INHIBITING FACTORS TO THE ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS IN PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE QUMBU DISTRICT IN EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

by

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in four Qumbu District schools. The literature review enabled the researcher to understand the current discourses in terms of learners’ participation in the governance of schools through the Representative Council of Learners. Through the methodological application of triangulation, the study produced data on which findings were based and recommendations made. Generally, evidence from the collected data reveals issues worth the attention of the researcher and relevant authorities. Some of the evidence in this study was that there is need to involve learners in decision making; that the learners who are elected to be members of the RCL should be provided with orientation and training so that they become aware of the content of policy documentations that govern their roles and responsibilities. These RCL members are supposed to be considered as potential decision makers and leaders in their schools. It is therefore the responsibility of schools and the Department of Education to provide orientation and training for these learners so as to equip them adequately with leadership information and to develop their skills in order for them to be able to play their roles responsibly. In concluding, the researcher believes that solutions to the problems identified can be resolved by considering the recommendations for implementation.
I, Sakumzi Poswa, Student number 203022866 declare that this dissertation entitled “Inhibiting factors to the role of the Representative Council of Learners in participative governance of schools: a case study of selected schools in the Qumbu district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa” which I submit for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT) at Walter Sisulu University is my own work. It is the result of my investigation, which I obtained through the support and professional guidance of the experienced and recognized supervisors. This study has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university in order to obtain an academic qualification.

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- My mentor and Mthatha campus LTD Manager at WSU, Mr Baleni ZG.
- All my friends and colleagues in the Department of Education.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this mini-dissertation to my late maternal grandfather, Edward Ndabiso Zokufa and my late mother Mrs. Eunice Tandiswa Poswa.

Name of student:

Date:
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE RESEARCH REPORT

The following were the acronyms used in the compilation of the research report:

**SGB** : School Governing Body

**RCL** : Representative Council of Learners.

**DOE** : Department of Education

**TLO** : Teacher Liaison Officer

**SA** : South African

**SAES** : South African Education System

**SASA** : South African Schools Act

**SAG** : South African Government
CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the inhibiting factors to the role of the Representative Council of Learners (RCLs) in participative governance of schools in the South African education context. The new democratic government which came into being in South Africa in April 1994 has viewed the concept of participative governance as an ideal style of leadership, governance and management for effective and efficient school development. The Guidelines for the Representative Council of Learners (DoE, 1999a) have specifically indicated that democracy should be consolidated at school level to enable learners to grow up with the understanding of democratic principles in order for them to be able to adhere to democracy. This has led to the introduction of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) that include learners as governors in schools.

The concept of transformation in the South African Education System (SAES) was formally propounded after 1994, which has had a marked effect on the way the SAES has undergone reforms and innovations. The provision of Department of Education (DoE) White Papers 1 and 2, the Report of the Review Committee on School Organization, Governance and Funding, the National Education Policy Act, and the South African Schools Act, as well as Provincial Legislation and Policy documents point firmly towards a transformation agenda in which a school-based system of education, governance and management are corner stones (DoE, 1996).
This enables schools to decentralize governance and management powers from the principal to all stakeholders at school. According to the Ministry of Education's school governance policy, stated in Education White Paper 1, decision-making authority is to be shared among parents, teachers, the community (government and civil society) and the learners, in ways that will support the core values of democracy. The Review Committee suggests that all learners need a balanced education in the values of their immediate environment, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship within the broad South African society. In turn, this requires a school governance structure which involves all stakeholder groups in active and responsible roles, encourages tolerance, rational discussion and collective decision-making. National and provincial policy should allow for the fact that such capacities may be under-developed in many communities and need to be built.

Schools are expected to form governing bodies with the aim of involving parents and learners in school matters to allow learners to participate actively in matters that affect them.

From the documents referred to, it can be concluded that there is an absolute need to find out about the inhibiting factors that hinder the role that RCLs play in participative governance of schools in South Africa (SA).

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Before 1994, South African schools did not have RCLs; they had prefect bodies which were supportive at the administration of the school and could not take decisions in the affairs concerning the development and accountability of their
schools. There was also no learner participation in the issues affecting learners in their various schools. School children were in fact not given any opportunity to participate in discussions on school governance. Instead, decisions were taken and imposed on them. Many schools had a tradition of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) which played a major role in the birth of the new South Africa. Other schools had a long-standing school prefect tradition as noted above. Then there were schools that used both systems. All those traditions needed to be brought together within the new context of consolidating democracy at school level. The best elements of these traditions had to be considered in order to see what was appropriate. This resulted in the South African Schools Act (SASA) stipulating that RCLs must be established in schools with learners in grade eight and higher being appointed.

In practice, it has been found that learners quickly realise the significance of their role in an RCL once they understand the connections between the struggle for democracy in the past and the present need in order to consolidate and broaden democracy through strides to build the nation. Section 11 of the SA Schools Act determines that the RCL must be established at every public school enrolling learners from the eighth grade and higher. The new RCLs are representative bodies that have a more definite function because they have a greater say in fundamental policy matters. A RCL will, for example, participate in developing a code of conduct for learners.

In 1996, the South African Government (SAG) published White Papers introducing school governance structures which involved all the stakeholders who play active
and responsible roles so as to encourage tolerance in discussions and collective decision-making (DoE, 1996). Emanating from White Papers 1 and 2 was the South African Schools Act of 1996, which became operative from the beginning of 1997. Through this Act, it became compulsory for all secondary schools to have RCLs.

Observations of the researcher as a school manager however revealed that learners did not respect their code of conduct.

Maintaining discipline at school is not only a duty of school management but it is also a duty of all stake-holders, including learners at school. This is evident when learners do not attend school regularly and do not do their school tasks.

Most teachers complain about learners’ misbehaviour and lack of learners’ discipline and commitment to their school work. Learners do not follow stipulated rules and school procedures. Teachers even resort to use corporal punishment to discipline misbehaving learners and to motivate or enforce learning. Such disciplinary measures do not appear in school policies.

Learners complain that they are being physically abused by teachers. The entire situation requires an investigation to find out whether learner representatives are aware of their role in uplifting the images of their schools. If they are aware, what hinders them from being unable to execute their responsibilities as leaders? To what extent do they influence change in their schools? These are the reasons for undertaking this study.
1.3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The formulation of the theoretical framework is followed by the development of the conceptual framework need to guide the study in terms of the researcher’s articulation of the study process. Literally, a concept is an image or symbolic representation of an abstract idea. Generally, the conceptual framework is a complex mental formulation of skills and experiences which the researcher is supposed to master in order to be able to articulate the study effectively. In short, while the theoretical framework is the theory on which the study is based, the conceptual framework is the operationalization of the theory which will guide the practical articulation of the research process from the beginning to end; for instance, in this study, the role of RCLs and inhibiting factors to their role is operationalized to be able to collect the required data to respond to the research problem. The gathering of the primary data through the structured questionnaire and literature review enabled the researcher to identify the basis of the RCLs’ inhibiting factors to their role in participative governance in schools.

To sum up, the conceptual framework for this study is the researcher’s own position on the problem to be investigated and gives direction to the study. Generally, it is an adaptation of an existing model used in other studies, as will be presented in the literature review, with modifications to suit the present study. Furthermore, through the conceptual framework, the researcher is able to show the relationships of the different constructs that will be investigated to provide a coherent treatment of the challenges identified from the collected data for the study (Boaduo, 2011).
1.4. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The work of Wildermeersch et al. (1998) on social learning (in group contexts) provided a theoretical framework for this study. Given the widespread limitations of the theory and practice of learner participation, one need to explore the experiences of elected learners in order to promote meaningful participation at a school level. Although this theory has been developed in relation to adults’ processes in participatory systems, it is relevant to understanding crucial relations between adults and learners in school governance. The theory recognises that people can learn through interactions with others. Social learning, as Lave and Wenger (1991) also argue, is mediated by different perspectives of co-participants. According to Wildermeersch et al. (1998), social learning takes place when people strike a balance between different tensions that influence decisions and directions of the learning system. In their opinion, social learning is explained in terms of four basic concepts: action, reflection, communication and co-operation (Wildermeersch et al., 1998).

It is a necessity to provide a theoretical frame work in research. Introspectively, the construction of theories is to explain, predict and master phenomena, which include relationships, events, behaviours and performances. A theoretical framework is the construction of models of reality in a certain working environment. In this study, it is to investigate the inhibiting factors regarding the role of the Representative Council of Learners in participative governance of schools. In effect, theories generalize about observations and predictions of issues and events. These generalizations usually consist of integrated, coherent ideas and models pertinent to the
environment under study. In this case, the study is about the inhibiting factors in the role of Representative Council of Learners in participative governance of schools. The theoretical framework, therefore, is the structure that can underpin or support the research work. It presents the theory which explains why the problem under investigation exists. In this study, therefore, the theoretical framework is based on the constructivism theory. This theory states that “learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When learners encounter something new, they reconcile it with previous knowledge and experience. They may change what they believe, or they may discard the new information as irrelevant. To be active creators of their knowledge, however, they must be able to ask questions, and explore and assess what they know. In the classroom, the constructivist view of learning means encouraging students to use active techniques such as experiments and real-world problem solving using authentic data if possible, and in so doing create knowledge and reflect on their understanding” (Boaduo, 2011: 91-92).

Constructivism helps to modify the role of the teachers so that they help learners to construct knowledge rather than reproduce a series of facts. The constructivist teacher provides tools such as problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities so that learners can formulate and test their ideas, draw conclusions and inferences, and convey their knowledge in a collaborative learning environment. Constructivist teachers encourage students to assess how the activity is helping them gain understanding by questioning themselves and their strategies; learners become
expert learners as they learn how to learn. The learners then have the tools necessary to become life-long learners.

This theory is relevant because learners, as future leaders, should be equipped with knowledge and skills in governance so that they become effective and efficient future leaders and be able to play their role in society democratically. They must play an active role in the construction and formulation of the school policies that affect them as learners rather than merely obey rules imposed on them. Involving learners in school governance enables them to be expert leaders as they learn how to lead; it provides them with tools necessary to become life-long leaders.

1.5. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Participation of learner governors in collective and participative governance is inhibited by a number of factors. Mncube (2011: 06) argues that, “most school principals tend to take over the role of SGBs and make decisions on their behalf. Some learner governors find it very difficult to regard themselves as full learner components of the governing body and they still perceive themselves as ‘Guests’ on the governing body.” This situation needs intensive investigation to be able to identify the exact roles that RCLs can play in participative governance of schools and other challenges that they experience in school governance. Learners’ participation broadens their insight, improves practical reasoning skills, and promotes a greater understanding of school values and consequently leads to higher educational expectations, positive self-concept, self-esteem and greater academic commitment among learners (Mncube: 2011). Failure to adequately involve learners in school
governance may result in rejection of school rules as they are not owned by learners. This is demonstrated by the high rate of misbehaviour by most learners at school. Democratic principles are to be applied at all government institutions and therefore, failure to adhere to those principles may lead to imbalance and frustration. This study seeks remedies to halt such possible problems at schools.

1.6. MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question for the investigation was:

What inhibiting factors do Representative Councils of Learners experience in the effective implementation of participative governance in schools?

1.7. SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following were the subsidiary questions that contributed towards finding answers to the main research question subsequently making it possible to attend to the problem statement of the study.

1. To what extent are democratic principles applied in South African schools?

2. Do SGBs create problem-solving and enquiry-based environments for RCLs?

3. What inhibiting factors do learner bodies experience in South African schools?

4. Does the SGB recognise RCLs as potential contributors to bring about development at school?
5. Is there any developmental support that RCLs get from the school or Department of Education?

1.8. AIM OF THE STUDY

The following was the aim of the study:

To identify the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools in order to make RCLs effective and active participants in school governance.

1.9. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives for the study were the following:

1. To assess the implementation of democratic principles and procedures at school level during SGB meetings.

2. To find out the level of learner involvement in governance-related problem-solving where RCLs are given an opportunity to ask questions and express their views freely.

3. To find out about the challenges that face learner representatives in decision-making processes.

4. To find out whether RCLs’ views are acknowledged and taken into consideration during policy formulation.

5. To find out whether RCLs are orientated, trained or work-shopped about school governance by the school or Department of Education.
1.10. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Qumbu Junior Secondary Schools have a responsibility to maintain the rights of children as outlined in the Bill of Rights (Section 29, Act 108 of 1996). This includes respecting learners’ feelings and expectations in schools. It is against the law for learners not to be given the opportunity to participate in school governance. It is important for all SGB components, including learners, to exercise their responsibilities in school governance without impediments. The Representative Councils of Learners have the right to express their views about discipline and all matters affecting other fellow learners freely; those who are in authority should give learners’ views due weight, according to age and maturity (Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child, 1989). This can help to draw up a common school vision and mission and the expected learners’ code of conduct at school jointly (that is, with effective involvement and active participation of the RCL in school decision-making processes and for school policy formulation).

1.11. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in that it is anticipated that it will assist school management and School Governing Bodies to effectively use the student component within the SGB so as to eliminate students’ misbehaviour and provide better school development initiatives to benefit all learners in the school system. It is also expected that it will help learners to actively and effectively participate in decision-making in their schools. Leadership capabilities in youth ought to be developed at an early stage at school so that children can learn how to articulate their views before
they graduate and become members of the larger civil society. Decisions taken with the effective involvement of learners are likely to be maintained by the learners as they understand the purpose of schooling and policy formulation. With the elimination of a lack of discipline among learners, the schools’ image will be improved. Moreover there should be development of understanding and trust between educators and learners based on mutual cooperation of the school rules and their implementation thereof.

1.12. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in four Qumbu District Junior Secondary schools only. Two public schools in urban area and two public schools in rural areas were considered for the selection. Participants were the principal, SGB Chairperson and RCL members serving on SGBs. The study investigated the role of RCLs and the challenges affecting them when participating in school governance.

1.13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study included the following:

Time was of the essence because the researcher is a full time educator, and for this reason he had to account for what happened on the days he went for data collection for the study.

Financial constraints challenged the researcher because schools are scattered, and there was no research grant offered by the Walter Sisulu University in order for him to travel to these schools.
1.14. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE RESEARCH REPORT

The following were the acronyms abbreviations used in the compilation of the research report:

**SGB** : School Governing Body

**RCL** : Representative Council of Learners.

**DOE** : Department of Education

**TLO** : Teacher Liaison Officer

**SA** : South African

**SAES** : South African Education System

**SASA** : South African Schools Act

**SAG** : South African Government

1.5. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The following constituted the outline of the chapter for this report: Chapter 1 provided the introduction, background, problem statement, main and subsidiary research questions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, objectives, limitations and delimitations and definition of key concepts including this outline of chapters and the conclusion.
1.16. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the bases for the study to be conducted. In the process, the following have been fully covered: introduction, background, statement of the problem, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, aim and objectives, main and subsidiary research questions, significance and rationale of the study, limitations and delimitations, acronyms used in the compilation of the report, on outline of chapters as used in this report and the conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

There are benefits in terms of learner participation in governance of schools. Some benefits are personal and others are institutional. Researches have revealed that personal benefits include the fact that learners who participate in the governance of schools benefit from a sense of personal control, increased confidence and improved relationships with teachers and peers. Learners learn how to respect and how to address others, including elders, and how to defend their opinions (Mncube, 2008; Mabovula, 2009). Furthermore, institutional benefits include improved functioning of the school, and the promotion of democratic values (Mncube, 2009; Mabovula, 2009).

According to Wilson (2009), learners’ participation broadens their insight, improves practical reasoning skills, and promotes a greater understanding of school values; it
consequently leads to higher educational expectations, positive self-concept, self-esteem and greater academic commitment among learners.

The establishment of SGBs by the government was to redress the in-equalities of a divided education system which characterized the South African Education System before 1994. Summarized in the Education White Paper 2, the new organization of schools through their SGBs will advance and redress issues through equitable use of public resources, improve educational quality, and provide for democratic school-based decision-making (DoE, 1996).

In S. A., school governance is primarily about the distribution of authority and voice (Mc Lennon, 2000). Authority includes both explicit authority such as financial and policy decisions as well as implicit authority involving the culture and values that determine the ethos of a school. In terms of Section 15 of SASA, each school is a “juristic person” that is, a legal entity. The school can institute legal proceedings; for example, a parent who does not pay school fees can be held liable. Moreover, if a child is hurt as a result of negligence on the part of the school or a teacher, legal proceedings can be instituted.

The overall responsibility for controlling school funds and property institute in terms of the SASA lies with the SGB. The underlying principle is to ensure that educators, parents and learners and non-teaching staff actively participate in the governance and management of schools with the view to providing a better teaching and learning environment for all the learners.
2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 DECISION-MAKING

The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond recognizes that the active engagement of young people themselves is central to its successful implementation and, accordingly, affirms the full and effective participation of youth in society and decision-making as one of its 10 priority areas for action. Implicit in this commitment is an acknowledgement that young people are part of the solution to the difficulties they face, not merely a problem to be resolved by others. An even earlier catalyst for change in attitudes towards young people was the 1989 adoption and subsequent near-universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention introduced a new philosophy with regard to children and young people, recognizing their importance as individuals whose dignity must be respected. It promotes the principle that youth are entitled to express their views on all matters that affect them and to have those views taken seriously. Article 12 of the Convention makes it clear that participation is a substantive right of all children and young people. As with adults, however, democratic participation is not an end in itself; as a procedural right, it represents the means through which they may take part in and influence processes, decisions and activities in order to achieve justice, influence outcomes, expose abuses of power and realize their rights.

In Scotland, a large number of organizations reported involving young people in decision-making, but few had undertaken any evaluation of their participation or had
developed guidelines for good practice. In some regions of the world, the rise of fundamentalist regimes is serving to restrict the participation of young people.

There is a need to institutionalize democratic systems for youth if the gains made over the past few years are not to be lost. In some cases this might be achieved by adopting legal reforms that, for example, give young people the right to develop democratic structures in their schools, or by introducing formal mechanisms for political dialogue between youth and officials at all levels of government.

Over the last few years there have been increased calls for increasing the extent of inclusion of students in decision making in secondary schools in Kenya owing to the frequent occurrences of student unrests in the sector (Kamuhanda, 2003; Ogot, 2003; Buhere, 2008; Kindiki 2009). Proponents of student participation in decision making have justified their support for this idea on premise that decisions in a school affect the student in latent and manifest ways. Largely they are recipients of final decisions (Sushila et al, 2006) hence the recommendations made by students may be very constructive and if approached in the right manner would work positively. In this way, students rejectionist tendencies of decisions imposed upon them by school administrators would change to ownership and acceptance of decisions arrived at with their participation. Calls for inclusions of students in the decision-making structure in schools have led to various attempts by the Ministry of Education to put in place structures for inclusion. The most prominent of this was the formation of the Kenya Secondary School Student Council (KSSSC) formed in 2009 with a view to making secondary school governance more participatory. In this new arrangement,
students would be part and parcel of decision-making to ensure their interests are adopted in the administration of schools.

Several authors attempt to explain reasons why young people are often excluded in certain topics during participation (Mncube, 2008; Weller, 2007; Barcelo, 2005). Mncube’s (2008) study on learner participation demonstrated that even where learners are afforded an opportunity to be involved in participatory forums, they are, at times, excluded when crucial decisions are to be made.

Stafford, Laybourn and Hill (2003) maintain that youth prefer engaging in youthful activities to contribute to decisions. Young people’s exclusion from many discussions may, however, be partly influenced by the notion that they are inadequately skilled for this (Weller, 2007).

Sometimes adults feel uncomfortable about the fact that their decision-making powers could be reduced (Barcelo, 2005). Research by Bischoff and Phakoa (1999) in South Africa warned that inconsistencies in implementing the Act (SASA, 1996) may lead youth to feel that they are being misused. In their research, young people complained that it was inappropriate to include them in structures that denied them a voice in certain issues (Wildermeersch et al., 1998). This finding may also suggest that adult governors fail to distance themselves from their pre-held assumptions about young people; for example, the notion that youth are too immature to contribute to decisions. In this manner, social learning is limited. Adult governors should recognise that despite their different perspectives, learner governors are part of the SGB and therefore should not be excluded from certain discussions.
Arguably, participation in school governance is a learning experience for both adults and learners. Bischoff and Phakoa (1999) maintain that creating dialogue using these principles can be helpful in promoting meaningful participation. Social learning has been found to be appropriate in dealing with challenging circumstances such as crucial interactions between adults and young people in participatory systems (Percy-Smith, 2006). Wildermeersch et al. (1998) recommend the use of a group’s maximum potential to respond to uncertainties; they lay out four dimensions for doing so. These dimensions are: action, reflection, cooperation and communication.

**Action** is the first dimension that enables social learning. According to Wildermeersch et al. (1998), actors engage in action because they realise a particular need, desire, shortage or challenge. Actors here could be the different stakeholders in school governance, namely, learners, parents, teachers and non-teaching staff. Wildermeersch et al. (1998) claim people use a variety of resources such as knowledge, competencies, insight, money, patience and other things to overcome the discrepancy between need and competence. In cases where one group lacks a certain resource, others are able to compensate. It is also possible for adult governors to have limited knowledge on a particular learner-issue and resort to seeking the perspectives of learners. Thus, participatory competencies are gained as actors interact within their context.

**Reflection** is the second dimension of social learning. According to Wildermeersch et al. (1998), it entails the ability to stand back from the action and consider how strategies and resources contribute towards the results. In social learning, shared meanings are created out of diverse identities. An opportunity for social learning can
be missed when actors fail to distance themselves from their pre-held assumptions about each other; for instance, if adult governors perceive learners as ‘problems’, they may not include them in decision-making and thus fail to learn from their experiences; however, when adults and learners form a common identity out of diverse perspectives, social learning is enabled (Wildermeersch et al., 1998).

**Communication** is the third important element of social learning and has the potential to trigger or inhibit learning. Social learning recommends that during discussions diversity of inputs be sought from both experts (adult governors) and novices (learner governors) to promote reflexive learning. In most cases, as Wildermeersch *et al.* (1998) argue, experts tend to ignore the competencies of novices due to their reliance on their own competencies.

Mncube (2008) and Mabovula’s (2009) work illustrated the view that often adult governors rely on their expertise and disregard the perspectives of learners. This leads to unilateral control and can potentially limit social learning.

The final dimension of social learning is **co-operation**. In order to achieve goals in participatory systems, people find themselves in a process of negotiation (Wildermeersch *et al.*, 1998). During these negotiations, differences in perceptions and interpretations are unavoidable. Opportunities for social learning are influenced by the groups’ ability to reflect and detach themselves from their orientations and beliefs.

In Wildermeersch *et al/’s* (1998) terms, social learning is enabled when we allow debates to take place because certain issues point to deep-rooted problems. The
authors advise that where conflict arises, it should be used as an opportunity for constructive collaboration. Wildermeersch et al. (1998) acknowledge that at times, differences may not result in an effective solution, and in such cases, the majority rule or power mechanisms can be viable options. Overall, the four dimensions of social learning offer some insights in relation to learner participation; however, as Wildermeersch et al. (1998) argue, social learning cannot happen without the influence of other factors such as the role different actors assume in these systems regarding issues of power, responsibility and creativity. They distinguish between four roles of actors: facilitator, core actor, go-between and obstructionist. In terms of learner participation, these roles can be paralleled with the role of adults. According to Wildermeersch et al. (1998), the facilitator allows others to bring in new perspectives to the system. This can be equated with adults who value and respect the input and contributions of learners. These adults seek views from learners in making decisions because they realise that goals may not be achieved in the absence of a learner perspective.

In contrast to the facilitator, the obstructionist prevents new perspectives from becoming more articulate and in doing so, privileges existing reality. This can be when adults restrict learners from expressing their views or even disregard the input made by learners in decision-making.

The third role is the go-between: actors who take up this role find themselves in diverse networks linking contradictory perspectives with on-going ones. One might think of sympathetic adults who are connected to different youth groups and who commit themselves to assisting young people while belonging to an adult group.
The last role is the core actor who is influential in initiating and continuing dominant definitions of reality and interaction patterns. Core actors can be adults who believe that their ideas are superior to those of learners and deliberately ignore learners’ input. Wildermeersch et al. (1998) argue that when challenges set in, in most cases, different actors develop creative answers to cope with them. By so doing, the actors inevitably face issues of power and responsibility. In social learning, actors have different capacities to act, owing to the sets of social and organisational relationships they represent in interaction; these differences affect each dimension of social learning.

At school, adults are in a position of authority. Depending on how they use this powerful position, their actions may affect learners’ intentions to take action, reflect, communicate and cooperate in these contexts — thus prohibiting or promoting social learning. In social learning, power is neither taken away nor given, but is constantly negotiated. Social learning can contribute to empowering others on condition that it confronts issues of power and exclusion. If Wildermeersch et al.’s (1998) ideas could be accepted in theorising learner participation in school governance, learner participation would complement more formal approaches to learning.

The learner councillors feel that often, teachers, upon realising that most learners can be very articulate in local languages and thus challenge their authority during meetings, resort to the use of English in SGB meetings. In this case, the learners’ poor English skills become an advantage to the teachers, thereby preventing learners from articulating their views properly. In Mabovula’s (2009) work, learners were able to deliberate and argue on issues in cases where mother tongue was
used. As the present study relied on reported experiences, the researcher is unable to infer whether or not that the English language was used to obstruct learners’ opinions in this context, however, judging from the perspectives of participants, it would seem so. This is in line with Mncube’s (2008), research which found that the use of the English language in SGB meetings disadvantaged some members of the SGB. Mncube (2008) recommended that learners who participate in the SGB’s activities should have a good command of English to facilitate effective participation in debates.

Phaswana’s (2010:110) study reveals that “...in terms of experiences with fellow learners, the RCL members alleged that the leadership role had some implications as their authority was often challenged by their peers: ‘One thing I don’t like being a leader is the disrespect you get from other students. When I’m being sent to give instruction they start to misbehave because they know me. I hate that.’ This researcher also discovered through interviews with participants that in some schools the RCL members were sometimes expected to assist teachers in enforcing discipline at the school. As a result, peers would attempt to break the rules simply to challenge leaders’ authority: “I don’t like this thing of thinking that just because you are family or friend, the rules will be bent a little bit.” This author’s findings also suggest that there were instances where leaders felt uncomfortable about disciplining their friends when breaking rules. While some participants felt embarrassed about reprimanding friends, some report that on many occasions, their friendships were disrupted: “For me personally it was dealing with the loss of certain friendships,
people I’d known since we were in primary (school) together... And dealing with that is a personal struggle for me.”

Liebenberg and Roos’s (2008) research on pre-adolescent leaders at primary schools confirms that the current social phenomenon on pre-adolescent leadership contributes to disrupted peer group interactions. Although these researchers’ findings revealed that some participants showed concern about their friendship ties being interrupted, the majority were determined to bear the loss that came with this role. In the above research, the RCL reflected on their experiences and were able to provide insight into the challenging position of being a leader at school, however, most of the literature reviewed was silent on peer-to-peer relationships in participation, as other studies concentrate on the adult-youth relationships (Boaduo, 2010).

Learner participation is an important element of school governance and needs to be promoted. Those schools involving learners in disciplinary issues need to be cognisant of the challenges learner councillors face with their peers, as highlighted in the present study. As the data suggest, learner participation can contribute to social learning. Wildermeersch et al’s (1998) ideas are helpful in thinking about how to make participation meaningful for learners. While recognising the limitation of small studies, a future framework for learner participation is suggested as a way forward. This framework is grounded in social learning theory and the empirical work carried out.
First of all, such a framework should be learning-centred, that is, it should articulate clearly the desired learning outcomes that need to be achieved for learners to participate effectively within these structures. In this way, there is potential to deepen social learning. This will benefit learners as well as stakeholders. Secondly, there is a need for both adult governors and learner governors to distance themselves from their different orientations and beliefs (Mncube, 2008 & 2009; Phaswana, 2008). They should work together to form a common identity which will enable affiliation. Thirdly, during deliberations in meetings, both adult and learner governors need to respect one another’s perspectives and refrain from taking one another for granted. In cases where conflicts set in, dialogue must be allowed, as it may signify deep-rooted problems (Percy-Smith, 2006). By allowing debate, an opportunity for social learning is created. Fourthly, during identification of problems and solutions, both adults’ and learners’ perspectives must be sought as they are equally valuable. This enables the two groups to learn from one another’s experiences. Finally, in terms of the roles adult governors should assume, the role of ‘facilitator’ is urged. In other words, during SGB meetings, adults should show a willingness to listen to new perspectives and encourage learners to express their views. Teachers in the SGB should take the role of ‘go-between’ and be willing to mediate contradictory perspectives between parent governors and learners (Phaswana, 2010).
2.4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the literature review has enabled the researcher to understand the discourses that have taken place in terms of learners’ participation in the governance of schools through the RCL. The researcher has also identified very important points and these are incorporated into the compilation of this report in terms of findings and recommendations discussed in Chapter 5. The chapter that follows discusses the methodology and procedure used in gathering data, the analysis and interpretation.
CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE AND APPLICATION

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Research methodology explains how the problem under investigation is pursued and why particular methods and techniques are employed. It also gives account of the procedure, size of sample, method of selection, choice of variables and controls, tests of measurement and statistics for the analysis and interpretation of the collected primary data. Nisbet and Entwistle (1970:169) point out that it is necessary to describe in detail any standard procedures that are well-known and selected for use in the conducting of a research study. Tuskey and Robb (1971: 175) advise that “…all important terms used are to be defined precisely, and any deficiencies in the method mentioned and explanation should be given regarding how they were overcome.”

De Vos (2002) and Neuman (2000) agree that in real life, human sciences research uses both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, a process termed triangulation. The purpose of triangulation is to provide complementary assistance in terms of what one methodology was not able to accomplish while the other is used to support the accomplishment of the set aims and objective. The rest of this chapter presents a discussion on the following research components: research design, tools used to collect data, target population, sample and sampling technique, data analysis and interpretation techniques required to be used to conduct research study.
3.2. RESEARCH SITE

The study was conducted in four schools in the Qumbu district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The study applied the purposeful sampling technique to reflect a true proportion of the population required for the research study (Fowler in Cresive, 2003).

3.3. METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE AND APPLICATION

A brief discussion of Carr’s (1990) argument and others follows in order to conceptualise, clarify and justify the research design and methodology used for this study. Social science inquiry takes a less empirical view of researching society than the traditional positivistic scientific approach (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Boaduo, 1988; Smit, 1995). The reason is that social science research claims that society and life cannot be replicated in the laboratory. Cohen and Manion (1989) support this position by stating: “...one comes to know social reality through prolonged and intimate participation in it rather than adhering to scientific protocols.”

The participants were the RCL serving as members of the SGB and all other members who provided the required information needed for the study. The enumerated knowledge that has much to offer the modern technological world was not ignored. The participants selected contributed towards finding solutions to the challenges facing the effective execution of the roles of RCLs in participative governance in schools in order to bring about the desired changes for their effectiveness and efficiency in school development and harmony.
Any scientific approach applied in social science research must be done with rigour; Carr (1990) takes this point further by claiming that social science inquiry fulfils the basic requirements of scientific enquiry in the following ways:

- **It confronts the social world being studied directly:** The study focuses on the involvement and challenges in the role of the participants in the promotion of participative governance in schools;

- **It establishes relations between categories of data:** In this study, as has been indicated, learners have a role to play in school governance. Observations revealed that there might be challenges facing RCLs in participating in school governance in some schools. Data collected to enhance the project inquiry clarified the situation. Additionally, listening to people and developing questionnaires heightened the participatory scenario.

- **Propositions are formulated around the relations in the study and investigated further through the use of the selected instruments:** In this study, the major concern was the identification of solutions concerning the challenges facing the RCLs in executing their role in participative school governance. In other words, the relevance of their contribution is required to improve the services rendered by SGBs in schools; this can be heightened through the participation of all SGB stakeholders;

- **The organization of propositions into analytical schemes:** In this study, the major propositions are collaborative participation and direct
involvement of all stakeholders for improving the involvement of RCLs in school governance and finding solutions to the identified challenges; and

- **The testing of questionnaires and the interviewer’s discussion take place through the examination of the problem under study:** In this study, the participants observed and identified the proposed problem for the study, therefore the participants were engaged in suggesting, identifying and devising appropriate involvement strategies to resolve the problems leading to the challenges.

### 3.4. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001, 2006) and Yin (1994), survey data is used to describe and explain the phenomena status and trace, change and draw comparisons. They define research design as the plan that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary (2000), a survey is an investigation of opinions, behaviours of a group of people and is done by asking a series of questions to make inferences about some characteristics, attitudes of population’s behaviour. The researcher used a questionnaire when collecting data. This is relevant because it enabled the researcher to collect data for the study about the opinions, beliefs, attitudes and views of principals, SGB chairpersons and RCLs about the role played by the RCLs in participative governance in the selected schools and the challenges that RCLs face in participative governance.
Lewin (1986: 34 & 46) observes that “… research that produces nothing but books will not suffice” in the new millennium. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) suggest that “…research, must of itself be educational. It must help practitioners to try to make sense of their normal everyday practice.” Carr and Kemmis (in Walker 1990: 158) provide criteria for a methodology that seeks to be at the cutting edge. They argue that all educational science and, consequently, contemporary educational research must attain these requirements in order for it to be regarded as adequate and coherent. These requirements are:

- An acceptance of both qualitative and quantitative methods of interpretation by practitioners and participants; and

- The ability to differentiate between ideas and interpretations that are distorted by ideology from those that are not. Mouton (1996: 38-39) further discusses and emphasizes that “…research methods and techniques are task specific and the task is defined by the research goal. This author further indicates that different studies use different methods and techniques because they have different objectives; that the technique and method must be appropriate for the task at hand; and that the technique and method should apply to data collection and data analysis techniques, to sampling and to questionnaire design.”

The above observations imply that the use of methods and techniques in a study depend on the nature of the study; for example, this study used the qualitative approach to analyse and interpret the collected data from the questionnaire.
3.5. CONTEXTUAL REASONS FOR THE CHOSEN METHODOLOGIES

The need to take account of context is a recurrent theme in qualitative analysis. Contexts are important as a means of situating an action, and of grasping its wider social, political, economic and historical import (Dey, 1993). This requires detailed descriptions of the social setting within which action occurs. The relevant social context is the effective role that is played by RCLs in participative governance in schools and the challenges that may be experienced by RCLs when executing their governance roles in schools.

- **The participatory perspective:** Participatory research is also regarded as appropriate for this study, including the two main approaches to qualitative data analysis proposed by Bryman and Burgess (1994: 3), which are the discussion of the main general framework and the provision of the main emphasis of the data. The comments by Carr (1990), Kemmis and Mouton are paramount in selecting participatory research as one of the research methods to use to study a field situation, such as this study, in order to improve practice. Participatory research, as this study purports to do, supports and contributes to the effort of individuals, groups and movements, which challenge social inequality and work to eliminate exploitation (Participatory Research, 1982). It strives to play a liberating role in the learning process by promoting the development of a critical understanding of social problems, their structural causes and possibilities for overcoming them. It calls for democratic interaction between the researchers and those among whom the research is conducted. This democratic interaction depends upon the political
participation of those involved in conducting research on the causes of their exploitation with the objective of overcoming it. In this study, RCLs seem to have been deprived of their ability to do their school governing work effectively and efficiently due to the identified challenges faced by RCLs in schools.

Participatory research is composed of three inter-related processes (Participatory Research 1982:2). These are:

• Collective investigation of problems and issues with the active participation of the constituency in the entire process;

• Collective analysis, in which the constituency develops a better understanding, not only of the problems at hand, but also of the underlying structural causes [socio-economic, political, cultural, historical] of the problems;

• Collective action by the constituency aimed at a long-term as well as a short-term solution of these problems.

These processes cannot be separated. Their integration gives participatory research its fundamental strength and power. Processes most closely related to investigation, analysis or action can be identified separately in any participatory research study or activity, but each process incorporates aspects of the others. Above all, participatory research is a learning process for those involved. The process begins with people’s concrete experience, situation, and moves to include both theoretical analysis and action aimed at change. Critical evaluation of the success or failure of action also deepens an awareness of the concrete reality that people face. Participatory
research is an educational approach to social change (Participatory Research, 1982). According to Boaduo (2010), the following questions need to be answered in studies that consider the participatory perspective:

- **Who are the participants?** As indicated above, the participants included the school principals, RCLs and SGB chairpersons. They were required to provide input into the study so that the outcome became the collective responsibility of all the stakeholders, and as a result, recommendations would be accepted and considered for introduction and implementation. Their participation in this study was crucial because the problem being investigated affected all of them and, as such, their concerns needed to be expressed. The collective efforts by the participants were expected to contribute significantly to the governance of public and private schools in communities.

- **Why should they participate?** There is a metaphor, “nobody takes in medicine on behalf of a sick person”. In other words, the sick person needs the medicine to get well. In this investigative study, the RCLs and other SGB members (represented by the principal and the SGB chairperson) were the people who needed solutions to the problem of the lack of learners’ leadership roles at school and therefore it has to be their collective responsibility to find solutions. By participating, they provided input and shared the derived benefits from the contributions that they made.

- **How will they participate?** There are various ways through which people can collectively participate in a study. These include answering
questionnaires. Right from the start, in this all the participants collectively learned from the various means through which data were collected. The learning was the practical involvement of all the participants, and whatever was discovered through this process was a collaborative expression of interest and solutions to the problem being investigated. Participants first learned how to make known the problems that confronted them, how to investigate the causes of the problems and how to identify possible solutions to the problems identified. Since the learning was a practical, participative learning experience, the participants were empowered educationally and professionally.

- **Why should they learn what they have to learn?** The need for learners’ input on school policies and governance was vital, as emphasized by SASA and White Paper 1 and 2. The participants needed to find and work out solutions to the problems. An outsider who does not reside in the community of the D.O.E officials, learners and teachers would not have been able to share their needs and aspirations and could not have provided solutions to the problems of the stakeholders. It was only them as identified participants in this study, who knew their problems, who could determine the causes and find solutions to them. There is therefore a need for the participants to learn what they have to learn to be able to find solutions to their problems.

- **How will they participate in the learning process?** The participants were fully orientated, engaged and were required to make specific inputs regarding the identified problem, for example, some of the participants
devised possible questions for inclusion in the questionnaire, especially the learners. Through this process, the participants learned through participation.

3.6. CHARACTERISTICS AND STRENGTHS OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

According to Cohen and Manion (1984:117), Kemmis (in Keeves 1988:11), Tripp (1990:158-166) and McKernan (1991:17), the key characteristics governing the family of participatory action research are many, but they can be reduced to six key elements relevant to this study, namely:

- A critical analysis is encouraged through the research process and not just at the beginning or termination because such an approach encourages active involvement on the part of all participants;
- Participatory action research is positive in initiating and helping to bring about change and improvement;
- By using their school as the study area, the natural behaviour of participants is accommodated;
- As a research framework, it is adaptive and flexible; and
- Participatory action research describes relationships as they develop over time and accommodates changes in thinking which reflect mutations occurring in the context of the study.

This is the essence of the selection and application of the participatory research approach in the investigation of the research problem for this study.
3.7. THE THREE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Participatory action research aims at understanding and solving problems. It does not, however, fit into one recognizable form. Rather, it gives expression to a variety of perspectives on how parental involvement in the governance of schools relates to educational research. In other words, approaches to educational research involve different theories of educational change that underpin them (Kemmis in Keeves, 1988). These assumptions are examined in order to assess the most appropriate form of participatory action research strategy applicable to this study.

Habermas’s "Comprehensive theory of knowledge" in McKernan, (1991: 17-19) provides such a framework for discussion. Habermas identifies three basic cognitive interests, namely, technical, practical and emancipation which constitutes three types of scientific approaches in which knowledge is organized. These are discussed in the following section:

- **Technical knowledge:** Technical knowledge is positivistic in nature, emphasizes rule-following and attempts to maintain the *status quo* (McKernan, 1991). Lewin in Keeves, (1988) refers to this as scientific participatory action research. Educational events, practices and relationships are seen to be phenomenal and consequently capable of objective assessment. Such action research asks: *How best can I do it?* This approach has given rise to empirical-analytical research.

- **Practical knowledge:** Practical knowledge has given rise to interpretive research that emphasizes the need to describe and understand interactions
(McKernan, 1991). It most commonly asks the following questions: *What should I do?* And *Why ought I to do it?* Proposals for such participatory action research stress the need to be intelligent, rather than correct, and to provide guidance rather than direction. The research has the responsibility to determine which knowledge is legitimate. This approach gives rise to hermeneutics and is based on the humanistic model. Lewin in Keeves (1988: 24) refers to this kind of research as “practical-deliberate participatory action research”;

- **Emancipation knowledge:** Action research is a radical alternative mode grounded on “emancipation knowledge proposed by Lewin in Keeves (1988). This type of participatory action research goes beyond asking questions pertaining to the social assumptions on which technical and practical actions are based. Additionally, it attempts to promote critical consciousness in solving problems (McKernan, 1991). It also attempts to make explicit the assumptions that there is a conscious commitment to social critique that is realized through changes to practice (Tripp, 1990). The guiding ethical code of this paradigm is that of freedom, independence, equality, justice and respect for each other’s views. It redresses all concerns about social and ethical approaches to issues.

Participatory research addresses practical problems with theoretical relevance while transferring the knowledge from the research findings to the participants (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). This research must possess an aspect of direct involvement in organizational change, and simultaneously, it must provide an
increase in knowledge. In contrast, several qualitative research methods seem to fall into the categories of basic research, applied and evaluation research. A critical observation suggests the development and application of planning methods, while related interventionists’ research technologies may be a neglected area of qualitative methodologies (Corey in Nel, Singh, and Venter, 1985: 63).

3.8. THE QUALITATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Qualitative analysis aims at the description of the world, as it is perceived by different observers and/or participants. The analysis is usually concerned with how actors define situations and explain the motives that govern their actions. It must be ensured that this relates to the intentions of the actors involved – in this study, the learners, principals and members of the SGBs. Qualitative research often seeks to illuminate the ways individuals interact to sustain or change social situations, as this study has as one of its aims. Qualitative data, therefore, is a description of social relationships and interchanges which unfold in the succession of action and events in which the actors are engaged. There is the need for participation in the process (Dey, 1993).

3.9. THE QUANTITATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The participatory research methodology that has been selected for this study is complemented by the quantitative approach (Tuckman, 1988). Quantitative research is generally classified as, primarily, interactive field research or non-interactive document research (Cohen and Manion, 1989). It is a naturalistic inquiry (Schofield, 1990; McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996). It describes and analyses people’s
individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions statistically (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993; Scott and Usher 1996; Casanova, 1981; Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; Mills, Mathew and Huberman, 1984; Van Maanen, 1982). The quantitative methodology is appropriate for this study because it studies the problem in its context where the people are located (Mouton, 1996; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993; Labovitz and Hagedorn, 1971; Tuckman, 1988). According to Lee (1973), when planning research, effective and operational decisions are more likely to result if the recommendations from planning analysis are implied in terms that are understandable, especially to decision-makers and clients.

3.10. THE TRIANGULATION PERSPECTIVE

The participatory, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies which have been selected for this study are complementary (Tuckman, 1988). Triangulation involves using multiple data sources in an investigation to produce understanding (Angen, MJ. 2000). Triangulation involves the conscious combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies as a powerful solution to strengthen a research design where the logic is based on the fact that it was insufficient to use a single method for the investigation of the complexity of human nature and social reality (e.g. the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools). Qualitative research is generally classified as primary interactive field research or non-interactive document research (Cohen and Manion, 1989). It is a naturalistic inquiry (Schofield, 1990; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). It describes and analyses people’s individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993; Scott and Usher 1996; Casanova,
1981; Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; Mills, Mathew and Huberman, 1984; Van Maanen, 1982). The qualitative methodology is appropriate for this study because it studies the problem in its context, that is, where the people are (Mouton, 1996; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993; Labovitz and Hagedorn, 1971; Tuckman, 1988). Lee (1973), in planning research has long observed that effective and operational decisions are more likely to result if the recommendations from planning analysis are couched in terms that are understandable, especially to decision makers and clients.

Contextually, data collection can itself be conceived as an interactive process through which the researcher struggles to elicit a meaningful interpretation of social action (Boaduo, 2010; Boaduo et al, 2011). Analysis follows data collection. The result of analysis depends on, and is modified by, the collection and the investigation of further data. In this respect, the researcher becomes a participant in his/ her own research project. His/ her own interpretation and action becomes a legitimate object of subsequent analysis. Information on the researcher’s own behaviour and thinking in the form of field notes, memos or a diary are vital sources of data for the analysis.

The process therefore shifts from context and intention to action and consequences; hence the additional choice of participatory research and participatory action research, apart from qualitative and quantitative making the methodological paradigm a triangulation (Sayer 1992).

3.11. SAMPLING

The concept of sampling involves taking a portion of a population, observing, administering questionnaires, conducting interviews on a smaller group and
then generalizing the findings to the larger population (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981). In any research, sampling is indispensable to the researcher (Cohen and Manion, 1989). In this study, the researcher sampled four school principals in four schools, four SGB chairperson and eight RCLs. All these participants were key stakeholders in school policy-formulation forums. As stated in the limitations, time, money and effort involved did not allow for a larger sample population (Anderson, 1990: 195-224; Vockell, 1983; Scott and Usher, 1996; Tuckman, 1988). Furthermore, it is not necessary to study all possible cases to understand the case under consideration. Since the purpose of drawing a sample from a population is to obtain information concerning the population, it is extremely important that the individuals in the sample constitute a representative cross section of individuals in the population (Smith, 1995). In short, sampling must be representative if one is to generalize with confidence from the sample to the population (Babbie, 1998; Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 1972). The target population comprised RCLs, principals and SGB chairpersons of the selected Junior Secondary Schools.

In this investigative study, the RCLs and other SGB members (represented by the principal and the SGB chairperson) were the people who needed solutions to the problem of the lack of learners’ leadership roles at school and therefore it should have been their collective responsibility to find solutions. They were the participants mandated by the South African Schools Act, Act No 84 of 1996, to govern the schools.
These participants included the school principals, RCLs and SGB chairpersons. They were required to provide input into the study so that the outcome ultimately became the collective responsibility of all the stakeholders. Their participation in this study was crucial because of the problem being investigated affected all of them and as such, their concerns needed to be expressed. The collective efforts by the participants had to contribute significantly in the governance of public schools in communities, therefore, their selection was purposeful because of their involvement in the problem being investigated.

Schools were chosen according to their distance from the nearby town (Tsolo). Two schools are between 1km – 10 km from town and others are between 20 km – 60 km from town. The selection was done because most people have the perception that better schools with better school governance are found in town.

The study sampled four principals, four SGB chairpersons and eight learners serving as SGB members. Learners were represented by their chairperson and their secretaries because these are critical positions in every committee.

According to Boaduo (2010), to enable the researcher to make the choice of methodologies, the following aspects need to be observed:

- Research methods and techniques are task specific;
- The task is defined by the research goals and objectives;
Different studies use different methods relevant and applicable to the study being undertaken; and

Both methods and techniques for data collection must be specific and should apply to data collection, treatment, analysis and interpretation.

3.12 THE SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The purposeful sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample population. Babbie (1986 & 1998) as well as Forcese and Richer (1979) and McMillan and Schumacher (1993) all concur that this method is economically feasible, gives reasonably precise results and shows within itself an honest measure of accurate results. This technique came to the researcher’s aid as it enabled him to study a portion of, rather than the entire population. The most important aspect of this technique is that the design can be based on statistical theory (Mouton and Marais, 1990), and that from a properly-designed sample survey it is possible to draw valid generalizations. Tuckman (1988) argues that purposeful sampling is one way to ensure that the sample population is representative of the larger population. The implication in this study was that qualitative, quantitative action and participatory methods had to be chosen because of the nature of the problem to be investigated and the involvement of communities where action and participation are required from the respondents. Furthermore, the chosen methodologies were complementary in the sense that where statistical issues arose, for instance, in the treatment of questionnaires, the quantitative method was applied while the qualitative method was used for the compilation of the report (Gajendra and Kanka, 1999; White,
2005). The actions in participatory methodologies were used to involve all respondents in the action and participation (Boaduo, 2006 & 2010).

3.13. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Primary as well as secondary data were required in order to complete this study. The primary data comprised responses from the questionnaires. The secondary data were obtained from published and unpublished sources. Since this is an investigative study, the qualitative data were mapped, inferences made, comments made and analysis and interpretations provided (Tuckman, 1988). Mills, Mathew and Huberman (1984:21) view qualitative analysis as data that “appear in words rather than in numbers.” Corey in Nel, Singh and Venter (1985:62) maintain that “…qualitative data can be collected by review of literature, content analysis, observation, interviews, extracts from documents, tape recordings, questionnaires and the like.” They further go on to claim that “qualitative data is analysed by means of data reduction, data display, conclusion-drawing and verification” (Venter et al 1984:10-11).

3.14. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA COLLECTED

The validity and reliability of a research study hangs on issues of accuracy and relevance of procedures used for the information to be collected for the study. According to Gajendra and Kanka (1999), validity in the field of educational measurement refers to the degree to which a test, tool or technique measures what it is supposed to measure in a study. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which a test or technique provides consistency and accuracy by yielding
the same results should the same study be conducted elsewhere using the same methodological choice and application. White (2005) is of the view that qualitative researchers regard reliability as the elimination of casual errors that can influence the results. Validity in a qualitative study refers to techniques that check the credibility of data and minimize the distorting effects of personal bias upon the logic of the evidence revealed by the collected data (Boaduo, 2006 & 2010).

3.15 DATA- COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher used notes as a data-collection tool and administered a questionnaire. According to White (2005), field notes are the researcher’s record of what has been observed in the field. Gajendra and Kanka (1999) state that data are required for any research study to be able to place the study in its proper perspective. In addition, Mouton’s view (1996:66-67) is that “data collection produces new information or data about the world that requires further processing.”

The explanation given in this respect is that data processing involves at least two kinds of operations, namely, data reduction, during which quantitative and qualitative data are summarized and data analysis (Smith 1995). Data analysis included both qualitative analysis that included processes such as thematic and content analysis, and quantitative or statistical analysis (Mouton 1996; Scott 1996). Tuckman (1988) emphasises the view that data analysis is followed by synthesis that involves interpretation or explanation of the data (Tuckman 1988; Scott 1996). In this way, categories with similar labels were compared and contrasted, thereby putting together categories that seemed to go together and therefore making further
notes to augment the findings. These notes, together with the data, formed the basis of the final report of this study.

According to White (2005), qualitative data analysis involves becoming familiar with the data in-depth so as to provide detailed descriptions of setting of participants and activities. This enables the researcher to categorize and code pieces of data, and to physically group them into themes and then interpret and synthesize the organized data into a general conclusion for the completion of the study.

3.16. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues pertaining to the respondents in terms of permission, informed consent, rights of participants, confidentiality and anonymity are discussed below:

- **Permission**: White (2005) suggests that ethics are generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad. The researcher requested a recognition letter from Walter Sisulu University in the Faculty of Education. This letter was taken to the Qumbu District office (where the schools chosen for the study are situated) in order to get written permission to conduct the study using these schools.

- **Informed Consent**: Obtaining informed consent implies that adequate information on the goal of the investigation and procedures are followed during the investigation. The possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, are explained to potential subjects or their legal
representatives (Babbie, 1998). The researcher asked the participants to give consent. Participants were at liberty to withdraw from the investigation at any time of the study.

- **Rights of participants**: Participants were assured of their protection from unwarranted physical and mental discomfort, distress, harm, danger or deprivation (Babbie, 1986). White (2005) suggests that respondents in a research project should be allowed to exercise their right to be or not to be part of the research. The researcher requested the respondents to participate voluntarily.

- **Confidentiality**: Confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner. Cohen and Manion (1989: 24) view confidentiality as a continuation of privacy “which refers to agreements between persons that limit other’s access to private information.” All the information obtained in the study was treated confidentially and will not be divulged to anyone. The participants were assured that the collection of data from the interviews was for academic purposes only.

- **Anonymity**: Information given anonymously ensures the privacy of the subjects. It is often necessary that respondents be identified, for instance when reminders have to be sent to persons who have not responded, or follow-up interviews have to be conducted with certain respondents (Scott, 1996). The structured questionnaires did not request respondents to give personal information.
3.17 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the research methodology and design to situate the investigative research study in its proper and relevant context. By so doing, the researcher identified the need to discern and elaborate on methodological choice, design and application because this is the most important part of a research study and guides the whole process to a successful conclusion. Through the methodological application, the study produced data from which findings emanated and recommendations made. In this way, solutions to the problems were identified and it is hoped that the recommendations will be carried out so as to resolve the problems.
CHAPTER 4

4. DATA TREATMENT, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the treatment, analysis and interpretation of the collected data through the administration of the Likert-type questionnaire are provided. The Likert scale uses the following abbreviations: SA (which indicates Strongly Agrees), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree) and SD (which indicates Strongly Disagree). The responses were tabulated and represented in tables and converted into graphs for easy visual identification. Brief interpretations for each response are provided to situate the data in their proper perspective.

This study set out to investigate the inhibiting factors to the role of the Representative Council of Learners in participative governance of schools. The main research question for the investigation was:

“What inhibiting factors affect the role of Representative Councils of Learners in the effective implementation of participative governance in schools?” This was supported by the following subsidiary research questions:

- To what extent are democratic principles applied in South African schools?
- Do SGBs create a problem-solving and enquiry-based environment for RCLs?
• What governance-challenges do learner bodies experience in South African schools?

• Does the SGB recognise RCLs as potential contributors to bring about development at school?

• Is there any developmental support that RCLs get from the school or Department of Education?

4.2. TALLIED AND ANALYSED RESPONSES FROM PRINCIPALS’ QUESTIONNAIRES

Table 1 below is the summary of the tallied responses from four principals’ questionnaires. Graphical representation and interpretation follow the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>SA%</th>
<th>A%</th>
<th>N%</th>
<th>D%</th>
<th>SD%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We involve RCLs when drafting school policy.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>We regard RCLs as potential decision makers.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>RCLs are able to argue their point of view.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>We provide RCLs with the opportunity to present their views during meetings.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In our view, RCLs need orientation and training in school governance.

Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership coaching so as to improve their ability in the roles they play in the school.

RCLs must be equipped with knowledge and skills in school governance.

Communication channels in the school make it possible for RCLs to voice their concerns about the governance of the school.

We explain complex terms and procedures to members of the RCL to help them understand governance.

Every decision that involves learners is not necessarily imposed on them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Tallied and analysed questionnaire responses from principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire item 1: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We involve RCLs when drafting school policy. The responses are represented in Figure 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: We involve RCLs when drafting school policy.

Interpretation: Evidence from Figure 1 shows that RCLs are according to principals, involved in the drafting of school policy. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles which will enable them to play their roles as citizens in the context of the new democratic South African. Principals agree unanimously.

Questionnaire item 2: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We regard RCLs as potential decision-makers. The responses are represented in Figure 2.
Figure 2: We regard RCLs as potential decision makers.

**Interpretation:** In principle, if the evidence in Figure 1 shows that RCLs are involved in the drafting of school policy, then this can be supported (by 40% Strongly Agree and 40% Agree) by the evidence in Figure 4 which indicates that RCLs are regarded as potential decision makers. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles as it will enable them to play their roles as citizens of the new democratic South African context; 80% of principals support this statement in that they strongly agree or agree.

**Questionnaire item 3:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: RCLs are able to argue their point of view. The responses are represented in Figure 3.

![Pie chart](image)

**Figure 3: RCLs are able to argue their point of view.**

**Interpretation:** If the evidence in Figures 1 and 2 shows that RCLs are involved in the drafting of school policy, then this can further be supported by the evidence in Figure 3 which indicates that RCLs are able to argue their point of view during
meetings to discuss issues that have an impact on their schooling. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles which will enable them to play their roles as citizens in the context of the new democratic South African which requires people with open mind in terms of decision making and policy formulation. While 20% of principals seem uncertain. RCLs (80%) either strongly agree or agree.

**Questionnaire item 4:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We provide RCLs with the opportunity to present their views during meetings. The responses are represented in Figure 4.

![Figure 4: We provide RCLs with the opportunity to present their views during meetings](image)

**Interpretation:** Evidence from Figure 4 further complements that of Figures 1, 2 and 3. If RCLs are provided with the opportunity to present their views during meetings, then they are able to argue their point of view during meetings to discuss issues that have an impact on their schooling and welfare. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles which will enable them to play their roles as citizens in the context of the new democratic
South African which requires people with open minds in terms of decision making and policy formulation and a large majority of principals (80%) strongly agree with 10% agreeing.

**Questionnaire item 5:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: In our view, RCLs need orientation and training in school governance. The responses are represented in Figure 5.

> In our view, RCLs need orientation and training in school governance.

![Figure 5: In our view, RCLs need orientation and training in school governance](image)

**Interpretation:** Under any normal democratic dispensation, new entrants into any system are supposed to be orientated in terms of their roles and responsibilities. Evidence from Figure 5 supports such a view in that RCLs need orientation and training in school governance to be able to function and perform their duties as required by the SASA policy documentation provisions; 90% of principals are in favour of this.
**Questionnaire item 6:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership coaching so as to be able to improve their ability in the roles they play in the school. The responses are represented in Figure 6 below.

- Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership coaching so as to improve in the role they play in the school.

- **Interpretation:** Generally, in any institutional setting, those who appoint leaders to manage the affairs of the institution should provide training in terms of the responsibilities and roles that the leaders are required to play. As the evidence shows in Figure 6, schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership coaching so as to be able to improve their ability in the role they play in the school. Further to this, in a normal democratic environment, new entrants into any system
are supposed to be orientated in terms of their roles and responsibilities. Evidence from Figure 5 supports such a view in that RCLs need orientation and training in school governance in order to be able to function and perform their duties as required by the SASA policy documentation provisions; 70% of principals strongly agree while 10% agree.

**Questionnaire item 7:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: RCLs must be equipped with knowledge and skills in school governance. The responses are represented in Figure 7 below.

![Figure 7: RCLs must be equipped with knowledge and skills in school governance](image)

**Figure 7: RCLs must be equipped with knowledge and skills in school governance**

**Interpretation:** As the evidence shows in Figures 4, 5 and 6, and supported by evidence in Figure 7, it is necessary to equip leaders with knowledge and skills. Generally, in any institutional setting, those who appoint leaders to manage the affairs of the institution should provide training in terms of the responsibilities and roles that the leaders are required to play. The schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership/coaching so that these learners are able to improve in the role they play in the school. Further to this, in a normal democratic environment, new
entrants into any system are supposed to be orientated in terms of their roles and responsibilities. Evidence from Figure 5 supports such a view in that RCLs need orientation and training in school governance so as to be able to function and perform their duties as required by the SASA policy documentation provisions; 20% of principals strongly agree and 70% agree.

**Questionnaire item 8:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: Communication channels in the school make it possible for RCLs to voice their concerns about the governance of the school. The responses are represented in Figure 8 below.

Communication channels in the school make it possible for RCL to voice their concerns about the governance of the school.

![Figure 8: Communication channels in the school make it possible for RCLs to voice their concerns about the governance of the school.](image)

**Interpretation:** In any organizational setting, communication among the stakeholders is very important in terms of ironing out issues of mutual interest and / or their differences. The evidence in Figure 8 support this view that communication
channels in schools make it possible for RCLs to voice their concerns in the governance of the school, thereby coming to mutual agreements on issues. While 5% and 70% strongly agree and agree, 5% and 20% disagree and strongly disagree, respectively.

**Questionnaire item 9:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We explain complex terms and procedures to members of the RCL to make them understand governance. The responses are represented in Figure 9.

**Figure 9:** We explain complex terms and procedures to members of the RCL to make them understand governance.

**Interpretation:** It is important that during the orientation of new entrants into any form of organizational setting to participate in decisions, it becomes important, as the evidence is shown in Figure 9, that complex terms and procedures are defined and explained to members of the RCL to make them understand governance and to be able to work according to the dictates of the provisions in the policy.
documentation, especially that of SASA. Regarding RCLs, the majority of principals strongly agree (20%) and agree (60%).

**Questionnaire item 10:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: Every decision that involves learners is not imposed on them. The responses are represented in Figure 10.

Every decision that involves learners is not necessarily imposed on them.

![Figure 10: Every decision that involves learners is not necessarily imposed on them.](image)

**Interpretation:** Only 10% of principals agree, 5% are neutral while 85% either disagree or strongly disagree. The majority are of the view that once a decision is made it is imposed on learners.

**4.3. TALLIED RESPONSES FROM SGBs QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

Table 2 below is the summary of the tallied responses from SGBs questionnaire. There were four chairpersons from four sampled schools. The graphical representation and interpretation is presented in the table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>SA%</th>
<th>A%</th>
<th>N%</th>
<th>D%</th>
<th>SD%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>We involve the RCLs when drafting school policy.</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>We regard RCLs as potential decision makers.</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>RCLs are able to argue their point of view during meetings.</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>We give RCLs opportunity to present their views during meetings.</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>In our view, RCLs need training in school governance.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>RCL’s represent learners’ views.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>RCLs are, overall, representative of the learners.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership training in order to help them to improve in the role they play in the school.</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>We explain complex concepts in school governance to the RCL.</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Members of RCLs’ age hinders them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school.

Table 2: Tallied and analysed questionnaire responses from SGBs

| Questionnaire item 11: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We involve RCLs when drafting school policy. The responses are represented in Figure 11 below. |

![Figure 11: We involve RCLs when drafting school policy](image)

**Interpretation:** The evidence in Figure 11 supports that of Figure 1 which shows that RCLs are not involved in the drafting of school policy. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles which will enable them to play their roles as citizens of the new democratic South African
context. But 75% of SGB members disagree and 20% strongly disagree. This means RCL members are being left out.

**Questionnaire item 12:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We regard RCLs as potential decision makers. The responses are represented in Figure 12.

![Figure 12: We regard RCLs as potential decision makers.](image)

**Interpretation:** The evidence in Figure 12 complements that of Figures 1 and 2. If RCLs are involved in the drafting of school policy, then RCLs are regarded as potential decision makers. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles and it will enable them to play their roles as citizens in the context of the new democratic South Africa.

**Questionnaire item 13:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: RCLs are able to argue their point of view during meetings. The responses are represented in Figure 13.
Interpretation: If the evidence in Figures 13 is correct then that of 1 and 2 show that RCLs are not involved in the drafting of school policy. This can further be supported by the evidence in Figure 3 which indicates that RCLs are able to argue their point of view during meetings to discuss issues that have impact on their welfare. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles which will enable them to play their roles as citizens in the context of the new democratic South Africa which requires people with open mind in terms of decision-making and policy-formulation.

Questionnaire item 14: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We provide RCLs with the opportunity to present their views during meetings. The responses are represented in Figure 14 below.
Interpretation: Evidence from Figure 16 further complements that of Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4. If RCLs are provided with the opportunity to present their views during meetings, then they are able to argue their point of view during meetings to discuss issues that have an impact on their schooling and welfare. This is a very important process of involving learners in the development of their democratic principles which will enable them to play their roles as citizens in the context of the new democratic South Africa which requires people with open minds in terms of decision-making and policy-formulation.

Questionnaire item 15: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: In our view, RCLs need orientation and training in school governance. The responses are represented in Figure 15.
Figure 15: In our view, RCLs need training in school governance.

**Interpretation:** Evidence from Figure 15 agreement is unanimous (100%) complements the evidence in Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7. It is necessary to equip leaders with knowledge and skills. Generally, in any institutional setting, those who appoint leaders to manage the affairs of the institution should provide training in terms of the responsibilities and roles that the leaders are required to play. Further to this, in a normal democratic environment, new entrants into any system are supposed to be orientated in terms of their roles and responsibilities. RCLs need orientation and training in school governance to be able to function and perform their duties as required by the SASA policy documentation provisions.

**Questionnaire item 16:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: RCLs represent learners’ views. The responses are represented in Figure 16.
Figure 16: RCLs represent learners’ views

**Interpretation:** As can be identified in Figure 16, RCLs structure should comprise of learners only. Learners are the ones who need to be responsible for their organisation. They are required to provide input and collective responsibility of their actions so that they bring solutions to the problems that affect them as learners in school.

**Questionnaire item 17:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: RCLs are, overall, representative of the learners. The responses are represented in Figure 17.

RCLs are, overall, representation of the learners.
Interpretation: The indication is that it is necessary for learners to appoint their leaders without interference from their teachers. Generally, in any institutional setting, those who appoint leaders to manage the affairs of the institution should provide training in terms of the election procedure, responsibilities and roles that the leaders are required to play. The schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership coaching to be able to improve in the role they play in the school. Further to this, in a normal democratic environment, new entrants into any system are supposed to be orientated in terms of their roles and responsibilities. RCLs need orientation and training on school governance to be able to function and perform their duties as required by the SASA policy documentation provisions.

Questionnaire item 18: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership training in
order to keep them improved in the role they play in the school. The responses are represented in Figure 18.

Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership training in order to help them improve in the role they play in the school.

Figure 18: Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership training in order to help them improve in the role they play in the school.

Interpretation: In an organizational setting like the school, there is a need to provide leadership training for those who have certain management roles. As the evidence shows in Figure 18, schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership training to be able to improve in the role they play in the school. For an example, 70% agree but 30% don’t agree. Generally, in any institutional setting, those who appoint leaders to manage the affairs of the institution should provide training in terms of the responsibilities and roles that the leaders are required to play. As the evidence shows in figure 8, schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership coaching to be able to improve in the role they play in the school. Further to this, in a normal democratic environment, new entrants into any system
are supposed to be orientated in terms of their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, evidence from figure 5 supports such a view that RCLs need orientation and training on school governance to be able to function and perform their duties as required by the SASA policy documentation provisions.

**Questionnaire item 19:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: We explain complex concepts in school governance to the RCL. The responses are represented in Figure 19.

![Figure 19: We explain complex concepts in school governance to the RCL.](image)

**Interpretation:** There is no evidence to show that RCL members are given orientation in terms of the explanation of complex concepts in the policy documentations on school governance. It is important that during the orientation of new entrants into any form of organizational setting, that complex terms and procedures must be defined and explained to new members of the RCL so that they understand governance and are able to work according to the dictates of the
provisions in the policy documentation, especially that of SASA. Yet all SGB members say this is not done.

**Questionnaire item 20:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: RCL members’ age hinders them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school. The responses are represented in Figure 20.

RCL members’ age hinders them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school.

![Figure 20: Members of RCLs’ age hinder them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school.](image)

**Interpretation:** Generally, the youth in the social environment lack understanding in terms of the decision making-processes in education as the evidence is shown in Figure 20. However, in any organizational setting such as the school, there is a need to provide leadership training to those new entrants who play certain management roles. Further evidence in Figure 18 shows that schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership training so as to be able to empower them in the roles they
play in the school regarding to RCLs. Only 50% of SGB members, however, agree with this statement regarding age of RCL members.

4.4. TALLIED RESPONSES FROM RCLs QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table 3 below is the summary of the tallied responses from the RCL’s questionnaire. The total number of RCL members was eight in this study. Two members (that is, the chairperson and the secretary) from each school participated.

The graphical representation and interpretation follow the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>SA%</th>
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<td>I am involved as a RCL member when school policy is drafted.</td>
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<td>I am aware of my role in participative governance.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>I am allowed to express my views during meetings.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>The school and DoE provide orientation to RCL members.</td>
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27 I am able to disagree with other SGB members on issues we disagree. 00 12.5 00 75 12.5
28 Complex concepts are explained to us. 00 25 12.5 25 37.5
29 I regard myself as a potential future leader. 25 50 12.5 00 12.5
30 Age of RCL members hinders them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school 12.5 12.5 12.5 50 12.5

Table 3: Tallied and analysed questionnaire responses from RCLs

**Questionnaire item 21:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: I am involved as a RCL member when school policy is drafted. The responses are represented in Figure 21.

I am involved as a RCL member when school policy is drafted.

![Figure 21: I am involved as a RCL member when school policy is drafted.](image-url)
Interpretation: There is no strong evidence to show that RCL members are involved in the drafting of policies in schools. If learners are included in decisions then policies, rules and regulations would be more likely to be respected and obeyed by learners.

Questionnaire item 22: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: I am regarded as a potential decision maker by SGBs. The responses are represented in Figure 22.

I am regarded as a potential decision-maker by SGBs.

![Pie Chart for Questionnaire Item 22](image)

Figure 22: I am regarded as a potential decision maker by SGBs.

Interpretation: It is very encouraging that RCL members regarded themselves as potential decision-makers in the SGB. This kind of recognition is an indication that leadership training is supported, and these young leaders will be equipped to play leadership roles in their respective schools. Once this kind of feeling is established among the members of the RCL, it becomes imperative that they are able to play their leadership roles responsibly.
Questionnaire item 23: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: I am aware of my role in participative governance. The responses are represented in Figure 23.

![Pie chart](image)

**Figure 23: I am aware of my role in participative governance.**

**Interpretation:** Evidence shows, in Figure 23, that 72.5% of members are aware of their role in participative governance of their schools. Yet only 62.5% think they are potential decision-makers.

Questionnaire item 24: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement:

I am allowed to express my views during meetings. The responses are represented in Figure 24.
**Interpretation:** In any democratic environment, people are allowed to express their views freely during meetings. Evidence from Figure 24 indicates that 62, 5% RCL members enjoy expressing their views during meetings of the SGB. This is a positive response but one wonders why 37, 5% do not express views.

**Questionnaire item 25:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: I received training as a RCL member from the school and DoE. The responses are represented in Figure 25.

I received training as a RCL member from the school and DoE.
Figure 25: I received training as a RCL member from the school and DoE.

**Interpretation:** As the evidence is shown in Figure 25, RCL members are provided with orientation and training when elected to be members of the RCL of their schools. Orientation and training equip these learners with leadership principles which they can use to facilitate the roles they are to play in their schools, however merely half are being trained.

**Questionnaire item 26:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: The school and DoE provide orientation to RCL members. The responses are represented in Figure 26.

![Figure 26: The school and DoE provide orientation to RCL members.](image)

**Interpretation:** Evidence from Figure 26 shows that the schools in concert with the DoE provide orientation and training to RCL members. This is done to equip them with leadership principles which they can use to play their leadership roles.
responsibly. As supported by Figure 24 and 25, this again does not apply to all RCL members as only half are given orientation.

**Questionnaire item 27:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: I am able to disagree with SGB members on issues with which we disagree. The responses are represented in Figure 27.

I am able to disagree with other SGB members on issues we disagree.

![Figure 27: I am able to argue with SGB members on issues we disagree.](image)

**Interpretation:** In a democratic environment, as shown in Figure 27, members of society are allowed to argue their view. If members of the RCL are allowed by the SGB to express their views in terms of issues discussed during meetings, it means that the democratic ideals are respected and practised in schools. This item clearly indicates that a large majority do not feel free to disagree.

**Questionnaire item 28:** This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: Complex concepts are explained to us. The responses are represented in Figure 28.
Interpretation: During orientation and training of new leadership, there is a need to explain complex concepts in the policy documentation so that members are able to understand and apply them both literally and contextually. This is the reason for the need to orientate and train people when elected to play leadership roles in any organizational setting. In this study only 25% agree that concepts are explained.

Questionnaire item 29: This item requested the respondents to respond to the statement: I regard myself as a potential future leader. The responses are represented in Figure 29 below.
Figure 29: I regard myself as a potential future leader.

**Interpretation:** Members of the RCL should actually regard themselves as potential future leaders. Most leaders start their leadership roles as members of RCLs and consequently become leaders of the future. This is an ideal scenario worth emulating so that future leaders are prepared during their school years. In this study 75% strongly agree. This is all the reason why the study was conducted.

**Questionnaire item 30:** This item requested respondents to respond to the statement: Members of RCL age hinder them from understanding the decision making process in the school. The responses are represented in Figure 30.

Age of RCL members hinders them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school.

![Figure 30: Age of RCL members hinders them from understanding the decision-making process in the school.](image)

**Interpretation:** Evidence from Figure 30 indicates that only 50% believe that age hinders RCL members from understanding the decision-making process in the school. Even though evidence from the literature reviewed supports this view, it is
important to indicate that it is only when people are involved in the decision-making process and are trained and orientated that they gradually gather experience and become able to perform their duties accordingly. It therefore follows that age should not be a barrier to learners’ leadership roles in the RCLs.

4.5 THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM THE DATA ANALYSIS

4.5.1 POLICY FORMULATION

As schools are expected to form governing bodies with the aim of involving parents and learners in school matters to allow learners to participate actively in matters that affect them, they seem to ignore this vital role in school governance.

4.5.2 DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURE

Decision-making procedure does not comply with what is emphasised in white Paper 1, which emphasises that decision-making authority is to be shared among all stake-holders including learners at school. This indicates that there are schools who do not support core values of democracy and learners are unable to grow-up with the understanding of democratic principles that will enable them to adhere to democracy.

4.5.3 TRAINING AND COACHING OF SGB’S

New entrants into any system are supposed to be orientated in terms of their roles and responsibilities. Schools and the DoE have a duty to provide such training and
orientation on school governance to RCLs in order for them to be able to perform their duties as required by SASA policy documentation.

4.6. CONCLUSION

Generally, evidence from the collected data has revealed issues worth attention. Some of the evidence is that there is a need to involve learners in decision-making. Moreover, findings reveal that the learners who are elected to be members of the RCL need to be provided with orientation and training so that they become aware of the content of policy documentations that govern their roles and responsibilities. RCL members are considered as potential decision-makers and leaders in their schools. It is the responsibility of the schools and DoE to provide orientation and training for the members of the RCL to equip them adequately with leadership information so as to be able to play their roles responsibly.
CHAPTER 5

5. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This study was set to investigate the inhibiting factors to the role of the Representative Council of Learners in participative governance of schools. The main research question for the investigation was: “What inhibiting factors affect the role of Representative Councils of Learners in the effective implementation of participative governance in schools?” This was supported by the following subsidiary research questions:

5.1.1 To what extent are democratic principles and procedures applied in South African schools?

5.1.2 Do SGBs create a problem-solving and enquiry-based environment for RCLs?
5.1.3 What governance challenges do learner bodies experience in South African schools?

5.1.4 Does the SGB recognise RCLs as potential contributors to bring about development at schools?

5.1.5 Is there any developmental support that RCLs get from the school or Department of Education?

The following findings were obtained from both the consulted secondary and primary data sources, which enabled the researcher to make recommendations.

5.2. FINDINGS

After careful consideration at the evidence revealed by the collected secondary and primary data, the following findings were identified from the study:

- Policy drafting: Findings show that all principals of schools agree that they involve RCLs in policy formulation meetings at school while parents on the SGB say RCL are not involved; About half of RCLs think they are involved. Opinions here are at odds. This is about policy drafting.

- Decision-making: There are gaps between school principals, parents and RCLs in as far as regarding RCLs as potential decision-makers is concerned. This shows that democratic principles and procedures are ignored; there are discrepancies in that principals regard RCLs as potential decision-makers; Most RCLs members agree but 75% of SGB members disagree.
• There are some stakeholders in the SGB who are reluctant to allow learners to voice their views. They do not allow RCLs to express their views freely when at SGB meetings. RCLs’ views are not taken into consideration by other stakeholders in the School Governing Body;

• RCLs are neither trained properly nor do they attend workshops about school governance. They need training, coaching and workshop pertaining to school governance so that they understand what it takes to be a member of the working committee; only about half were trained despite principals and SGB members saying training was necessary.

• RCLs are also challenged by age and by the level of understanding of some complex issues, procedure and terminology used in the meetings;

• RCLs find it very difficult to disagree with other stakeholders when complex terms are discussed and if they perceive items discussed in a meetings irrelevant to their activities; and principals did not really agree with RCL’s view but SGB parents also feel RCLs were not able to be frank.

According to the researcher’s observations, youth prefer engaging in other youthful activities to which they can contribute through discussions because they better understand them. Activities such as tours, sport and or excursions draw more attention to RCL members.
Of the findings listed above, the following recommendations have been made to provide a solution to the study problem of finding the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the researcher’s recommendations based on the findings listed above which could help to resolve the challenges facing RCLs in participating in participative school governance:

- The agenda of the meeting should be circulated 14 days before the actual date so that RCLs prepare for the meeting (as per SASA). RCLs should submit items for the agenda. Learners’ involvement should not only be shown by their presence in the meeting, but their articulation of issues they want to discuss. Their voice must be heard in meetings;

- During SGB meetings, parents and teachers should show a willingness to listen to new perspectives and encourage learners to express their views. This could be done by, for instance, the agenda of the meeting having an item for “Questions and discussions” so that all SGB components, including RCLs, can ask questions and discuss matters where possible. Decisions should not be imposed on learners, therefore democratic principles and procedures should not be ignored. RCLs need to be allowed to express their views freely and take part in every SGB meeting;
• It is recommended that training, coaching and work-shopping of RCLs be done quarterly by the school and annually by the Department of Education. The schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership coaching to be able to improve in the role they play in the school. This may help to make sure that learners understand their role as governors. In such sessions, their leadership roles should be explained and learners should be able to discuss difficulties relating to roles and duties;

• Adult governors should recognise that despite their different perspectives and opinions, learner governors are part of the SGB and therefore should not be excluded in certain discussions during SGB meetings. School policies that include codes of conduct during meetings should also be collaboratively developed and endorsed by all the structures of the stakeholders in the school, including RCLs;

• Adult governors (parents and teachers) should provide a positive climate for RCLs to voice their views freely. Even if they are, at times, out of order, their point of view should be taken into consideration and proper guidance be provided before the end of the meeting; and

• Age, background or academic performance of RCLs should not hinder them from participating in school governance. The fact that a Grade 8 or Grade 9 learner is still young or is not performing well in class does not automatically
mean he or she cannot disagree with an adult. Communication channels at school should be user-friendly and be improved to allow RCLs to voice their views so that learners can report their discomfort to relevant persons at school. The relationship between the Teacher Liaison Officer and learners should be recognised and acknowledged.

5.4. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted in the Qumbu District schools. The literature review enabled the researcher to understand the discourses that have been taking place in terms of learners’ participation in the governance of schools through the RCL. Through the methodological application, the study produced data from which findings have been deduced and recommendations made. Generally, evidence from the collected data has revealed issues worth the attention of the researcher and relevant authorities. Some of the evidence suggests that there is a need to involve learners more in decision making. In addition, findings suggest that the learners who are elected to be members of the RCL should all be provided with orientation and training so that they become aware of the content of policy documentations that govern their roles and responsibilities. Those RCL members are considered as potential decision-makers and leaders in their schools. It is the responsibility of the schools and DoE to provide orientation and training to the members of the RCL to equip them adequately with leadership information to be able to play their roles responsibly. In this way, solutions to the problems might have been identified and the relevant recommendations made could be used to resolve them.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
QUMBU DISTRICT
QUMBU
5180
MADAM

A REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

I, Poswa Sakumzi, a student at Walter Sisulu University hereby request to conduct an educational research in selected schools in your district.

My topic is as follows: INHIBITING FACTORS TO THE ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS IN PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS. Aim of the study is to identify the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools in order to make RCLs effective and active participants in school governance.

I intend to conduct the study during the month of October, November and December 2012. Participants in this study are School Principals, SGB chairperson and RCLs serving as SGB members in four selected Junior Secondary Schools.

Yours Truly
Poswa S.

076 294 0932
THE PRINCIPAL
SIDWADWENI JSS
QUMBU DISTRICT
QUMBU
5180
SIR

A REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

I, Poswa Sakumzi, a student at Walter Sisulu University hereby request to conduct an educational research in your school.

Participants in this study will be the Principal, SGB chairperson and two RCL members serving in the School Governing Body.

My topic is as follows: INHIBITING FACTORS TO THE ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS IN PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS.

Aim of the study is to identify the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools in order to make RCLs effective and active participants in school governance.

I intend to conduct the study during the month of October, November and December 2012.

I hope that this request will be highly appreciated.

Yours Truly
Poswa S

076 294 0932
APPENDIX C

THE PRINCIPAL
MPOZA JSS
QUUMBU DISTRICT
QUUMBU
5180
MADAM

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I, Poswa Sakumzi, a student at Walter Sisulu University hereby request to conduct an educational research in your school.

Participants in this study will be the Principal, SGB chairperson and two RCL members serving in the School Governing Body.

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I intend to conduct the study during the month of October, November and December 2012.

I hope that this request will be highly appreciated.

Yours Truly

Poswa S

076 294 0932

05 / 09 / 2012
APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

PO BOX 52490
MTHATHA
5099
05/09/2012

THE PRINCIPAL
RICHARD SAMELA JSS
QUUMBU DISTRICT
QUUMBU
5180
SIR

A REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

I, Poswa Sakumzi, a student at Walter Sisulu University hereby request to conduct an educational research in your school.

Participants in this study will be the Principal, SGB chairperson and two RCL members serving in the School Governing Body.

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I intend to conduct the study during the month of October, November and December 2012.

I hope that this request will be highly appreciated.

Yours Truly

Poswa S

076 294 0932
A REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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Participants in this study will be the Principal, SGB chairperson and two RCL members serving in the School Governing Body.

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Aim of the study is to identify the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools in order to make RCLs effective and active participants in school governance.

I intend to conduct the study during the month of October, November and December 2012.

I hope that this request will be highly appreciated.

Yours Truly

Poswa S

076 294 0932
TO : POSWA S.
FROM : DISTRICT DIRECTOR
SUBJECT : PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN INHIBITING FACTORS TO THE ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS IN PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE OF
DATE : 2012.09.08

1. This is to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 10 September 2012.

2. Kindly be advised that the office has granted you permission to conduct the said research.

3. The department is looking forward to receive your research in which you would have identified the inhibiting factors to the role of representative council of learners participating governance of Junior Secondary schools in the Qumbu District.

4. The department wishes you all the best in your research.

5. Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

L.N. DYODO
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE
To: Popwa, S
From: Principal Richard Samele Junior School
Subject: Permission to conduct research on inhibiting factors to the role of representative council of learners in participative governance of schools.
Date: 07 November 2013

Your letter dated, 05 November 2013, refers.

Kindly be informed that the school has granted you the permission to conduct the research as requested.

We look forward to sharing your findings with us.

Sincerely yours

[Signature]

S. TSHIKITSHA (Principal)
ESIDWADWENI J.S.S.

P.O. BOX 254
TSOLO
5170

Principal : L. S. Libala
Contact Number : 082 950 7416
E-mail Address : lenoxlibala@gmail.com

TO : POSWA S. P. O. BOX 52490 MTHATHA 5099

SUBJECT : PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

This serves to confirm that the School Governing Body of the above mentioned school has granted you permission to conduct your educational research in the above mentioned school as requested on the 05 / 09 / 2012.

We promise to be of great assistance to your studies.

Good wishes on your studies.

Yours sincerely

LIBALA L.S. (Principal)

Date : 06 / 09 / 2012
TO: POSWA S. P. O. BOX 52490 MTHATHA 5099

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE OF A REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The School Governing Body of the above mentioned school informs you that your request to conduct an educational research in INHIBITING FACTORS TO THE ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS IN PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS is accepted. The SGB chairperson, RCLs and myself will fully support you in your studies.

We promise to be of great assistance to your studies.

The school wishes you all the best.

Yours sincerely

Ndlame N. (Principal)
RESPONSE FROM Mr POSWA's REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

On the 11th of September 2012, the School Governing Body of the above mentioned school discussed your request to conduct an educational research in our school. This serves to informs you that your request is considered and accepted by all stake holders in our school. You are therefore allowed to conduct you study in this school.

We promise maximum participation and support to your studies.
We wish you all the best for your studies.

Yours sincerely

Saxa N. (Principal)

079 067 6554
APPENDIX K

PRINCIPALS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Make a mark in an appropriate column. **SA** (means Strongly Agree), **A** (means Agree), **N** (means Neutral), **D** (means Disagree), **SD** (means Strongly Disagree).

Aim of the study is to identify the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools in order to make RCLs effective and active participants in school governance.

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RCLs must be equipped with knowledge and skills in school governance.

Communication channels in the school make it possible for RCLs to voice their concerns about the governance of the school.

We explain complex terms and procedures to members of the RCL to help them understand governance.

Every decision that involves learners is not necessarily imposed on them.
APPENDIX L

SGB’s QUESTIONNAIRE

Make a mark in an appropriate column. **SA** (means Strongly Agree), **A** (means Agree), **N** (means Neutral), **D** (means Disagree), **SD** (means Strongly Disagree). Aim of the study is to identify the inhibiting factors to the role of RCLs in participative governance of schools in order to make RCLs effective and active participants in school governance.

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Schools and the DoE should provide RCLs with leadership training in order to help them improve in the roles they play in the school.

We explain complex concepts in school governance to the RCL.

RCL members’ age hinders them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school.
APPENDIX M

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Make a mark in an appropriate column.

**SA** (means Strongly Agree), **A** (means Agree), **N** (means Neutral), **D** (means Disagree), **SD** (means Strongly Disagree).

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<td>I am able to disagree with SGB members on issues we disagree with.</td>
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<td>Complex concepts are explained to us.</td>
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<td>I regard myself as a potential future leader.</td>
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<td>Age of RCL members hinders them from understanding the decision-making processes in the school.</td>
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APPENDIX K

WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY
DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
MANDATORY CONSENT FORM: ELECTRONIC THESSES & DISSERTATIONS (ETD) AND PLAGIARISM REQUIREMENT (For postgraduate research outputs from 2009 September)

TEMPLATE FOR THE STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION OF ELECTRONIC RESEARCH OUTPUT ON INTERNET AND WSU INTRANET

FACULTY: ________________________________

QUALIFICATION NAME: ____________________ ABBREVIATION: ____________ YEAR: ____________

STUDENT'S FULL NAME: ________________________________ STUDENT NUMBER: __________________

TYPE OF RESEARCH OUTPUT: RESEARCH PAPER/MINI-DISSERTATION/DISSERTATION/THESIS (TICK ONE)

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH OUTPUT: ______________________________________________________

CONSENT: I HEREBY GIVE MY CONSENT TO WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY TO PUBLISH MY RESEARCH OUTPUT FOR THE QUALIFICATION ABOVE ON THE WSU INTRANET AND INTERNET. I CERTIFY THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS NO PLAGIARISM IN THE RESEARCH OUTPUT AS SUBMITTED. I HAVE TAKEN REASONABLE CARE TO ENSURE THAT THE RESEARCH OUTPUT MEETS THE QUALITY LEVEL EXPECTED FOR THE PRESENT QUALIFICATION LEVEL BOTH IN TERMS OF CONTENT AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THIS DECLARATION.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT ________________________________ DATE __________________

ENDORSEMENTS BY:

SUPERVISOR:

FULL NAME: ________________________________ SIGNATURE: ________________________________ DATE: __________________

CO-SUPERVISOR(S):

1. FULL NAME: ________________________________ SIGNATURE: ________________________________ DATE: __________________

2. FULL NAME: ________________________________ SIGNATURE: ________________________________ DATE: __________________