

## **Management versus Governance Power Contests Facing Principals in Schools: Power Relations**

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### **Abstract**



*The focus of the article is about issues that secondary schools face in terms of the responsibilities of principals and school governing bodies (SGBs) in terms of dispersed leadership rather than one-man role-based leadership. Methods: The study investigates issues of schools surrounding distributed leadership practices using data from research on the connection between the principal and school governing bodies. This research used qualitative and quantitative data collected from secondary school administrators, SGB members, and teachers as part of a design research project. Implications: According to the findings, concentrating on distributed leadership methods may assist overcome some of the drawbacks of providing feedback to a single leader. Findings: In Gauteng secondary schools, opposing ideas and expectations predominate. Where SGBs and principals struggle against one another, ambiguous rules are found. Some principals impose terms on SGBs, while SGBs impose terms on principals. Dysfunctional schools are caused by weak governance and management. In terms of financial problems, there is a lack of transparency in schools. Principals contribute to school problems by refusing or failing to accept their ineptness. They continue to run schools inefficiently; they do not fully engage teachers in school management; they mistreat parents; they impose terms on SGBs; they contribute to dysfunctional schools; school resources are embezzled for purposes not related to the running of schools, and they mix up their work with that of the SGBs. Principals and SGBs should be made aware that cooperation, rather than competition, may be more effective in reducing power struggles in schools.*

**Keywords:** Distributed Leadership, Governance; Principal; School Governing Body; Transparency

### **Introduction**

The focus of the article is on the perceptions of principals and school governing bodies about their responsibilities concerning their powers as prescribed by the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. The emphasis was on the issues that secondary schools face in terms of the responsibilities of principals and school governing bodies (SGBs) in terms of dispersed leadership rather than one-man role-based leadership. The merging of roles by principals and School Governing Bodies is one of the most difficult that schools face. The abbreviation SGB will be used to refer to School Governing Bodies throughout this article. In the recent past, there has been an increasing push for school administrators to improve their leadership and managerial skills, since they are the most powerful individual in advocating reform, change, and innovation. However, completing these duties presents problems for educational leaders (Cruz, Villena, Navarro, Belecina & Garvida, 2016, p.707). Years of struggle against apartheid led to the development of South Africa. Its citizens are now faced with the task of transforming a society riven by politics and tainted by corruption. Every area of South African life is transforming (Department of Education (DOE), 1996).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The goal of this study was to look at the issues secondary schools have in improving school leadership, with a focus on principals' and school boards' responsibilities for distributed leadership rather than a single-man role focused on an individual leader. The following major questions will be addressed in this research article: To what extent should the School Governing Bodies allow principals to do as they please? And how much power should other stakeholders wield over school operations, such as SGBs (School Governing Bodies)? This could be the case with Gauteng Province's approval of the South African Schools Act in secondary schools. The findings pose a

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severe challenge to the South African Schools Act implementation in schools. Management and governance concerns are the most troublesome areas of conflict in schools.

**Research question**

What are the perceptions of principals and school governing bodies about their responsibilities concerning their powers as prescribed by the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996?

**Objectives**

The objective of the article was to determine the perceptions about the responsibilities and power relations between the school principal and the School Governing Bodies in secondary schools. Also, to understand the perceptions of principals and SGB members about the power relations since the promulgation of the South African School Act No. 84 of 1996.

**Rationale**

Governance and professional management of public schools are guided by section 16 of the South African Schools Act of 1996. (1) Subject to this Act, the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body. (2) A governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school. (3) Subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department.

**Significance of the study**

The functions of all governing bodies in terms of section 20 (e) of the South African Schools Act of 1996, are to support the principal, educators, and other staff members of the school in the performance of their professional functions. Section 23(b) of SASA (1996) says the principal, in his or her official capacity, is a member of the School Governing Body.

**A Theory of Authoritarian Power Sharing**

In this article two key players, the principal will be likened to the dictator and the SGB to the ruling coalition. Svolik (2009, p. 480) found that at the heart of this moral hazard problem is the possibility that an attempt to consolidate power by the principal (dictator) could go undetected by those in the SGB (ruling coalition). The autonomy that is associated with delegated power in most political systems is intensified in dictatorships by the secrecy and back-channel politics that characterize those regimes.

I argue that a conflict of interest between the principal and the members of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) is the central problem of management versus governance in schools: once they have delegated executive powers from the Department of Education to principals, the members of School Governing Bodies are concerned that the principal could use those powers to strengthen his/her position and later eliminate them from the governance functions. For instance, the principal may attempt to divert economic resources to expand the ranks of his loyal followers. Once the principal has acquired a sufficient amount of additional power, s/he may eliminate members of the governing body whose support is no longer necessary for the principal to remain in power. If enough members of the governing body are weakened, the remaining members may be left with too little power to credibly threaten the position of the principal and thereby lose all influence over School Governing Body. Although some members of the School Governing Body may attempt to strengthen their position as well, the principal's control of the executive presents him with the greatest opportunity to do so. I, therefore, propose that the dictator's potential opportunism will be the central concern of the ruling coalition.

**Method**

The data for this study was gathered using a mixed technique approach. Data was gathered through the use of interviews and questionnaires. There were two sections to the questionnaire. Portion 1 deals with biographical information, whereas part 2 deals with assertions about school governance and management. A questionnaire was sent out to all stakeholders in School Governing Bodies. Following the collection of data, an analysis was done using factor and item analysis about relationship issues between principals and school governing bodies. In Gauteng Province, 200 questionnaires were sent to twenty schools. Individual responses to questions were analyzed and compared as needed.

**Literature review**

Sunker (2021, pp. 12-13) believes that principals are responsible for a wide range of obligations, including overseeing curriculum-related matters, evaluating learner performance through ongoing assessment and exams, and monitoring the deputy principal and HoDs. Distributive leadership can be considered as a feasible option since principals become deeply involved in administrative problems.

Leadership responsibilities will be spread in a variety of ways, resulting in multiple leaders. On the other hand, School Act No. 84 of 1996 empowers schools to include all stakeholders in the governance of schools, according to Nxumalo, Gamele, and Uleanya (2021, pp. 578) who believe that transformation in the education system should include the principle of collaboration between the principal and SGBs (parents, educators, learners, and communities). All schools are required to have governing bodies under this law. The SGBs are in charge of governing and managing school activities. There is a perception that governing bodies share responsibility for the effective delivery of children's education. Meanwhile, the Department of Education has entrusted the administrative role and management of the schools to the school governing bodies (SGB) and SMT (School Management Team).

At the millennium's turn, many manifestations of a lack of morals exacerbated corruption on multiple society levels. Today's societies bear tremendous expenses as a result of ethical failures stemming from a clear lack of leadership and well-organized management systems, prompting some authors to label capitalism as undergoing a "pathological mutation" (Turriago-Hoyos, Thoene, and Arjoon, 2016). Lan, Zhu, and Liu (2021), on the other hand, believe that the Confucian rule of virtue in schools and school policies should be able to influence schools' moral advancement. In any relationship, Confucian ethics views the abuse of strength and authority to be unethical. Fairness in principals' and SGBs' accountabilities can help build harmony. Similarly, Chu and Vu (2021, p.2.) discovered that the reasoning capacity of stakeholders would not always predict whether principals or SGBs will act morally.

Any country's educational system dictates its future course and reflects its ideology. Equality and freedom are some of the competing ideas with contrasting expectations for schools. Disputes over differing ideological perspectives and the interests they represent highlight the value of education in society (Mahmood, Ahmed, Zubair, Ali, & Khan, 2016, pp.96-103). The school is a vital component of the community and it must be treated as such. Parents in SGBs, are very important in the decision-making process. Changes in education should be made following our Constitution's ideals and principles (Gauteng Department of Education, 1997).

Principals' management of schools, according to Mahlangu (1998), must be a cooperative endeavor with SGBs. School administrators are no longer the major decision-makers in terms of school governance. In governance, parents set rules to the best of their abilities and enforce regulations as well as offer services. In short, governance must be concerned with the wishes of the school community at large rather than with the goals that they set (Fukuyama, 2013, pp. 347-368.). In making school choices, and the way stakeholders make their opinions heard, that is the responsibility of governance (Petrie, Chopra, Chochinov, Artz, Schull, Jones, MacPhee, Ackerman, Stiell, & Christenson, 2016).

Principals are now members of School Governing Bodies, the bulk of which is made up of parents. This might be an issue of concern for some principals, because of fear of democratic school governance trends. Principals and teachers are in charge of several major topics, which influence student performances. This is largely due to legislators' belief that some parents are unprepared to participate in such affairs and should refrain from interfering with the daily aspects of running schools (Squelch in De Groof, Bray, Mothatha, & Malherbe (eds), 1998). The phrase "distributed leadership" was coined and developed as a conceptual lens to change the focus of leadership research from individual leaders to "patterns or kinds" of leadership found throughout the organization, including engagement in collaborative or "concertive" activity. Distributed leadership, in this tradition, is an analytical lens for understanding leadership as a feature of organizations that recognizes that leadership practice is the result of interactions between leaders, followers, and their circumstances (Kelley & Dikkers, 2016, pp. 392-422.). The confluence of all stakeholders in schools to achieve concerted management efforts is known as distributed leadership. While task distribution is included, it goes beyond delegation to provide a complete view of the execution of leadership actions by multiple leaders in the same environment (Howard, 2016).

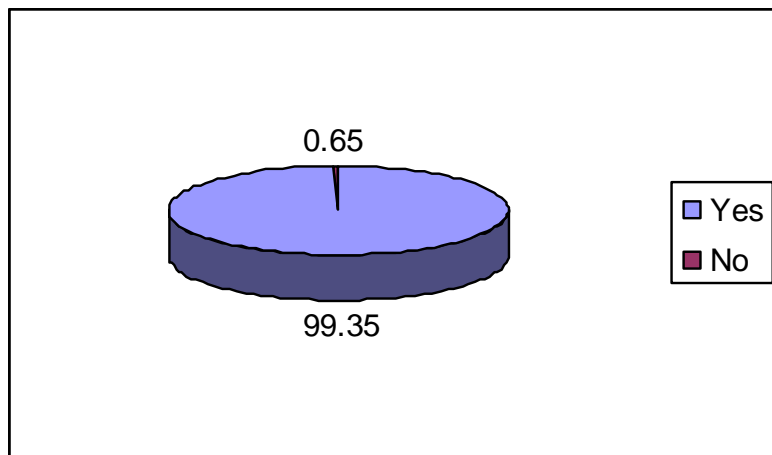
When inept citizens are involved in political decision-making, stability is jeopardized (Maxcy, 1995).

## **Results**

The vast majority of responders (99.35 percent) believe that having a principal in a school is necessary. The responders (98.69 percent) believe that having an SGB in a school is important. One of the SGBs' flaws appears to be a lack of understanding of the South African Schools Act (37.5

percent). Schools have bad administration, according to 47 percent of parents, whereas 94 percent of principals disagree. Teachers play no involvement in school administration, according to 22.23 percent of participants, but teachers do play a large part (60.13 percent). 17.65% of participants are unsure about teachers' role in school administration. Principals in Gauteng schools, according to (23.53 percent) of participants treated SGBs unfairly. This could be the result of some principals failing to pay attention to parents who visit schools or treating them indifferently during parent-teacher conferences. 65.36 percent of selected participants believe that principals do not handle parents unfairly, as some of the 23.53 percent of participants believe. Where the SGBs and principals oppose one another, the overwhelming majority of participants (80.27 percent) believe confusing rules exist. Poor principal administration causes dysfunctionality of schools in Gauteng secondary schools, according to 64.66 percent of participants. According to 35.29 percent of participant principals, their work is confused with that of the SGBs, however, 54.9 percent of participants disagree with this statement.

**Discussions**



*Figure 1: The importance of a principal in a school.*

Figure 1 depicts participants' views on the significance of a principal in a school. There must be someone in charge in any organization. The vast majority of responders (99.35 percent) believe that having a principal in a school is critical.

In a sophisticated and knowledge-intensive organization, principals provide management. As a result, it's comprehensible why principle leadership is frequently regarded as a critical component of SGB success. The extent to which principals can affect their schools is determined by their decision-making authority. The function of a school principal is quite similar to that of a corporate executive. Principals are expected to motivate teachers and to interact with all stakeholders in the school (Böhlmark, Grönqvist, & Vlachos, 2016). Leadership is defined by Kelley and Dikkers (2016) as establishing conducive conditions for teaching and learning in the school." Principals encourage and facilitate teachers' and their professional and career development. They promote the exchange of current information and practices targeted at meeting the different needs of kids while maintaining a broad commitment to school development and student performance. School principals are in charge of organizing and supporting their teachers' professional development. Principals play a critical role in this domain by creating a learning environment that encourages and supports school workers (Lijuan Li, 2016).

On an individual level, principals must nature morals in the school and society (Turriago-Hoyos, Thoene, & Arjoon, 2016). In schools, principals need to operate in line with laws and financial rules, as officers of provincial education departments. As a result, leaders (principals) must become part of SGBs since they have the appropriate skills to assist SGBs in performing their responsibilities. Principals are expected to collaborate with SGBs as though they were one entity. Principals oversee all teaching and learning activities. They must act in good faith (be in a position of trust) towards the school (SASA section 16(2)). Sections 19(1) and 19(2) of SASA require principals to provide capacity building to SGBs for them to appropriately perform their obligations.

Principals' roles and obligations can occasionally be unique and different, depending on the schools in question. The school governing board must support the principals as teachers in the fulfillment of their obligations, according to section 20(1) (e) of SASA, Act No. 84 of 1996.

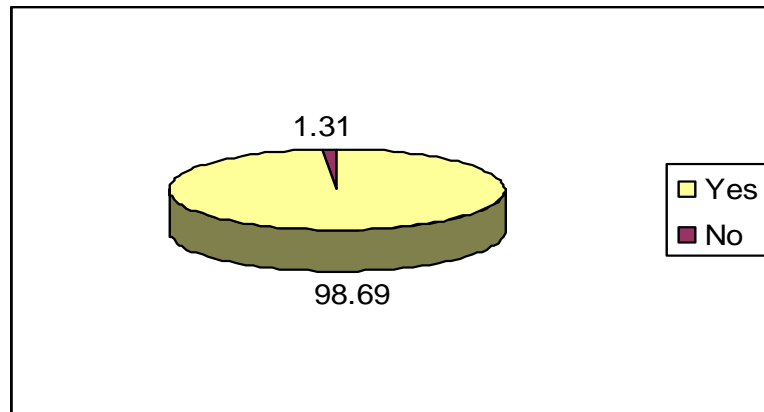


Figure 2: Value of SGB in a school

The value of an SGB in a school is depicted in Figure 2 by the participants' opinions. The vast majority of responders (98.69%) believe that having SGBs is important. In any case, it would be unfair to ask parents to contribute financially to the operation of schools without also giving them some control over how the money is spent and other aspects of their children's education. SGBs are given a great deal of authority. Within the national and provincial frameworks, SGBs have the power to formulate rules of behavior for students, and working hours, among other things. They are responsible for maintaining control over the school's property and buildings, as well as assisting administrators and teachers in the classroom. SGBs are also required to complement government support of schools by generating money or charging fees in schools. It is expected that SGBs and principals must have a good working relationship (Section 20(1) (h) of SASA, Act No. 84 of 1996). The overwhelming support for SGBs demonstrates that the government's governance aims are well-intentioned.

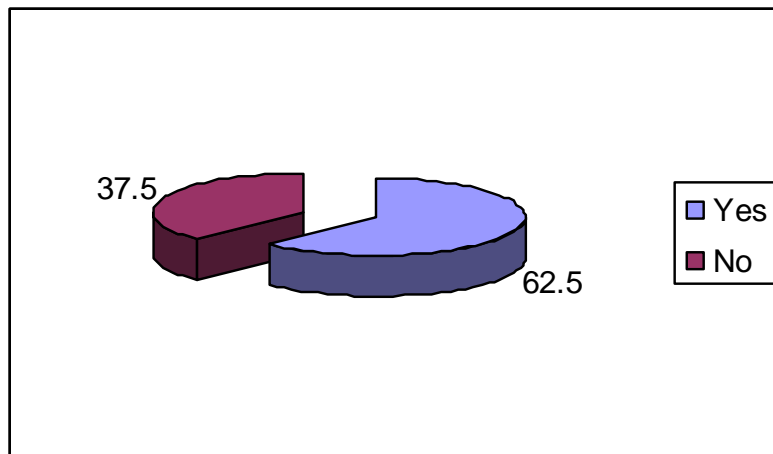


Figure 3: Knowledge of the participants of the South African Schools Act.

Figure 3 depicts the participants' knowledge about SASA. The majority of participants (62.50 percent) are aware of the Schools Act. Flaws appear to be a lack of understanding of the Act by SGBs (37.5 percent). The lack of awareness of the Act makes it very difficult for some SGB members to administer policies that are in the best interests of all stakeholders in schools. It will be more difficult for new members to operate if any of the old SGB members do not understand the Act because they will be entering a group of people who are unsure of their roles. Indeed, SGBs occasionally attend workshops to empower themselves, but some of them resign from their SGBs before empowering others. As the lack of understanding of the Act, the relationship between principals and SGBs will be tumultuous throughout. The principals' and SGBs' responsibilities are clearly stated in the Act.

Information is shared, and decisions are made jointly at schools where principals and SGBs collaborate. Because people's objectives, ambitions, means, and ideologies differ, interdependency can lead to conflict. School systems are moving away from order and toward disorder and irregularity (Maxcy, 1995).

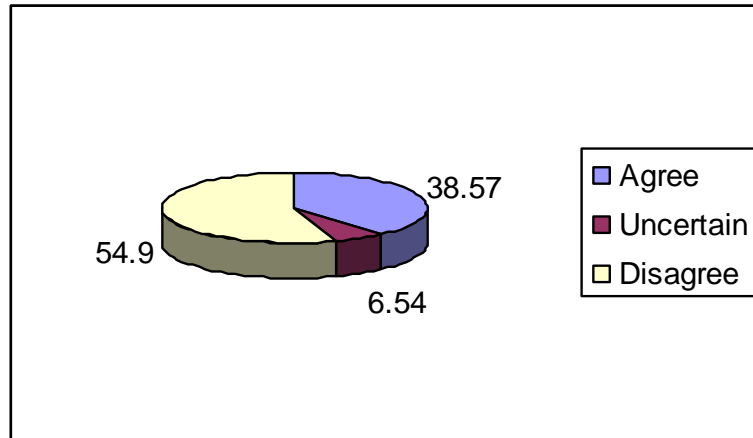


Figure 4: The school has poor management.

Figure 4 depicts whether participants believe the schools are under-managed. Schools have poor management, according to 38.57 percent of participants, while 54.90 percent believe that schools are managed appropriately. 40% of people participants were unsure whether schools had inadequate management. This indicates that some of the responders have a misunderstanding of what managing entails. Schools have bad administration, according to 47 percent of parent responses, but 94 percent of principals disagree. Parents' perspectives differ from those of leaders (principals) because of interpersonal issues. The principals may be protecting themselves in the face of criticism.

The following are core leadership activities connected to school improvement:

- "constructing and marketing an educational vision;"
- creating and managing a school culture that encourages teachers to talk about the core technologies of education by instilling trust, collaboration, and academic press;
- obtaining and distributing resources, such as supplies, time, assistance, and compensation;
- assisting teachers in their personal and professional development, both individually and collectively;
- teaching and creativity are monitored in both summative and formative ways; and
- creating a school climate in which disciplinary issues do not take precedence over academic concerns" (Kelley& Dikkers, 2016).

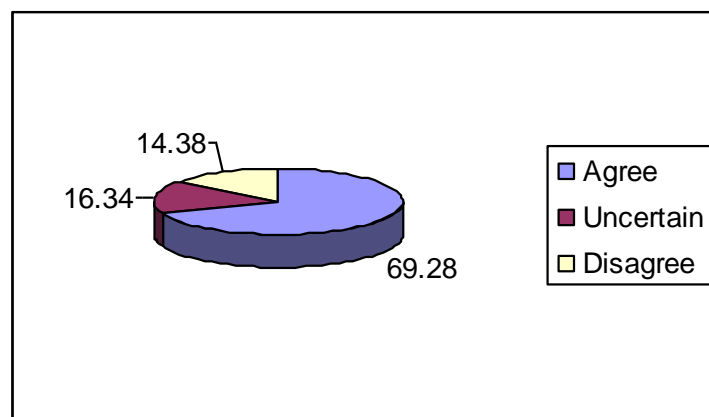


Figure 5: SGBs should assist principals.

Figure 5 depicts participants' views on whether the SGB should assist the principal, teachers, and other members in doing their duties. The vast majority of participants (69.28 percent) believe that the SGBs should assist administrators, teachers, and other members in carrying out their duties. Approximately 16.34% of participants are unsure about the preceding statement, and only 14.38% do not believe that the SGBs should assist principals, teachers, and other members in carrying out their responsibilities. The SGBs' job is to assist the school in maintaining and carrying out its mission as

efficiently and effectively as possible. The significant level of ambiguity (16.34 percent) indicates that some of the participants are unfamiliar with the SGB's work.

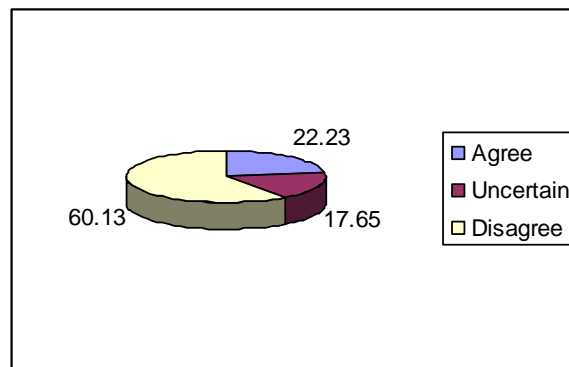


Figure 6: Teachers are involved in administration.

Figure 6 depicts the participants' views on whether or not teachers play a part in school management. Teachers play no involvement in school administration, according to 22.23 percent of participants, but teachers do play a large part in school management, according to the majority of participants (60.13 percent). 17.65% of participants are unsure about the role of teachers in school administration. This indicates that some of the participants are unaware that the SGB is made up of teachers as well. The provisions of the SA Schools Act, 1996 (Section 23) must be made known to all stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, non-teaching personnel, and community members) (1-12).

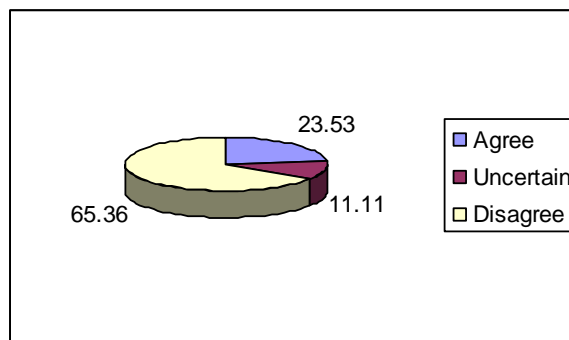


Figure 7: The principal treats parents badly.

Figure 7 depicts the participants' thoughts on how the principal treats parents. Some principals in Gauteng schools, according to 23.53 percent of participants, treat parents unfairly. This could be the result of some principals failing to pay attention to parents who visit schools or treating them indifferently during parent-teacher conferences. About 65.36 percent of participants believe that principals do not treat parents badly, as some of the remaining 23.53 percent of participants believe. There is 11.11 percent of responders that do not want to agree or disagree with the aforesaid statement. This indicates that the connection between the principal and the SGBs is strained in some schools, as some principals (23.53 percent) mistreat parents. According to 31.3 percent of parent participants, principals in their schools treat parents badly, while 100 percent of principals disagree. The perspectives of parents and principals are vastly different. Principals may be unaware that they are mistreating parents or may refuse to assume responsibility for problems.

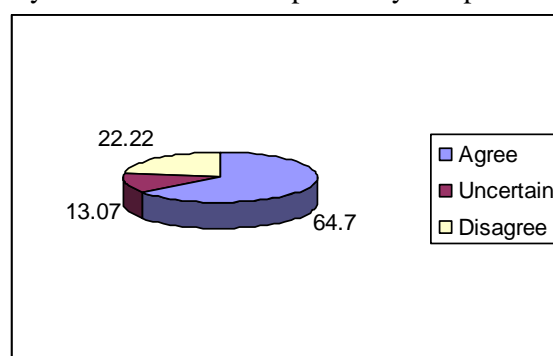


Figure 8: The SGB must support the principals in performing their professional functions.

Figure 8 depicts the participants' views on whether or not the SGBs should assist the principals in completing their professional duties. Approximately 64.70 percent of participants agree with section 20(1) (e) of SASA, which states that the SGBs must help the school's administrators, teachers, and other employees in performing their professional tasks. There is 22.22 percent of participants disagree with the aforementioned statement and 13.07 percent are unsure. The SGBs can talk to the principals about the situation and offer them support and guidance (Gauteng Department of Education 1997, 8). The SGBs can only offer suggestions and comments to assist the principals with school administration. The perspectives indicate that there is a solid foundation for principals and SGBs to work together. The fact that 35.29 percent of participants don't know or are unsure about this critical function of SGBs is concerning.

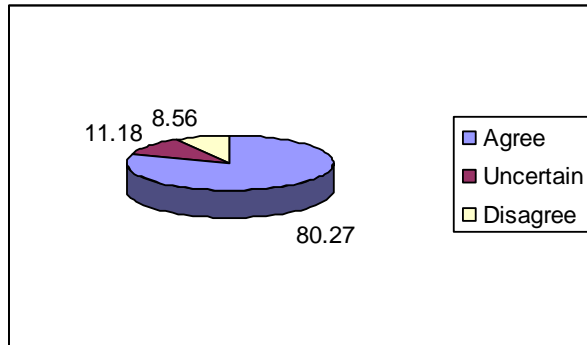


Figure 9: Ambiguous rules are found where the SGB and the principal oppose one another.

Figure 9 depicts the participants' views on the types of rules that are found when the SGB and the primary are at odds. Where the SGBs and the principals oppose one another, the overwhelming majority (80.27 percent) of the participants found confusing regulations. In schools, ambiguous rules might lead to unneeded fights.

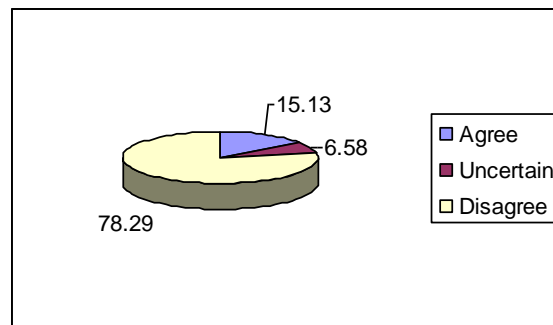


Figure 10: Role of parents in the classroom.

Figure 10 depicts the participants' views on the role of parents in the classroom. Many of the participants (78.29 percent) disagree with the assertion above that parents have no responsibility for their children's education. In any public school in Gauteng Province, parents are at the heart of any SGB system. The views reflect the government's idea of parental involvement and contributions to school governance. All managerial operations are intertwined with decision-making. It cannot be confined to a single step or phase of planning because decisions are made throughout goal setting, policy formulation, and problem-solving. In terms of the goals desired, decision-making entails identifying, evaluating, and selecting alternatives.

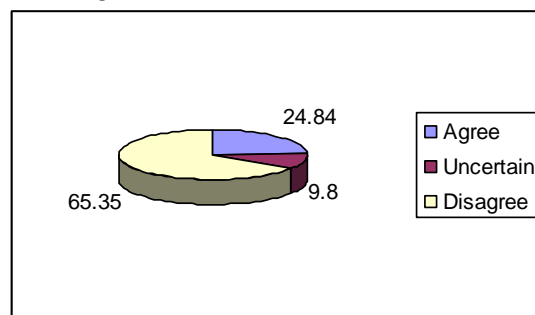


Figure 11: SGBs dictate to principals.



Figure 11 depicts the participants' views on whether SGBs must always impose terms on the principals. The notion that the SGBs must always dictate conditions to the principals is rejected by 65.35 percent of the participants. SGBs are required by Section 20(1)(e) of SASA to support principals in the exercise of their professional functions rather than dictating terms to them. 24.84 percent of participants believe the SGB should impose conditions on the principal. This proportion may appear little, yet it is nonetheless significant.

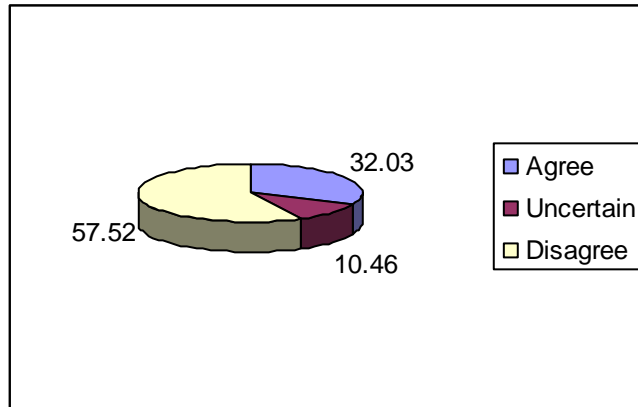


Figure 12 The principal always dictates terms to the SGB.

Figure 12 depicts the participants' views on whether or not the principals always impose terms on the SGBs. About 57.52 percent of participants think the principals do not dictate terms to parents, while 32.03 percent agreed with the assertion. SGB members must be familiar with their schools and collaborate with the principals. The percentage of participants who believe that principals always impose terms on SGBs is a cause for worry. Between the principals and the SGBs, there must be agreement and consensus. Principals and SGBs must occasionally make compromises for teaching and learning to take place in schools. To make their schools operate, all stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, non-teaching personnel, and community members) must accept their duties. The connection between the principals and the SGBs will not be good if the principals have complete control over the SGBs in all matters.

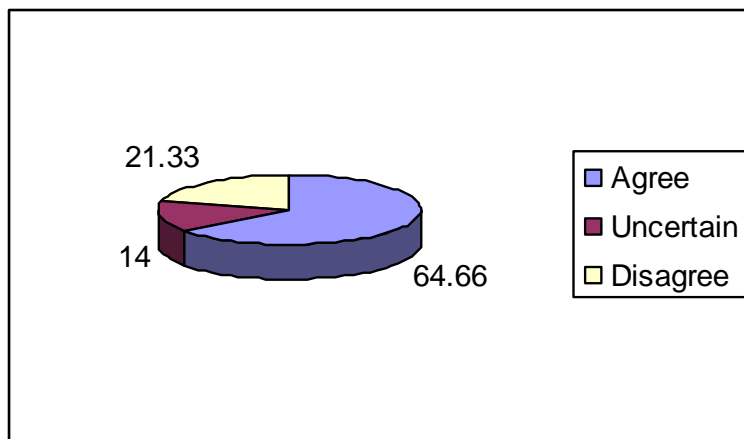


Figure 13: Poor management by the principal is the cause of a dysfunctional school.

Figure 13 depicts the participants' views on whether bad principal management is to blame for failing schools. Poor principal administration is a challenge in schools, according to 64.66 percent of participants. Dysfunctional schools will not be able to function properly. In terms of their interactions, there is always a conflict between the SGBs and the principals. When attempting to provide the greatest possible answer to an issue, some parents in SGBs find themselves at odds with school managers. The fight between principals and SGBs will eventually result in dysfunctional schools. It may be deduced that 80% of the participants believe that inadequate principal administration is a problem in secondary schools. Principals always conceive of themselves as good managers, whilst other stakeholders believe principals are bad managers. This difference of viewpoint could result in a fight.

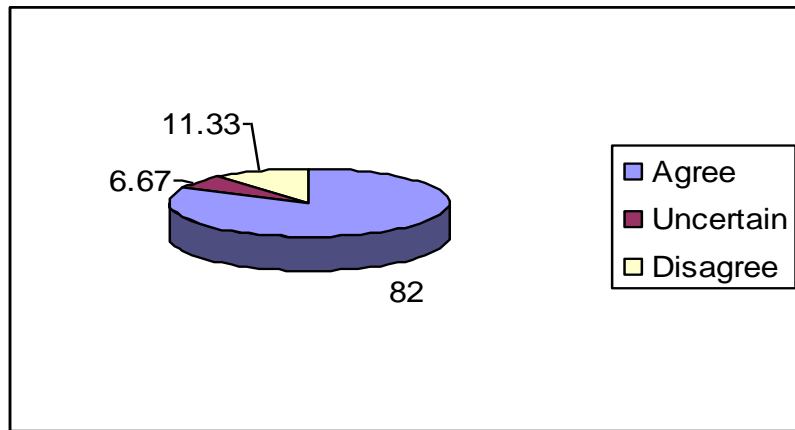


Figure 14: Weak governance causes dysfunctionality in schools.

Figure 14 depicts the participants' views on whether or not weak governance is the cause of a dysfunctional school. Refer to figure 13 for information on how principals run their schools. Poor governance is the cause of dysfunctional schools, according to most participants (82.00 percent). Poor governance can easily result in a situation in which teaching and learning are impossible to carry out. The SGB oversees the entire school since it is responsible for ensuring that the SA Schools Act is followed and that school policy are properly written (Department of Education 1997, p. 44). It may be deduced that 90% of participants believe that bad governance is the root of a dysfunctional school. Dysfunctional schools are said to be caused by weak management and governance. Bad management is not viewed as a cause of dysfunctional schools by 88 percent of principal participants; instead, poor governance is viewed as an issue by 94.1 percent of principal participants. Poor management, on the other hand, is cited by 100% of parent participants as a cause of dysfunctional schools. Different perspectives from parents and principals on what causes dysfunctional schools can lead to conflict and effectively weaken SGBs.

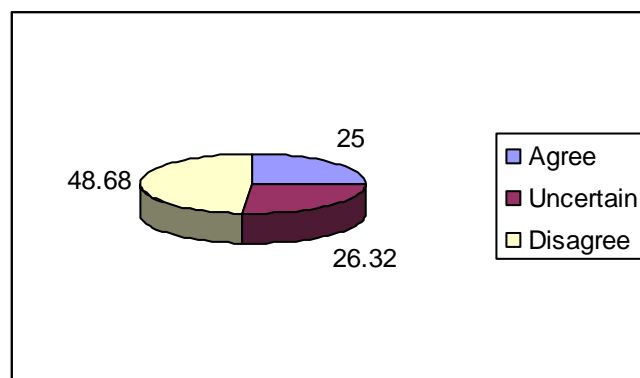


Figure 15: The school funds are misappropriated for non-educational purposes.

Figure 15 depicts participants' views on whether or not school funds are misappropriated for non-educational uses. The participants are unsure whether or not school monies are being used correctly. The fact that so many SGB members (51.32 percent) are unsure whether funds are being misused implies that SGB accountability measures are ineffective. It also suggests that SGBs lack internal transparency. "Governance" is a nebulous concept that is misunderstood to mean management. Instead, managerial or technocratic skill, or, opposite, cooperative, consensual decision-making, is emphasized. "Governance issues" has remained a useful term for corruption, fraud, incompetence, and waste. All forms of institutional frameworks that support both good substantive outcomes and public legitimacy are referred to as good governance (Rose-Ackerman, 2016). Participatory monitoring has shown that it can help men and women talk about how to improve transparency, involvement, accountability, and cooperation. Participatory monitoring is a method for bringing about change, not only for women in leadership roles, but also for men in and out of them, as well as for gender relations, so increasing community governance as a whole (Flores, Evans, Larson, Pikitle, & Marchena, 2016).

According to an article published in the City Press Gauteng (10 August 2008, p. 4), school money is often plundered in some schools for non-educational activities. In this article, a school administrator is at the center of a fierce dispute between members of the school governing body (SGB) and instructors, who accuse him of mismanaging school funds. In July 2008, members of the SGB allegedly removed the principal as one of the signatories to the school's account, according to the publication. This means that corruption began more than 13 years ago and is now rampant throughout the country.

Unauthorized withdrawals from the school account were allegedly made by the principal. According to several professors, the school hasn't had an audited financial statement since 2003. "We are afraid to report the principal to the regional headquarters of the Department of Education because the principal has friends there who are supporting the principal," one teacher explained (City Press Gauteng, 10 August 2008, 4). The principal refuted the charges, stating they were made by "certain teachers who are upset because of their redeployment to other schools and will use anything to defame the principal," according to City Press. This is a sign that certain schools are having problems with governance and management.

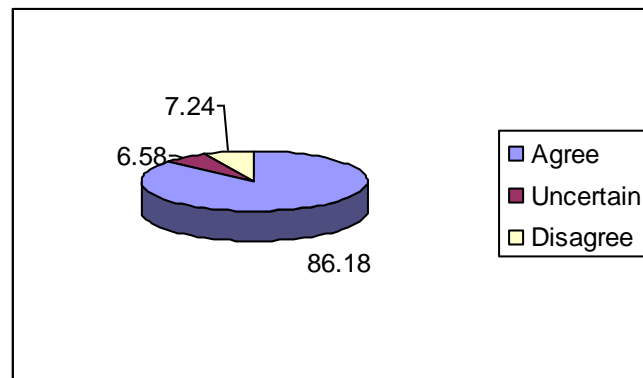


Figure 16: Good management occurs where the relationship between the SGBs and the principal is cordial.

Figure 16 depicts the participants' views on the degree of management where the SGB and the principal have a friendly connection. According to 86.18 percent of participants, good management happens when the SGBs and principals have a positive connection.

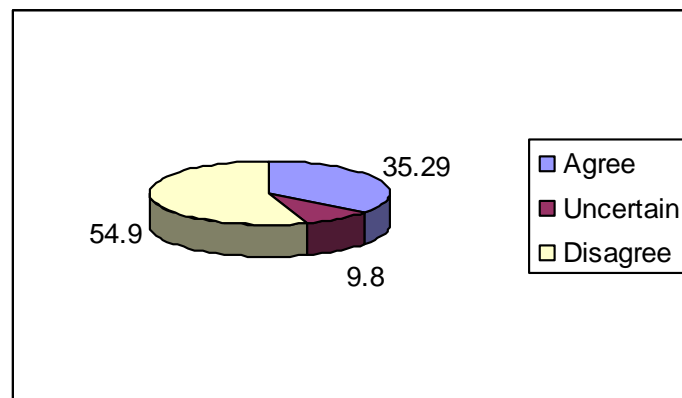


Figure 17: The principals confuse their work with the work of the SGBs.

Figure 17 depicts whether the participants believe the principals confuse their work with that of the SGBs. According to 35.29 percent of participant principals, their work is confused with that of the SGBs, however, 54.9 percent of participants disagree with this statement. Some participants (9.8%) do not want to commit to a position because they are undecided. The fact that 35.29 percent of principals confuse their work with that of the SGBs indicates that some of them do. The principals and SGBs must acknowledge the fact that they are unfamiliar with their area of operation.

The Head of Department (HOD) is required by Section 19(1) and 19(2) (a-b) of SASA (Republic of South Africa, 2006) to establish a program to provide introductory and continuing training to the SGBs. If the principals confuse their work with the work of the SGBs, they will be in continual disagreement, which will have a detrimental impact on their relationship. Principals

frequently mix up their responsibilities with those of the SGBs. Those who disagree with the statement that principals conflate their work with that of the SGBs are themselves, principal participants. They could be defending themselves or attempting to present a positive picture of how they (principals) interact with SGBs. This implies that principals contribute to issues by refusing or failing to recognize their ineffectiveness.

**Findings**

In Gauteng secondary schools, opposing ideas and expectations predominate. From a legal standpoint, school principals no longer serve as the primary decision-maker in matters of the school authority. Where the SGBs (School Governing Bodies) and principals struggle against one another, ambiguous rules are found. Principals in some Gauteng secondary schools impose terms on SGBs and vice versa. Dysfunctional schools are caused by weak governance and management. In terms of financial problems, there is a lack of transparency in schools. Principals contribute to school problems by refusing or failing to accept their ineptness. They continue to run schools inefficiently; they do not fully engage teachers in school management; they mistreat parents; they impose terms on SGBs; they contribute to dysfunctional schools; school funds are misappropriated for non-educational purposes, and they mix up their work with that of the SGBs. Principals and SGBs should be made aware that cooperation, rather than competition, may be more effective in reducing power struggles in their schools.

**Recommendations**

There should be continual monitoring of principals' and SGBs activities in schools. It is suggested that the Department of Education provide continuing training programs for School Governing Bodies to empower new members who may be co-opted during the SGBs' tenure. Furthermore, the training programs should cover the roles of both principals and SGBs, as well as how they must interact to carry out their responsibilities.

I, therefore, propose that the principal's potential opportunism to over-power SGBs should not be the central concern of the School Governing Bodies. The principal's position should not be used by school principals to divert school resources and increase his/her share of power relative to the power delegated to SGBs by the South African Schools Act. Once s/he acquires enough power, s/he may weaken some members of the SGBs who are weak in terms of knowledge of education law. Therefore, SGBs should deter such behavior and have the principal comply with the policies set by SGBs in terms of the law.

**Implications**

Focusing on distributed leadership methods, according to research and practice, may assist overcome some of the constraints of providing feedback to a single leader. Focusing on distributed leadership methods, according to research and practice, may assist overcome some of the constraints of providing feedback to a single leader.

**Conclusion**

Schools cannot allow principals to continue mismanaging schools, not involving teachers in school management, mistreating parents, having ambiguous rules, dictating terms to SGBs, contributing to dysfunctional schools, misappropriating school funds for non-educational purposes, and conflating their work with that of the SGBs. There are two perspectives on individuals that leaders hold: Principals should not compete for first place and view SGBs as adversaries. By considering SGBs as associates, they should be able to win through cooperation. When principals and SGBs work together as a team, they will be able to build genuine trust in one another and will be able to collaborate effectively. To avoid tension in the classroom, principals and SGBs should collaborate. In terms of how law and policy requirements apply in schools, some Gauteng secondary schools need to be empowered. They require training to understand their legal responsibilities under the law (SASA) in practice. Principals have the legal authority and responsibility to run schools, whereas SGBs have the legal authority and responsibility to regulate schools. As competitors/rivals of SGBs, principals and SGBs should not be allowed to administer and regulate schools. Schools cannot allow principals to continue mismanaging schools, not involving teachers in school management, mistreating parents, having ambiguous rules, dictating terms to SGBs, contributing to dysfunctional schools, misappropriating school funds for non-educational purposes, and conflating their work with that of the SGBs. There are two perspectives on individuals that leaders hold: Principals should not compete for first place and view SGBs as adversaries. By considering SGBs as associates, they should be able

to win through cooperation. When principals and SGBs work together as a team, they will be able to build genuine trust in one another and will be able to collaborate effectively. To avoid tension in the classroom, principals and SGBs should collaborate. In terms of how law and policy requirements apply in schools, some Gauteng secondary schools need to be empowered. They require training to understand their legal responsibilities under the law (SASA) in practice. Principals have the legal authority and responsibility to run schools, whereas SGBs have the legal authority and responsibility to regulate schools. As competitors/rivals of SGBs, principals and SGBs should not be allowed to administer and regulate schools.

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