

## **Teaching Experience as an Avenue for Participatory Decision-making in Schools**

**Newman Wadesango**

*Walter Sisulu University, East London, Republic of South Africa*  
*E-mail: nwadesango@wsu.ac.za, newmanwadesango@yahoo.com*

**KEYWORDS** Expertise. Experience. Secondary Schools. Delegation. Autocracy

**ABSTRACT** The new dispensation in educational leadership calls for shared decision making by all the critical stakeholders. Teacher participation is a paradigm shift from traditional leadership styles which were autocratic in nature. It is set to transform 'top-down' approaches, which reduced teachers to tools of implementing policies and decisions without making any meaningful contribution. It encourages teachers to improve the quality of their profession and workplace, which may result in a less stressful, more satisfying and motivating environment. The study sought to investigate if teaching experience was an avenue for participatory decision making in schools. The study adopted an interpretive qualitative research methodology and a case study research design. A purposive convenient sample of 5 school heads and 20 secondary school teachers formed the study. Data was collected through face to face interviews, documentary analysis and observation of two staff meetings per school. The findings from this study were that teaching experience and expertise were identified as accurate indicators of participation type. The study established that most of the participating school heads considered teaching experience and expertise as avenues for participation. Participating heads confirmed that in critical issues, they sought advice from the more experienced members of staff. The study concluded that when heads were faced with a sensitive situation, they approached the mature members of staff.