing the centralisation of power as an issue in the development of teacher unions, particularly unequal power relations that unions have with policy or managers in most instances. The government's professionalism acts as a philosophical mechanism to manage, and teachers themselves might use it as a self-defence method in their struggle against manipulation (Govender, 2008).

Teachers' participation in the strategic decision-making processes can take different formats, including defying the aims of decision-making processes when they are noticed as acting against teachers' attention. Teachers mostly rely on their unions to take up their truncheons on their benefits. However, not all teachers have immeasurable trust in their union delegations, even though membership in their unions is high, member activity is usually low (Torres, 2000). The reasons for teachers' involvement in decision-making are convincing in the perception of developing countries.

### **2.10.2 The shared strategic decision-making process**

The sharing of decision-making is used to democratise the workplace and to accomplish teacher involvement and teacher empowerment (Brost, 2000; Moodley, 2012). The implementation of decisions is "aimed at improving education efficiency, equity and democracy" (Nishimura, 2010). The aim of shared decision-making (SDM) has shifted from democratising the workplace to enlarging schools' ability to improve. Due to teachers being part of the shared leadership and decision-making process, teacher leadership outlines school leadership from a single individual role-orientated view to perceive a leadership being collective and spread throughout the organisation (Chatturgoon, 2008). For active arrangement and positive outcomes, decision-making is a process and not an activity (Moodley, 2012).

#### ***2.10.2.1 Shared decision-making as a process***

Decision-making as a collective and mutual process follows a structure that may be formal or informal (Forsyth, 1990; Moodley, 2012). The stakeholder inclusivity approach may involve role variation whereby there is an initiator who proposes ideas, approaches, or possible solutions. The passing of decision-making at the school level is made possible in the execution of legislative directives. While within the sphere of strategic decision-making processes mandates are highly consolidated and unified.

Therefore, the authority to execute decision-making processes at the school level is eventually shifted from the central government to individual school management teams (SMTs) and school governing bodies (SGB) (Moodley, 2012). This gives SMTs and SGBs the authority to be engaged in a strategic decision-making process for discussing issues to improve the quality of education for children.

#### ***2.10.2.2 Decentralizing decision making***

The functionality of any school is guided by national government policy directives (Moodley, 2012). The South African Schools Act (1996) is a key legislation governing the operation of schools. Sharing of the decision-making level is only possible if there is the decentralisation of power from central authority or school management, entrusting those with lesser power to make decisions (Moodley, 2012). Therefore, the principal with SMTs has been assigned decision-making powers in ensuring the efficient running of schools. Within education discipline, decentralisation means “the transfer of power over educational policy and practice from a central authority to lower levels of authority, such as local levels of authority and thereafter to schools” (Addi-Racah & Gavish, 2010). On the other hand, Chikoko (2009) and Moodley (2012) decree that decentralising decision-making through stakeholder inclusivity is viewed as an admired educational transformation. The advantage of decentralised decision-making is that the flow of information is viewed as vitally important (Moodley, 2012). Shared decision-making through stakeholder inclusivity can only be practised in a context where there is support by the management.

#### ***2.10.2.3 Environment of shared decision-making***

Decision-making can only succeed given that precise conditions and attitudes are present in any given context (Moodley, 2012). Teachers who are involved in the practice of shared leadership or stakeholder inclusivity should have a sense of humility and modesty.

The driving force for participating in decision-making should be to enhance one's status related to capacity and maintaining quality and meaning for stakeholder inclusivity. The environment should further allow participants to express their thoughts and make meaningful participation in the theme discussed. The employment of strategic decisions, alongside strategic goals need, adoption of a related action plan which includes activities, responsibilities, deadlines, costs, individuals and prerequisites for implementation (Divjak & Redep, 2015).

### **2.10.3 The importance of teachers' involvement in the decision-making**

Teachers are the most essential asset in the educational decision implementation processes with their knowledge, experiences, and competencies (Alsubaie, 2016; Okongo, 2015). Teachers know the needs of most education stakeholders including the learners, and they can support better learning when they are well-informed about decisions they must implement. Alsubaie (2016) and Okongo (2015) further suggested that a lack of teachers in the strategic management or school management team (SMT) will mislead the decision-making processes related to learners' needs as they are the only education stakeholders that work directly with learners.

### **2.10.4 Challenges facing teachers in the educational strategic decisions process**

The teachers' engagement in the school management team is significant in meeting the needs of the school communities (Alsubaie, 2016). Teachers play an essential role in every step of educational strategic decision implementation processes (Pantakav & Kolhapur, 2013). This means that teachers' involvement acts as a basic unit of educational strategic decision execution processes. The process of decision-making needs teachers to respond and signify people's needs in every stage of the development process (Alsubaie, 2016; Nkongo, 2015). However, sometimes educational strategic processes and procedures are not clear. The teachers' approach to involvement in the educational strategic decisions process is not well explained and complicated for teachers, so they face challenges of not having clear directives of what and how to

engage in strategic decisions making processes (Ramparsad, 2000). Professional development of teachers acts as a priority that contributes to the success of the strategic decision-making processes and implementation (Handler, 2010; Darling-Harmond, 2017; Archibald, 2011). This alludes that teacher education programs are required for potential teachers to study educational approaches for strategic decisions accordingly. This means that without the professional development of teachers, the strategic decisions making process cannot succeed.

#### **2.10.5 Preparation for teachers' involvement in strategic decision-making processes**

Since teachers must play a part in the strategic decision-making processes, they should be furnished with relevant information and skills that will assist them to efficiently contribute to strategic decision-making processes (Alsubaie, 2016, Jongman, 1998; Govender, 2008). As a result, teachers need training programmes and workshops, which are geared towards developing professional participation skills that will enable them to positively engage in decision-making processes. Teachers who are not empowered with valuable and relevant skills will work parallel to the educational development content and the needs of learners and society at large (Govender, 2008).

### **2.11 PARENTS' INCLUSIVITY IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

Parents play a significant role in children's ability to achieve academically (Mutwiri, 2015; Mabasa, 2018). The role of parents has been recognized as a key factor in the educational success, school improvement and quality of education given to learners. Parents have constitutional rights in relation to children's education (Bisschoff & Phakoa, 2009). Bryk and Schneider (2005) further view parents from poor educational backgrounds mostly as not having sufficient resources and capacity to support their children and that becomes a problem in the education processes, and this is mostly happening in rural areas where cultural activities dominate education.

Parental engagement in the education system and governance inspires and creates many opportunities for children's morale, attitudes, and collective academic achievement. Stakeholder inclusivity in a strategic decision-making process received different reviews, nevertheless, from a literature review, it seems that there was no sufficient exploration in terms of the real execution of stakeholder inclusivity in strategic decision-making processes in primary and secondary schools. Govender (2008) and Alsubaie (2016) studied much on the teachers' involvement in strategic decision implementation, while Mabasa (2018) and Mutwiri (2015) focused on parents' inclusivity in the academic affairs of their children, and none has covered the role of these stakeholders in a strategic decision-making process for improving the quality of children's education and improving academic performance. This study will focus on the role of teachers, and parents. SGBs and community in a strategic decision-making process.

## **2.12 LEADERSHIP STYLE FOR STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVITY**

Educational leadership can play a fundamental part in creating a positive culture. Effective school leadership is progressively deemed as a key to a comprehensive education revolution. With a relevant leadership style, school managers (school principals) can change ordinary schools to be successful. Here are effective leadership styles that can impact the education transformation.

### **2.12.1 Democratic leadership style**

The democratic leadership style includes the involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes (Lewin, Lippit & White, 1939). Though the leadership has a last say in this leadership, the stakeholders participate in the process (Lewin, 1939). This confirms that employees are engaged in strategic decision-making and their views are valued. Machumu and Kaitila (2014) stated that democratic leadership improves stakeholders' morale and decreases isolation, it has been associated with enhancing stakeholders' satisfaction. Democratic leadership inspires members of the group to take a more participative role in the decision-making processes (Mutwiri, 2015).



Democratic leadership provides stakeholders with opportunities to collaborate and plan together with school managers. This improves stakeholders' confidence, and satisfaction and increases morale (Hickman, 2017; Hourani, Stringer & Baker, 2012; Nicolaidou, Sophocleous & Phtiaka, 2006). Democratic leaders set an example of what they expect from others, administrators predict a positive future and teachers are encouraged to try ground-breaking strategies. Within a democratic style of leadership, principals encourage stakeholders to share ideas in taking decisions about school-related problems (Mutwiri, 2015; Kilicoglu, 2018; Yalicinkaya, 2021). Mutwiri (2015) and Ogunyiknka (2013) further argued that democratic principals engage SGBs, parents, learners, and other related stakeholders in taking decisions that may affect the school and community. Allocation of duties and accountabilities develops a system of a collective leadership style and decision-making (Mutwiri, 2015; Villiers, 2011).

According to Wadesango and Sisulu (2012), the principals are required to consult their seniors, colleagues, and their subordinates, SGBs and parents in decision-making processes. The schools have hierarchies with principals, SGBs, SMTs, teachers, heads of departments, and parents that play a significant role in schools' decision-making processes (Wadesango & Sisulu, 2012). In many instances, the principals are advised to include educators in decision-making processes as a way of extrinsically encouraging them and creating a sentiment of belonging (Ndiku, Simiyu & Achoka, 2009).

According to Riley (2008), and Cisler (2013), school principals are deemed as the key foundation of leadership by the staff, SGBs, parents, and learners. This, therefore, appeals to the principals to be an expert in educational matters. This affirmed the school principal's leadership style and how stakeholders are engaged to contribute to the enhancement of learners' educational performance through leadership quality. The principals' managerial proficiencies, therefore, contribute to the general performance of the school (Mutwiri, 2015; Kadariah, 2020).

Misoloh (2011) indicates that relational skills are great in relation to human resources. This further asserted that principals cannot work alone and manipulate processes but need to work in collaboration with other educational stakeholders. Mumbe's (2008) research on leadership style and teachers' satisfaction in primary schools recognised sharing of responsibilities as a success when educators have relevant skills, information, and knowledge about the task and readiness for participation. Through sharing power in decision-making processes, democratic leaders encourage and influence the school communities to fulfil a long-term vision.

### **2.12.2 Authoritarian leadership style**

Authoritarian leadership is defined by Lewin and Korsch (1939) as a leadership style where a leader maintains maximum control over the environment. Authoritarian leaders use power and authority oppressively to control and negatively dominate juniors including stakeholders serving under their leadership (Mutwiri, 2015). According to Smith (2016), Vasilev (2016) and Sheng (2020) authoritarian leadership control the environment through harsh and strict rules, guidelines, and negative outcome. Autocratic leadership suggests a strict and static kind of leadership with less or no room for stakeholders' input. With reference to the education scenario educators, SGBs, and parents are treated as items without views and suggestions to assist in the resolution-making processes. This undermines the views of teachers and other related stakeholders in the strategic decision-making processes. The school principals are viewed as experts with relevant skills in all areas of leadership. Teachers and other related educational stakeholders who have positive attitudes towards stakeholders' engagement recognise organisational conditions that are autocratic or manipulative as an obstacle to participation (Mutwiri, 2015; Cheruto & Kipkoech, 2011). This supports that autocracy impedes and disorients stakeholder inclusivity.

### **2.12.3 Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership is a kind of leadership whereby managers and stakeholders are involved in a reciprocal course of empowering each other through ideals, self-consciousness, appealing acts and inspiration (Burns, 1978, Lai, 2020; Sirin, 2018). Selecting a collaborative approach, transformational leaders empower stakeholders to have authority in decision-making processes and facilitate goal setting (Mutwiri, 2015). Through a transformational approach, leadership implants confidence, loyalty, and respect that stimulate teachers' confidence and learners' academic performance.

Transformational leadership involves a collective value system that is grounded in rationale and agreement among the people of the same team (Cawelti, 1990; Sirin, 2018). This suggests that transformational leadership invites views of stakeholders as innate significant. Through role modelling, transformational leadership forms a culture of improvement and innovation and a collective sense of intention. Transformational leaders can stimulate school outcomes by drawing high-performance expectations, advancing educators by encouraging teacher inclusivity in strategic decision-making, building a mutual relationship, and offering educational support. According to researcher Bernard Bass (1985), the four qualities of transformational leadership are idealized influence, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Studies conducted by Sabir, Shahani and Shahnawaz (2015) and Kailola (2017) have disclosed that transformational leaders have a direct influence on teacher performance, with teachers freely taking steps to enhance the quality of education.

### **2.12.4 Situational leadership**

Hersey and Blanchard (1996) started with an idea of parenting styles and how they were transformed centred on the development level of children. The situational leadership idea was applied and how they have changed was based on the degree of employees' maturity (Smith, Minor, Brashen & Remaly, 2017).

Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer (1979), explained the significance of a leader's ability to verify a degree of employees' maturity and appropriate adjustment of leadership style. The leadership style relies on the development level of an individual and the complicatedness of the task being implemented. Through verifying the maturity level of the employees, the leadership will use the following approaches: coaching, directing, delegating, and supporting (Blanchard, 2008). There are skills for leadership to become situational leadership according to Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi (2013), a situation leader builds open goals using a SMART (specific, motivating, attainable, relevant, and trackable) format. Situational leadership analyses the development level of employees and corresponds of leadership style to the needs of the people.

#### **2.12.4.1      *Challenges facing school leaders***

Schools as institutions are exceptional, firmly regulated organisations that have little access to dialogue and diversity (Orzel, 2012; Vrikki, 2019). In a democratic society, humanity has the responsibility to see that everyone is fairly engaged not only in school processes, but in social, economic, cultural, and political issues. Everyone has the right to contribute to what the world has to offer and harvest the benefits of these environments (Ryan, 2006; Mutwiri, 2015). The stakeholder inclusivity in schools needs to be designed and assessed for promoting collaboration and whose execution includes all related stakeholders (Conyne, 2013; Mabasa, 2018). To offer cooperative relationships instead of traditional hierarchies, leaders should provide justifiable, unbiased, and caring relationships to promote dialogue (Orzel, 2012; Schruijer, 2020). The school principals have a major challenge of creating comprehensive strategic management. To promote collaborative leadership, principals must not focus only on academic performance, but training teachers and other related stakeholders like SGBSs for a diverse, democratic society. According to Astin and Astin (2000), a valuable outcome of leadership should promote equity, social justice, and quality of life.

The interaction between the school management, teachers, SGBs, parents and community members which is coordinated by dialogue should consider social justice and equity as the main principles of deliberating issues affecting teachers and other related stakeholders in the working environment (Mutwiri, 2015; Hourani, Stringe & Baker, 2012; Nicolaidou, Sophocleous & Phtiaka, 2006). To create social justice schools, school principals need to start with teachers as educational leaders. Schools need to shift from passive dialogue where one individual (school principal) plays a significant role in managing the school, to the involvement of conscious, proactive, and purposeful routines in educational leadership which focuses mainly on producing social justice for all learners.

## **2.13 CONCLUSION**

The organisation as an open system has various systems that support and depend on each other. The theoretical framework of this study is centred on the social system theory of Bertalanffy (1968) which supports the social interaction of an organisation and its stakeholders. The stakeholder theory motivates the inclusion of stakeholders in organisational activities and recognises the capacity for inspiration that stakeholders' behaviours, conduct and actions may have. The inclusion of educators, HODs, principals, SGBs and parents in the strategic decision-making processes plays an important role in convalencing the quality of education and academic performance of the learners. The exclusion of teachers and other related stakeholders in decision-making processes disregarded the role and effect of interaction and communication in stakeholder relations and stakeholder inclusivity.

The literature has revealed that dialogue and the creation of reciprocal relationships play an essential role in attaining effectual stakeholder relationship management. Stakeholder engagement focuses mainly on the sharing of information, consultation, involvement, and formation of a team in taking a desirable decision in the communication system.

The principles of efficient stakeholder engagement centre on commitment, respect, integrity, transparency, and trust. This can be achieved through a democratic leadership type which encourages teachers, SGBs, parents and community members to share experiences, skills and knowledge that will contribute to making decisions in related problems in the organisation. Communication is considered by democratic leadership as a transactional and expressive process for discussing and interpreting information to create a mutual correlation between the organisation and its stakeholders. From the literature, it can be presented and argued that the inclusivity of stakeholders in the decision-making processes of schools in Hlanganani has not been documented and the study intends to fill that gap.

The literature review, stakeholder inclusivity, stakeholder theory, social system theory, dialogic relations theory, leadership style for stakeholder inclusivity were discussed. The next chapter, research methodology presents research design, research paradigm, data collection techniques, credibility and trustworthiness, ethics, limitations, and data analysis.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The research intended to address the challenge of lacking an understanding of engaging stakeholders in the decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit. To address this challenge, research questions were formed to work as a guideline, the literature was reviewed in the previous chapter where the roles and challenges of teachers, parents and SGBs in strategic decision-making processes were discussed. This section presents the research method that was used to respond to research questions. The section presents the research design, paradigm and population that was considered pertinent for this research, sampling methods, data collection methods and analysis methods, limitations, and ethical matters.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a plan to address research questions (Msweli, 2011). Msweli (2011) and Mabasa (2018) outline that the plan specifies how data is collected and analysed. Research design is “a blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct research” (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). Creswell (2018) and Babbie and Mouton (2012) describe a qualitative explorative study as an approach to investigating and comprehending the meaning, of individuals or groups assigned to social or human problems. Qualitative study is a method of social action that underlines the way people interpret and make logic of their experiences to understand the social truth (Haradhan, 2018). Qualitative research also explains and interprets matters or subjects analytically from the point of view of individuals or populations being investigated. The qualitative explorative study design was employed. The key objective of using qualitative explorative research design was to help the researcher review the propositions developed through literature review.

The meaning was socially constructed by teachers, HODs, Principals, SGBs and parents. According to Creswell (2016), Hatch (2002) and Rossman (2016), qualitative researchers are inclined to gather information in a natural setting where respondents experience the issue or problem. The information was collected through interviews on Zoom when all the participants were at a school they teach at or have a child at. Interviews with teachers, HODs, school principals, SGBs and parents enabled the researcher to accept that there are different ways of making sense of the area and that meaning is created by the respondents rather than an investigator (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Additionally, Shonubi (2012) supports Cohen (2007) that in qualitative research, understanding is individualistic and not generalised, and attention is on the subjective, natural societal world rather than external truth.

A qualitative study permitted the researcher to perceive the inclusivity of stakeholders through different perceptions and experiences of participants (Makue, 2015). The researcher used these experiences to create and interpret understanding from collected data. The researcher believed that actuality or truth includes people's personal experiences of the external world. Eventually, the researcher adopted an inter-subjective or interactional epistemological view towards reality and used methods such as interviewing teachers, SGBs, and parents. The research was Cross-sectional, permitting the evaluation of different inconsistencies jointly. It further permitted an exploration of stakeholders' inclusivity and the importance of stakeholders' opinions in strategic decision-making processes. A qualitative research design is relevant for exploring stakeholder involvement through its flexible approach and researcher has access to attain personal views and answers to the research problem. In this regard, the participants were given an opportunity to share their personal views and experiences related to stakeholder involvement in their schools.

The research approach was never meant to generalise expectations of the study into the larger population, but rather to supply the pockets of comprehension into the phenomenon concerned (Hlanganani South Circuit).



### **3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Research paradigms are fundamental sets of ideas that guide acts (Guba, 1990). Lincoln (2000) defines paradigms as human interpretations indicating first notions or ultimate indicating where the researcher comes from to form meaning inserted on data. Henning, Rensburg and Smith (2004) further described a paradigm as a theory hypothesis or structure where theories are constructed which mainly influences how one views the subject. Giving a particular worldview inspires an individual's behaviour, proficient tendency and ultimately a position taken regarding focus for research. Research paradigms explain to the researcher what they are about and what falls within and outside the limits of genuine study (Shonubi, 2012). Research paradigms are therefore significant since they offer views and orders, which, for academics in a particular discipline, guide on what should be investigated how it should be investigated and how the results of research should be interpreted (Kivunja, 2017). The study adopted the interpretivism paradigm.

#### **3.3.1 Interpretivism**

Interpretivism is extended because of a study of positivism. Positivism focuses mainly on more comprehensive matters including factors connected to perspective, it recognises humans differently from physical geniuses and believe that human beings cannot be studied in the same way as physical phenomena (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Interpretivism values variances such as values, cultures, and conditions leading to the improvement of various social realities. Interpretivism primarily focuses on collected data instead of providing rigid and worldwide laws that can be generalised and applicable to anyone regardless of important variables and aspects (Myers, 2008; Bhattacharjee, 2012). However, interpretive study rejects knowledge developed as a basis shared as worldwide law and double-checking its legitimacy and needs different sets of measures adopted by positivism. Furthermore, interpretivism as a paradigm admits that truth is subjective and can be different depending on people. People have various interpretations and so the truth cannot be rigid.

Therefore, this recognises that participants do not have universal interpretations (Scotland, 2012; Collins, 2010). The data collected and analysed would be less likely to be generalised (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Adopting the interpretivism paradigm allowed the researcher to centre on the whole experience for stakeholder inclusivity rather than considering other attributes. Interpretivism enabled researchers to explore more depth of individual experiences in stakeholder inclusivity through semi-structured interviews. The interpretivism paradigm permitted the practice of individual experiences as an important aspect and contribution to supporting stakeholder inclusivity.

### **3.3.1.1      *Ontology***

Crotty (2003) and Ahmed (2008) describe ontology as a study of real life. Ontology is more concerned with the kind of world being investigated, the kind of existence, and the type of reality (Ahmed, 2008). Guba and Lincoln (1989) affirm that ontological theories react to the question “what is there that can be known?” or “what is the nature of reality?” This study uses an ontology that reality is subjective. The researcher assumes that the world they are to explore is a world settled by human beings who have their thoughts, and meanings. It is a social world, and its meaning should be socially constructed.

The central attempt of qualitative context was to understand the subjective area of human experience, that is, to maintain the integrity of a phenomenon to be investigated (Shonubi, 2012, Ahmed, 2008; Buse, 2015). Since an inspection of the situations is through participants’ experience than the researcher. There are various interpretations and perspectives on a single occasion, conditions and certainty are multifaceted and complex (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Dai, 2017). The occasion, situation and truth could be interpreted in various ways depending on a level of acquaintance with an educational background, experiences, and practices. The interpretations were inspired by the level of intelligence, experiences, and subjectivity. The researcher acknowledged that reality is versatile and personal and created by participants and that is understood from the participants’ perspectives who face such conditions (Creswell, 2007; Merrill,

2019). Therefore, a researcher obtained different views of the participants as appear from their world, as stated by Healy and Perry (2000) that truth is multifaceted depending on the views and perceptions of the people. Investigating this context, the construction of reality depended on the interaction between an interviewer and respondents. The researcher in this research used Zoom programme interaction with teachers, HODs, principals, SGBs, and Parents to understand their worldwide view on stakeholder inclusivity in various schools of the Hlanganani South Circuit. This informed the study on how teachers, HODs, principals, SGBs and parents are involved in the decision-making processes of various schools of the Hlanganani South Circuit. Through this data-collecting plan, the researcher accumulated data from different stakeholders and participants were free to communicate without any system of intimidation. The practical importance of participants' perceptions helped the researcher collect data without any method of manipulation from school principals. This further confirmed a true reflection of what they experience in a working environment and their community since schools form part of the community and how this affects the academic performance of learners.

### **3.3.1.2      *Epistemology***

Epistemology is “a way of understanding and explaining how people know what they know” (Crotty, 2003). Epistemology is more concerned with offering the philosophical basis of deciding what kinds of information are both sufficient and genuine (Maynard, 1994; Crotty, 2003; Ahmed, 2008). The epistemological stance used in this study is discovering the truth subjectively. The truth about stakeholder inclusivity in the decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit was discovered by acquiring the individual views of teachers, SGBs, parents and community members.

## **3.4 RESEARCH SETTING**

### **3.4.1 Population**

The population of the study consists of teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents of schools in South Africa. The target population includes teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents situated in the Limpopo province. The accessible population includes teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents in the Hlanganani South Circuit in the Vhembe West District. A reason for choosing teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents was centred on their full-time relations with learners and their understanding of the need for stakeholder inclusivity in producing quality learner results. The teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents are the foundation of the education system. Teachers, HODs, principals and parents mainly nurture the academic aspects of learners. Parents devote more time to learners as children and their part in nurturing them is significant and can contribute to some areas of decision-making that concern schools. Parents are the first people to understand the needs of children because they are engaging from childhood. Therefore, there is a need to involve teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents in the education of their children by participating fruitfully and significantly. Parental engagements and partnerships with other education stakeholders enhance the educational performance of learners from underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds (Edwards & Alldred, 2000). According to Mbokodi & Singh (2011), such partnerships and engagements act as a marketing structure and communication approach to improve a school's efficiency for all learners.

### **3. 4.2 Unit of analysis**

There are four types of units of analysis according to Zikmund (2013) namely, individuals, the group, the organisation, and objects. Dolma (2010) further affirmed that any kind of societal being, or creature could be stipulated as the unit of analysis and further supports a sorting or categorising of units of analysis of the study into levels to assist in understanding ranked relations between the possibilities that one can choose for the research. The units of analysis for this research are individuals (teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents).

### **3.4.3 Sampling technique**

Purposive sampling was employed to take a sample from teachers, SGBs, HODs, principals and parents (Mabasa, 2018). Participants were chosen because they are valuable contributors to decisions that schools take. Purposive sampling is the most broadly used method for non-probability sampling according to Saunders and Lewis (2012) as it is used, particularly for selecting a smaller sample when collecting qualitative information. The main objective of purposive sampling is to enlarge information and not to generalise, henceforth a researcher ceased interviews once information saturation was achieved (Thabethe, 2017). The purposive sampling method assisted a researcher in using his judgement regarding the characteristics of the sample to be used (Bless, 2013). The researcher chose participants that are necessary to include in the decision-making processes of schools. A sampling applied for this research was non-probability sampling because not all schools had an equal chance to participate in the research. Purposive sample, which is a non-probability sample, the researcher selected participants in such a way that the participants were recognised to be representative of the population and normally uses certain selection criteria to ascertain the most suitable people based on the researcher's experience or ingenuity (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012:93). The use of purpose sample in this study was motivated by the intension of making a good decision concerning the individuals to include in the sample with an understanding of the topic and can provide meaningful and in-depth information. The purposive sampling was used by the researcher with an aim of enlarging the functionality of information acquired from all samples. Purposive sampling is applied to those situations where researcher has a prior knowledge of something, participants, or events and deliberately chooses particular ones who are likely to produce the most valuable information (Mchunu, 2010). In this regard educators, HODs, principals, SGBs, and parents are considered as rich informants to drive change through their contributions in the system of education.

### 3.4.4 Sampling size

A comprehensive sample size of six schools dealing with stakeholder issues within the Hlanganani South Circuit was selected. Semi-structured interviews included 24 teachers from six schools both primary and secondary schools, six HODs for six schools of the circuit, six principals of six schools of the circuit, 12 SGB committee members from six schools of the Hlanganani South Circuit, 12 parents from six schools of the Hlanganani South Circuit from the Hlanganani South Circuit. The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually through Zoom. The total number of participants that participated in all semi-structured interviews was 54. Qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews are assumed to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). Therefore, conducting several interviews focused mainly on collecting more data for saturation reasons and that is literature guided for collecting more data in stakeholder inclusivity.

**Table 3.1: Categories of samples for interviews per selected schools**

Names of schools	Teachers	Principals	SGB member	Parents	Total
Khamanyani Primary School	4	1	2	2	9
Akani Secondary School	4	1	2	2	9
Yingwani Ribungwani Secondary	4	1	2	2	9
Frank Mahatlani Secondary School	4	1	2	2	9
Masakona-Senthumule Senior/Primary School	4	1	2	2	9
Mawela Primary School	4	1	2	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>54</b>

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE**

#### **3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews**

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research technique that joins a prepared set of open questions with an option for researchers to dig deeper into information on themes studied (Adams, 2015). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask questions with follow-ups from the inputs of the respondents. The responsibility of the interviewer in semi-structured interviews was to create a reliance atmosphere and to urge respondents to talk about the topic in a wider manner (Du Plooy, 2009; Walliman, 2011). The guidelines of interviews are determined by the researcher by asking about the last comments made by the respondents, making inspirational noise to show incredulity, inquiring about ideas articulated earlier in interviews, preceding the last remarks made by the respondent and introducing new topics (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison, 2007). This indicates that the researcher made follow-ups, inspiring participants to express themselves deeply on the matters deliberated and finally had to proceed to the next question. The semi-structured interviews were piloted separately through the Zoom programme and were recorded.

The benefit of Zoom interviews was to acquire verbal and non-verbal signals that include voice, body language, intonation and gestures, which showed the level of contentment and uneasiness with the questions. The interviewer had a chance to ask for explanations of the interviewee's responses. The interview session was complying with COVID-19 protections and protocols by using the Zoom programme for keeping distance and avoiding contact. The researcher applied to the circuit manager for permission to conduct research in the Hlanganani South Circuit. The researcher further applied to the Vhembe West district office and the provincial Department of Education for permission to conduct research. Consent was obtained from all the participants to participate in the interviews. The consent had a declaration at the end for voluntary participation and confirming that all the information given was honest and true. All questions were asked, and their inputs were recorded and analysed by the Atlas-ti software programme.

### **3.5.3 Data collection tool**

A questionnaire was created and employed in all Zoom semi-structured interviews. The measuring tool was therefore an interview guide which was divided into two sections. Part 1 dealt with the demographic information of the participants which was intended to understand their responsibilities in the schools and if they met the requirement of being included in the research. Part 2 dealt with the actual subject matter of the research which is stakeholder inclusivity. It comprised nine open-ended questions seeking to understand how stakeholders are involved in the strategic decision-making process. The interviews started and concluded through high-order questions, the low order questions and follow-up questions were used in the central part of the interviews.

## **3.6 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness refers to the degree to which the information acquired, and interpretations attained represent an actual view of the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Shonubi, 2012). The trustworthiness of methods involves an order of processes that includes a clear description of all methodological steps employed in the research process, from the appropriateness of research questions and participant samples to a theme under research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morrow, 2005; Sousa, 2014). There are four elements of trustworthiness, which are dependability, conformability, transferability, credibility, and authenticity (Sergeant, 2002; Thabethe, 2016).

### **3.6.1 Conformability**

Conformability is concerned with fairness, that is, an ability of capacity amongst two or more independent people about data's accuracy, relevance or meaning (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanster, Polkki, Utriainen & Kyngas, 2014). The conformability of findings indicates that data precisely represent information that has been provided by participants and that interpretations of data are not formulated by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012).



The objectivity of data on stakeholder inclusivity focuses on the inputs of the respondents and not being manipulated by the inquirer. This was achieved by representative data that was collected through the Zoom programme and analysed by the Atlas-ti software programme, signifying that the researcher did not swindle with outcomes.

### **3.6.2 Dependability**

Dependability indicates a constancy of data over time under various conditions. Therefore, it was essential to confirm the principles and measures used to select participants' main characteristics so that the transferability of outcomes to other contexts can be assessed (Maretti, Vliet, Bensing, Deledda, Mazzi, Rimondim & Fletcher, 2011). The dependability of a study is high if another researcher can keenly follow the decision trail used by the initial researcher (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Sandelowski (1986), and Polit, Beck and Hungler (2006) further described dependability as the reliability and consistency of research outcomes and the extent to which procedures are recorded, allowing someone outside research to follow, review and criticise. Detailed coverage of the methodology used allows a reader to evaluate the degree to which proper research practices have been followed (Shenton, 2004). The researcher recorded interviews and focus groups with all the participants. A reflexivity journal which appears as a self-evaluation for subjectivity was to decrease biases and increase dependability as it improves transparency for the research process (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman, 2016).

### **3.6.3 Transferability**

Transferability represents the generalisation or transfer of outcomes to other conditions. According to Kock (1994) and Polit and Beck (2012), transferability proposes a level to which findings could be transferred to other circumstances. This means that results attained in a previous stakeholder engagement or stakeholder inclusivity can be generalised and used in other research.

Considering paradigms outlining qualitative research, these support important epistemological changes, and as important, a concept for a generalised truth is altered; consequently, results of qualitative research are uncertain in a character, then generally established (Stiles, 1993). The outcome of the research of this study cannot influence other related investigations of stakeholder inclusivity. The research concentrated primarily on the Hlanganani South Circuit which cannot act as a midpoint of stakeholder inclusivity. The outcome of the study is only applicable to the Hlanganani South Circuit and no other portions of life.

#### **3.6.4 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the precision with which the researcher construed the data that was provided by the participants (Cresswell, 2012). Whittemore, Chase and Mandle (2001) maintained that credibility is expressed with continuing self-reflection and self-inspection to ensure that interpretations are valid and based on data. Not only should a sufficient description of the analysis be presented to validate data, but the researcher must also discuss the limitations of the study. The study agreed with Creswell (2013) specified that validation in qualitative research is an effort to measure the accuracy of findings, as fairly described by the researcher and participants. This proves that trustworthiness for research should be focussed on a clear set of principles that are followed logically. The self-reflection and self-scrutiny of the researcher appeared as a major tool in the whole research. This was to sustain honesty between the researcher and participants and to ensure that interpretations were justified and reliable.

#### **3.6.5 Authenticity**

Authenticity shows a level to which researchers fairly and truly, expose a variety of realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012). The researcher signed a declaration form to confirm the anonymity of the respondents and the academic aim of the research. This permitted the respondents to partake freely without fear of being divulged or used for other objectives instead of academic reasons.

### 3.7 ETHICS

Research ethics refers to the set of commonly recognised moral values and regulations that direct research (Makue, 2015). Research ethics restrain research abuses by emphasizing the humanitarian and sensitive treatment of participants (Strydom, 2005). The investigation was conducted in line with related ethical directions as authorised by the university. The researcher found an ethical clearance from the University of South Africa's ethics committee, the Department of Basic Education in Limpopo province, the Vhembe West district, the Hlanganani South Circuit office and the participating teachers, SGBs, parents and community members of the Hlanganani South Circuit. A researcher adhered to a code of ethics during the data collection process. Ethics deemed in a study were consideration of values, participation of respondents and confidentiality of collected data. Within these guidelines, the following key features were maintained by the researcher:

Informed consent- each respondent signed a consent form and interview declaration. This was done after the researcher had described the purpose of the research to each respondent.

Right to privacy and anonymity - each participant was assured that their responses would not be connected to their names. Finally, coding was used to connect their responses to code that did not provide their identity.

Right to withdrawal - each respondent was advised of their right to withdraw from the interview process at any point should they feel uneasy as they were voluntary participants. This was written in a consent form.

Purpose of the research - the researcher has advised all the respondents that their responses will only be utilised for academic purposes and there is no other intention of using their responses to achieve mysterious programmes.

No financial prizes were granted to participants - the participants were not remunerated with any form of money or any rewards for partaking in research but signed a consent form for voluntary participation in research.

No harm particularly during covid19 pandemic was done, all the participants were bound to comply with COVID-19 protocols by adhering to rules such as keeping their distance from each other and the researcher by using the Zoom software programme.

### **3.8 LIMITATIONS**

The research was done and contextualised within the following methodological limitations:

- a) **Low population** - The research concentrated on schools within the Hlanganani South Circuit owned by the state. The total coverage of the population was known, but the identity of the participants was not known.
- b) **Lack of generalisation** - in this research purposive sampling was used since purposive sampling strives to enlarge the scope of information and not to facilitate generalisation.
- c) **Interviewee bias** - might still result from the research of both respondents' inputs on stakeholder inclusivity and their internal inspiration on their thinking of stakeholder inclusivity. Their responses consequently could have been a combination of their views, community and the school they represent.

### **3.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

A computer-aided Software, Atlas-ti was used for data analysis and interpretation. Information accumulated was in the form of Zoom interviews that were translated into text. The software, Atlas-ti permitted the introduction of raw data in the form of text copy into an assignment set up for a particular analysis. The data was coded into different themes.

Themes attained and secured the significance of data in relation to research questions and signified some level of a patterned meaning in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An inductive approach of thematic analysis was appropriate for recognising and classifying a labelling unit of qualitative data into different themes.

Thematic analysis is an umbrella term for analysing qualitative data (Friese & Soratto, 2018). Braun and Clarke (2006) further explained thematic analysis as a system of recognising, analysing, and reporting themes of data. This affirmed that data was collectively arranged in sections since it gives direction for the researcher to focus fully on data segments of the research. The following stage of data analysis was connecting essential themes into groups. The software permitted a view of conceptual groups in a network to demonstrate a relationship and association developing from data.

In the final analysis process, developed themes and concepts were assessed considering relevant literature and research questions to draw judgments that helped in decision-making. Since data were collected from semi-structured interviews, such data was coded and marked with new codes to protect the confidentiality of the participants and the location of the research and be kept in a safe lockable room for a period of five years and the university archives. As data was coded it was simpler to identify themes in the data. A formation of codes was revised to check if the codes employed are true reflections of the unit of analysis. Grouping of codes into categories of meaning follows the coding of data units of analysis. The selection of categories is instinctive and should signify the aim of the research questions (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). This asserts that categories should be comprehensive and reveal the purpose of research questions.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

Creswell (2018), Mabunda (2006), and Babbie and Mouton (2012) describe qualitative explorative research as the method of exploring and understanding a value, individuals or groups consigned to social or human problems.

According to Brown (2016), exploratory research investigates an issue that is not clearly described and is piloted to have a better understanding of the current situation with a perception of not providing conclusive results. Within the exploratory approach used Interpretivism paradigm was deemed relevant to the subjects being studied, to understand and interpret what the subject is reflecting to respondents. (Kivunja, 2017). The emphasis was placed on understanding the reality and respondents' interpretation of the world around them.

Teachers, HODs and principals were the populations of the study because of their full-time interactions with learners and as front liners in improving learners' academic performance. The parents and SGBs are also the foundation of the education system (Mbokodi, 2011; Masinga, 2000 & Masha, 2017). Data collected through semi-structured interviews were coded and marked with new codes to protect the confidentiality of respondents and the location of the research and be kept in a safe lockable room for five years and the university archives. Inductive methods for thematic analysis were appropriate in identifying and classifying data to mark units of qualitative data into various themes. The Atlas-ti programme was used for data analysis and interpretation presented in the next chapter. The research design, research paradigm, data collection techniques, credibility and trustworthiness, ethics, limitations, and data analysis were discussed. The next chapter, presentation of research results presents descriptive statistics of participants, presentation of qualitative results, communication channels, decision making approach, and communication flow.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the prior chapter, the research methodology used in this research was presented. This section presents the results of the qualitative data collected. The presentation begins with biographical and demographical data collected through semi-structured interviews followed by qualitative findings analysed thematically. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, HODs, principals, the school governing body (SGB) and parents.

#### 4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The biographical and demographical data of the interview participants are presented below.

**Table 4.1: The age, gender, qualification, and position group data of the interview participants**

QUALIFICATION		
Diploma		18
Bachelors		07
Honours		16
Masters		13
AGE GROUP		
22	22-30 Years	15
31	31-40 Years	25
41 and above		14
GENDER		
Male		25
Female		29

<b>POSITION</b>	
Teacher	18
HOD	06
Principal	06
SGB	12
Parent	12
<b>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE</b>	
0-5 Years	06
6-10 Years	14
11-20 Years	18
21 and above	16

The biographical and demographic outcomes as presented in Table 4.1 above show that the interview participants are 41 years and above years of age at most. All in the position of a formal qualification. The research was able to include both males and females with a good number of experiences in the field of study. The population was also inclusive of all units affected by the strategic decision-making processes of schools, and this included teachers, HODs, Principals, SGBs, and parents. With the given age, experience and qualifications, the respondents are in a good position to provide credible data.

### **4.3 PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

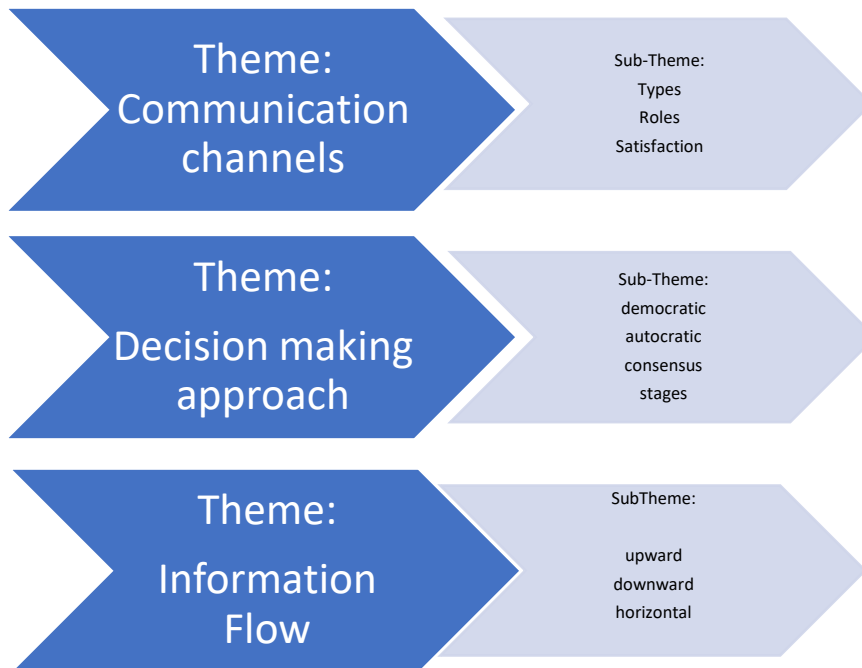
With the view to gain some understanding of how the inclusivity of stakeholders in strategic decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit is achieved, virtual interviews were conducted with all relevant stakeholders (teachers, HODs, Principals, SGBs, and parents).



### 4.3.1 The Thematic Map for the study

The data accumulated was analysed using thematic analysis with the support of the Atlas-ti software program. Concentrating on similarities within the collected data the following thematic map, as presented in Figure 4.1 below, was created.

Figure 4.1: Thematic map for the study



## 4.4 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The thematic analysis showed Communication Channels within the organisation as the theme appears in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Communication channels within the organisation**

Codes	Category	Emerging Theme
Face-to-face meetings, Emails, Telephone calls.	Types of Communication Channels use	Communication Channels
WhatsApp, Communication book, Circulars, Letters, Rumours		
Active	The role played by participants within these channels	
Passive		
Satisfied / Not Satisfied	Satisfaction	

The central theme communication channels is presented in three sub-themes, namely, communication channels used, the role played by participants when these channels are used and satisfaction with these channels. Inclusivity cannot be achieved until channels that promote inclusivity are used, hence it was imperative for the study to explore channels used to engage stakeholders as an effort to discover how these channels according to the literature encourage inclusivity endeavours.

#### **4.4.1 Types of Communication Channel**

Participants reported that there are numerous communication channels employed to engage with stakeholders in the resolution-making process. Teachers outlined that they use face-face meetings, to discuss issues, circulars to get information from the circuit, and communication books to keep abreast with the decisions made in the school. SGB members, on the other hand, stipulated that they are engaged in the decision-making process via face-face meetings and they receive calls inviting them to those meetings. Parents argue that they are not engaged inclusively because they are only called to meetings to be informed and not engaged, they are invited to meetings via letters from the school, given to their kids to give them at home.

Some of the parents mentioned that they are not informed at all on the issues of the school decision-making processes. Parents also articulated that; they only hear rumours about developments in schools.

*“We engage in resolution-making process as teachers through meetings, where we are consulted on issues, discuss, them, share ideas of how to resolve them, get to be delegated to committees that will work on the realising the resolution plan”* Participant 14

*“We engaged through meetings, as SGB, we get a WhatsApp message or a call for a meeting to come and discuss issues and participate in decision making, our views are taken serious and respected”* Participant 4

*“As parents we are called to meetings but not to be part of the discussion but to be informed of what the school has decided on and is implementing”* Participant 9

*“There are meetings that are conducted, I get an invite from my child via a letter. Most of the decisions that the school takes, we are not involved in taking that decision, we hear about those decisions from our children, for example, issues of extra classes, extra fees, and sick children sent home, we are not informed by the school directly, but we hear about those decisions from our children at home”* Participant 16

According to these participants, parents are not included in decision-making processes that affect their children’s education. The White paper on education emphasises the right of parents to be involved in schools’ governance. It also claims that they have a right to meaningful communication with teachers and be involved in planning, maintaining, and drawing school policies and school programmes. Parents who are well knowledgeable on the policies and resource allocation in an education sector and engaged in the decision-making processes considering their children, can use significant inspiration and submit solutions to challenges in the education system (Modisaotsile, 2012). Parental engagement in the education system and governance inspires and creates many opportunities for children’s morale, attitudes, and collective academic achievement.

The stakeholder theory encourages relationships between schools and all stakeholders and not just stakeholders that are in a powerful position such as teachers. However, schools in the Hlanganani South Circuit, do not align their engagement efforts with those populated by the literature, rather, they only engage teachers, principals and HODs in the decision-making process and leave teachers out. Duma (2014) affirms that parents have a legal right to play an effective role in their children's education, parents might ease conditions that teachers and learners learn chaotically and assist educators to deal with learners that encounter complications. Lethoko (2019) further agrees that parents' active role has a positive influence on children's educational progress and achievement and asserts that when parents work together with educators to sustain learning, the children manage to be successful not only in school but also in other parts of life.

The school is a central portion of the community and parents cannot be separated from it (Mahlangu, 2005). Parents and SGBs are in an exceptional position to know what schools need and what problems there are in these schools (Department of Education, 1997). The South African Council for Educators (SACE) specifies that teachers must acknowledge the role of parents and keep them informed regularly about the welfare and progress of the learners. The family-school collaboration as a joint process of planning brings together school, parents, and community members (Naicker, 2013). The magnitude to which the school communicates with parents and SGBs influences the engagement in the activities of the school (Stein & Thorkildsen, 1999; Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004).

An active parental role has positive effects such as a decline in absenteeism, improved attitudes, and motivation towards education, improved acceptable behaviour and discipline as well as a decrease in dropout rate (Tlale, 2006; Lemmer, 2009; Wong, 2008). The decision of parents to actively take part in their children's education can be associated with inherent parental skills because they have the ambition for their children to succeed (Hoover-Dempsey, 1997; Page 2016). This mainly means that parental role creation is seen as the parent's belief in what they are supposed to do in relation to their children's education.

Barge and Loges (2003) and Lethoko (2019) outline that the active role of parents in strategic decision-making is significantly linked to improved educational performance, improved school attendance, and increased community support to schools, including financial and material resources. On the other hand, Boulton (2006) emphasises that any kind of parental participation, whether for engagement in supporting the child's academic progress from home or being involved in the decision-making processes of schools, attending an activity of schools or even for voluntary work of the school has a great effect in the progress of such school. Based on the literature and findings, it can be argued that schools in the Hlanganani South Circuit undermine the impact of parental involvement in education.

#### **4.4.2 Role played**

Participants as teachers and SGBs revealed that they play an active role in the meetings that they are engaged in during the decision-making process. Parents outlined that they play a passive role as they are not consulted but dictated to when called for meetings.

*"I actively participate, I get to say something in meetings"* - Participant 2.

*"I am an active participant; I contribute my ideas"* Participant 15

*"I can say it's passive, there is poor communication to our community, we are never called to meetings to participate and be active"* Participant 27

*"I am passive, I am not active as a parent, I do not have a link with the circuit, as parents we've not related at all with the school"* Participant 12

Stakeholder inclusivity advocates for a comprehensive and accountable interaction between stakeholders and entities (Green, 2001). Stakeholder inclusivity is regarded as interactive and as contrasting with asymmetrical communication where information is collaboratively distributed to stakeholders for common understanding.

This informs the study of the significance of active and collaborative participation as a key element in stakeholder inclusivity. Stakeholder inclusivity involves a search for win-win situations, an investigation for mutual results and building and reinforcing of relations (The Environment Council, 1999). The system theory argues that organisations are a system with parts that should work well together, meaning that teachers, parents, principals and HODs of schools are parts of the school system, and they should work together for schools to be successful. However, the result reveals that the Hlanganani Circuit schools do not follow the system theory when other parts of the school system such as parents are given an inactive role to play in decision-making processes.

#### **4.4.3 Satisfaction**

It was found that teachers are satisfied with the channels used and how they are engaged in decision-making processes. SGB members need some improvement to be made while parents are not satisfied.

*“I am not satisfied; they should communicate with us better” - Participant 4*

*“I am satisfied, they should keep up the good work” Participant 21*

*“They should improve on feedback because we wait for feedback from them to the principal or the chairperson then it comes to us, it is either delayed or interfered with when it reaches us” Participant 8*

Communication satisfaction is a person’s level of satisfaction with different attributes of communication in the organisation (Kandlousi, Ali & Abdollah, 2010). In the same perspective, communication satisfaction as described by Wagner (2013) is the level of satisfaction of members in the organisation’s experience during communications between themselves and their supervisors and between themselves and their fellow members. Communication satisfaction involves the exchange of ideas, creating respect and satisfaction.

Employees who are well informed by their supervisors and organisations are more expected to understand their job requirements and prospects of their contributions to an organisation’s success (Down & Adrian, 2004). When stakeholders understand their mandate, they perform better (Demirtas, 2010). Parents, and SGB who participate in the decision-making processes feel the ownership, and inputs into policies that affect their children’s education, are aware of their opinions in the decisions, share experiences and correlations with their stakeholders, consciousness of school, district and state policies and finally hold school to account for academic performance (National Education Collaboration Trust). Schools in the Hlanganani South Circuit demotivate the performance of parents in contributing to the success of schools by not engaging with them to their satisfaction.

#### 4.5 DECISION MAKING APPROACH

The thematic analysis revealed the decision-making approach within the organisation as the theme appears in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: The decision-making approach within the organisation**

Codes	Category	Emerging Theme
Participation	Democratic	Decision-Making Approach
Consultation		
Workshops		
Meetings		
Dictation	Autocratic	
Power		
Planning	Stage engaged in	
Implementation		

The main theme decision-making approach within the organisation is presented in three sub-themes; democratic, autocratic and stages that measure how the decisions are taken and at which stage are stakeholders engaged. For inclusivity to be achieved, the decision-making process should take into consideration the ideas of participants. Hence it is important to explore how decisions making is approached.

#### **4.5.1 Democratic**

It was found that teachers and the members of the SGB use a democratic approach to decision-making, where they are given a platform to participate in decision-making, and their views are heard, taken seriously, and considered they outlined that they participate during meetings and workshops.

*“We are democratic, we participate in decision-making, and our views are important. For example, in staff meetings we talk about how to manage classrooms, in subject workshops, we discuss how to improve pass rate” – Participant 1*

*“We are involved in decision making, during the planning stage, we share ideas with the teacher components and other committees.” – Participant 4*

A democratic leadership approach is an approach that can encourage “humanness” “teamwork” and “participation” of employees (Peteman, 2000). The heart of democratic leadership supports and respects humanity (McClaim, Ylimaki & Ford, 2010). A democratic or participative leadership approach is used by the leaders to include stakeholders in the strategic decision-making processes, giving guidance and support (Atsebeha, 2016). Democratic leadership offers guidance to stakeholders who are participating in the strategic decision-making processes and encourages stakeholder inclusivity in the decision-making processes (Kilicoglu, 2018). Moreover, is one of the most appropriate leadership styles that permit stakeholders to offer their views freely (Peteman, 2000; Atsebeha, 2016).



According to Goleman (2007) and Kilicoglu (2018) democratic leadership, which involves a participative leadership style, influences stakeholders to participate in the organisation to feel involved in resolution-making processes. This allows stakeholders or members of the organisation to feel ownership and be responsible assets of the organisation through their engagements in the organisational processes. This further motivates them to be creative and analytical in resolving issues that affect their organisational progress. The advantages of the democratic leadership approach are that every stakeholder gets an opportunity to voice their concerns and make inputs and there is a transfer of power from organisational leadership to subordinates (Kane & Pataman, 2010). The principals or SMT as the leaders of schools transfer power to other stakeholders like SGB in the decision-making processes. The democratic leadership style assists leaders in forming appropriate working conditions and promoting a free stream of thought in the organisation (Atsebeha, 2016). Furthermore, democratic leadership is a suitable way for decision-making processes and more actual procedures because of the creative thinking processes of consultation and feedback (Peteman, 2000; Atsebeha, 2016).). Through stakeholder inclusivity of teachers and SGB, a mutual relationship is built in the Hlanganani South Circuit. This connects them to reach a common goal in children's education, which is to improve academic performance.

#### **4.5.2 Autocratic**

Parents are not participating in decision making and therefore, an autocratic approach is used to make decisions with them.

*“They use autocratic, communication is one-sided. Our views are not given an opportunity to be heard” – Participant 16*

*“It's autocratic, they never invite us to share our point of view. They only inform us when they are implementing.” – Participant 22*

The autocratic leadership style is portrayed by individual domination over the actions of all members of the organisation and little input (Jony, Alam & Amin, 2019). Autocratic leadership believes in taking unilateral decisions on issues that affect a collective. Autocratic leaders make choices grounded on their beliefs and judgements and rarely consider subordinates' guidance (Cherry, 2019). Autocratic leadership further apply commanding authority using reward and force to sway their subordinates, focusing attention on the product instead of considering human needs and rights significant (Atsebeha, 2016; Bogler, 2001). The decision-making process is leader-centred and instruction-centric because leaders do not allow any suggestions and inputs from other stakeholders or subordinates. The leaders' skills, knowledge and information direct the organisational focus in achieving its objectives and solving issues that affect the working environment. Autocratic leadership provides a clear explanation of what the task is, how it should be executed and when should it be completed (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016).

The autocratic leadership style that the Hlanganani South Circuit uses on parents does not allow these stakeholders to participate in the resolution-making processes and through this approach, they cannot improve their creativity (De Cremer, 2006; Atsebeha, 2016). This discourages parents from attending meetings and participates mutually in the strategic-making processes of the school. The discouragements and negligence of parents can extend to learners' attitudes and performance (Naicker, 2013).

#### **4.5.3 Decision-Making Stage Engages in**

It was reported that teachers and HODs are engaged in both the planning and implementing stages of decision-making while parents are engaging in the implementation stage only.

*"We participate in both the planning and implementation stage"* Participant 21

*"During the planning stage we sit and discuss and share ideas, the teacher components, will attend executive meetings and present our ideas which are normally considered, the*

*teacher component will come back to us and report which ideas will be implemented, which will not be implemented and why. So, we participate in all stages” Participant 24*

*“We are only involved in the implementation stage, where they call us to a parent meeting and inform us of what they will or have implemented, we do not get to plan these decisions, we are only dictated to with decisions taken” Participant 15*

The school as a public organisation in a democratic society have a moral and social responsibility to encourage democracy and a democratic approach to life (Mncube & Naicker, 2011). Therefore, teachers, parents, and HOD principals who participate in the planning stage of decision-making processes acquire studying programs, policies, advancement plans, values, and beliefs jointly. This results in stakeholders assuming leadership responsibilities within the school as they work together towards a mutual vision (Masha, 2017). However, the schools in the Hlanganani Circuit have not yet realised the significance of including all stakeholders in both the planning and implementation stages of decision-making processes hence the results reveal that parents are only included in the implementation stage. The results are in contrast with the literature by Van Deventer and Kruger (2011) assert, “Through community participation in the work of the school, parents may become more interested in the things their children are doing and this may, in turn, help to reduce the number of learners dropout in schools”. Parents who are members of the planning team in the strategic decision-making processes are more aware of and become more active concerning policies that affect their children’s education (Sapungan, 2014). Parents and SGBs regard schools as their possessions because they are engaged with the school programmes (Masha, 2017). Therefore, this assists in sustaining the safety of school properties. Not engaging parents and SGB members in the planning stage of decisions drifts them apart from the school’s mandate and negatively affects the overall performance of these schools.

## 4.6 COMMUNICATION FLOW

The thematic analysis shows communication flow within the organisation as the theme appears in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: A representation of the communication flow themes**

Codes	Category	Emerging Theme
Meetings	Upward	Communication Flow
Policies	Downward	
Workshops	Horizontal	

The main theme of communication flow from the circuit is presented in three sub-themes; upward, downward, and horizontal flow which measures how information is disseminated to stakeholders. Each information type requires a specific flow, hence the study must look at the flow used in decision-making processes.

### 4.6.1 Downward

It was found that downward communication which is one way flow of messages is used when policies are disseminated to stakeholders. Stakeholders do not participate in policy developments which affect them.

*“Decisions from the circuit flow differently, depending on the nature of the information disseminated. When we are informed of policies, communication of that policy will be downward, from circuit manager to the principal then to us.” – Participant 34*

### 4.6.2 Upward

It was found that Upward communication which allows subordinates to communicate with management is used for various group and committee discussions.

*“Communication can flow upward for example if we have a pass rate issue in a certain subject, we can take that issue up to the HODs so that strategies of resolving pass issues on a specific subject are initiated” – Participant 17*

### **4.6.3 Horizontal**

It was found that Horizontal communication which allows stakeholders at the same level to share information occurs.

*“We have communication book, we can all read messages and sign that book, we have meetings, we can all sit and discuss issues as equals in the meeting.” – Participant 9*

Organisational communication has an essential role among the stakeholders in conducting business (Weldeghebiel, 2020). It embraces activities of sending and receiving information or messages through different layers of leadership, using different message systems, and discussing different issues of interest (Shonubi & Ankitaro, 2016). Hence, in organisational communication, there are communication flows used to disseminate information, resources, and policies to different related stakeholders.

Consequently, to achieve effective communication, organisations have an obligation to create effective communication flows for all stakeholders to communicate throughout the organisational structures. According to Chan Chun Ming (2010), communication flows permit information to be conveyed through well-defined communication channels. So that information can reach receivers in an appropriate and well-organised manner. The communication flows are formal and informal where stakeholders exchange or share information that affects their working environment or schools (Weldeghebiel, 2020). Hoffman (1989) argues that it is not satisfactory to improve individual communication skills for leaders (school principals in particular) and leaders to solve problems of internal communication.

Downward communication is a formal or official communication flow recognised by the management and is relevant for procedures, directions, reasons, philosophies, purposes, and policies (Markovic, Radovic-Markovic & Spasic, 2013).

Normally it occurs through well-defined communication channels created by the organisation's hierarchy structure or management (Weldeghebriel, 2020). Formal communication flow is often pre-arranged and necessary for performing certain tasks (Banihashemi, 2011). Larkin and Larkin (1994) sustain that a downward communication flow is typically operational if managers communicate openly with supervisors and in turn, supervisors communicate specifically with the staff. However, the results reveal that the schools in the Hlanganani South Circuit use downward communication for the dictatorship of policies and therefore theory practice is not governed by the literature of Larkin (1994); their downward communication is not operational.

In school organisation, upward communication refers to communication that moves from the staff, SGBs and parents to the leadership of the school. These messages are not only to determine if staff, parents and SGBs have understood information transmitted through a downward flow but also to meet the personality needs of the subordinates (Lunenburg, 2010). Upward communication flow is also formal communication between the management and the other education stakeholders including educators. Stakeholders have an opportunity to respond to the information received. This is through engagement with the leadership of the schools or school management teams (SMTs). The teacher representatives through the mandate of the staff and SGBs and parent representatives through the mandate of parents engage with the leadership of the schools to submit their grievances, reports, and suggestions on their children's education. Therefore, communication flow and channels should allow parents, SGBs, and teachers to participate in the resolution-making processes. The managers are seized liable for forming openness in subordinates, preparedness to share feelings hopes, and fears and acknowledging mistakes (Thompson, 1998). When it comes to upward communication, the results reveal that the Hlanganani Circuit schools do engage in open communication meant for their managers.

Horizontal communication flow refers to communication among the peer levels and not in a hierarchical relationship. The recent horizontal tendencies are the main communication between the team members concentrating on collecting information and teamwork (Markovic, Radovic-Markovic & Spasic, 2013). Stakeholders are orientated towards learning and information exchange on the issues or policies of the organisations. Horizontal communication does occur in the Hlanganani schools as stakeholders at the same level are awarded opportunities to sit and discuss issues.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

The significant effort of qualitative research is to understand a subjective domain of human existence, this includes the immersion of all related stakeholders in the planned decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit schools. The researcher had the role of exploring how the Hlanganani South Circuit engages with teachers, SGBs and parents in decision-making processes. Participants participated in semi-structured interviews with the researcher and revealed that different communication channels are used to communicate with stakeholders. Channels that support inclusivity in decision-making were found to be used for teachers and SGB members, while channels used to engage with parents do not encourage inclusivity. Therefore, teachers' inclusivity in decision-making is achieved except in policy development and parent inclusivity is not achieved. Uninformed parents have negative attitudes towards school activities and programmes, consequently, they do not respect the quality of education in general. The communication gap between teachers and parents might increase only if teachers undermine the thoughts, suggestions and inputs and therefore do not allow parents to participate in the strategic decision-making processes. This chapter presented the research findings, The next chapter discusses a conclusion on how the results enabled the achievement of research objectives.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The problem statement that was driving this research was the lack of stakeholder inclusivity in the decision-making processes of the Hlanganani South Circuit. A qualitative explorative method using interviews was used to collect data that helped understand the problem and make recommendations accordingly. This chapter presents the findings of the research and recommendations therein.

#### **5.2 PRINCIPAL FINDINGS**

##### **5.2.1 Stakeholder Inclusivity**

The principal finding that answers research objective 1: How educators and other related stakeholders like SGBs and parents are included in the resolution-making process of the Hlanganani South Circuit reveals that teachers and SGBs are engaged in strategic decision-making processes, but SGBs need some improvements to be made regarding their inclusivity, while parents are not included at all. The major concern is that schools do not understand the importance of parents as educational stakeholders. The principles of mutually beneficial dialogue and information sharing are ignored through engaging teachers and SGBs only in decision-making processes and undermining the roles of parents as the foundation of children's education. This is in clear disagreement with the literature of Manetti (2011) which reflects the need for stakeholder inclusivity with all stakeholders and shows the values of collaboration and partnership in improving learners' academic performance.



### **5.2.2 Type of communication**

In response to research objective 2: The type of communication used to engage with educators, SGBs and parents on decision-making, results reveal that the communication channels used by the schools are face-to-face meetings, circulars and communication books which are mostly used by teachers and SGBs. Jeffery (2009) outlines that the channel for decision-making should be 2-way and encourage feedback. The schools in the Hlanganani South Circuit use meetings as a channel of 2-way communication, however, circulars and communication books do not provide stakeholders with an opportunity to seek clarity and voice out their views.

### **5.2.3 Decision-making approach**

In response to research objective 3: In exploring the approach used to make decisions in the Circuit, it was revealed that the democratic approach is used when engaging teachers and SGBs in the resolution-making processes through face-to-face meetings and workshops while an autocratic approach is used to communicate with parents about the resolution that is made.

### **5.2.4 Involvement in decision making**

In response to research objective 4: In exploring step in the decision-making processes that mostly engages teachers and other related stakeholders, results show that teachers and SGBs are mostly engaged in the planning stage while other parents are only engaged in the implementing stage. Unilateral decisions are taken by teachers and SGBs without including parents in the resolution-making processes.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made to schools in the Hlanganani South Circuit:

- The Hlanganani South Circuit should include parents the same way they include teachers in their decision-making processes as parents also play a role in the education system as per the argument of the literature.
- More symmetrical communication methods should be employed by the Hlanganani South Circuit to achieve stakeholders' inclusivity. Instead of circulars communication books, workshops and round table discussions can be used to foster a dialogue.
- The schools need to allow and promote a democratic approach in engaging parents in a strategic decision-making process when parents are dictated to about the role, they need to play in education they might fail to implement what they did not develop. Also, a democratic approach should be employed on teachers when policies are developed because teachers are on the ground, implementing these policies, when teaching policies are developed without teachers, they come with loopholes.

### **5.4 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

The following limitations apply to this research.

- Purposive sampling was employed to select the sample for the purposive reasons of this research and therefore, the results of this research could not be generalized. Employing purposive sampling matches the rationale of the research, as the main aim was to acquire detailed information rather than generalise the outcomes of the study.

- The response partiality which is innate in an explorative and qualitative study could be another limitation. It was likely that respondents provided their perspectives centred on the belief of stakeholder inclusivity or based on protecting the leadership practised in their schools, which could cause biases in the way answered in the semi-structured interviews and focus group.
- The study could have benefited from a mixed method study where content analysis was also employed to measure the interview results against documents that guide stakeholder inclusivity in education and not only measure the results against literature.

Because of the size of the sample, results of the study could not be generalized to the larger population as it has been stated in the research design. Occasionally, some samples are too small to show the characteristics of the population. Large samples according to Van Dalen (1979) and Mchunu (2010), accomplish an appropriate extent of reliability and safest procedure is to allocate more time for the study and use large samples as possible for the study to yield good results.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

This research is viewed as successful because it has achieved its aims. Its focus was on analysing how schools in the Hlanganani South Circuit implement stakeholder inclusivity in a strategic decision-making process. Semi-structured interviews which were used through Zoom allowed the identification of a vital concern of engaging all related stakeholders in the system of education. It was established that stakeholder inclusivity occurs in the Hlanganani South Circuit schools but not to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. Parents in the strategic decision-making processes are side-lined while teachers and SGBs are considered as relevant educational stakeholders to improve learners' academic performance are included.

Therefore, to achieve stakeholder inclusivity, schools need to engage with all stakeholder groups in both the planning and implementation stages of decision-making. Schools need to utilise a two-way communication method during this process and not only receive the views of stakeholders but also consider these views. Finally, basic education specifically Hlanganani South Circuit's adoption to effective stakeholder inclusivity is essential in achieving their objectives and addressing challenges in improving the quality of children's education.

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