

**Title**

**Exploring stakeholder inclusivity in the development of the South African national policy on basic education**

**By**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Contents

1. ABSTRACT.....	3
2. KEYWORDS.....	4
3. INTRODUCTION.....	4
4. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	6
4.1 Stakeholder .....	7
4.2 Stakeholder theory.....	9
4.3 Stakeholder approach to policy development.....	9
4.4 Achievement of quality learner outcome .....	10
4.5 Role of communication in stakeholder relations .....	12
5. METHODOLOGY .....	15
5.1 Research approach.....	15
5.2 Research process .....	15
5.3 Population and unit of analysis.....	17
5.4 Sampling .....	17
5.5 Data collection .....	18
5.6 Data analysis .....	18
6. RESULTS.....	19
6.1 Research Question 1: Approach used .....	19
6.2 Research Question 2: The value of stakeholder inclusivity.....	21
6.3 Research Question 3: Stakeholder groups .....	23
6.4 Research Question 4: Stakeholder communication .....	25
7 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	27
8 CONCLUSION.....	29
REFERENCES .....	30
APPENDIX .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Assessment Sheet.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

## 1. ABSTRACT

This study explores the necessity of stakeholder inclusivity, particularly the inclusivity of teachers, in the development of the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* in the Department of Basic Education. Through the qualitative exploration of data drawn from in-depth interviews, the study found that bureaucracy and a top-down approach drives policy development in the basic education system of South Africa. While most of the stakeholders indicated that they are only consulted at a public comment phase of the policy development, they viewed this as asking for their endorsement as opposed to genuine and constructive inputs. As such, educational policy developer's end up missing an opportunity to engage and learn from stakeholders and ultimately the policy reaches the implementation phase with loopholes. Therefore, adopting a consultative approach throughout the life cycle of the policy development with not only the body of stakeholders who have a say by virtue of their power, but also with those whose say was initially restricted as a result of having less influential power in the formulation of educational objectives, might be the breakthrough being strived for in developing policies that will lead to the achievement of quality learner outcomes.

## 2. KEYWORDS

*Stakeholder inclusivity, quality learner outcomes, policy development, communication as a life blood, stakeholder theory.*

### 3. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century witnessed policy development mainly as an expert approached and power driven activity. The new millennium brought about inclusivity and extensive consultation with all stakeholder groups that are crucial to the achievement of corporate objectives. Hence there is a growing awareness of the need for stakeholder inclusivity and for organisations to move towards an overall polycentric consideration in policy-making. Bonn and Fisher (2005) outline that managers are faced with high levels of uncertainty, incomplete information and equivocality. For this reason they need some sense of guidance on complex projects – projects that often require taking quality issues into consideration. Therefore, the inclusion of stakeholders – be they weak or powerful – in policy development processes is crucial if an organisation is to ensure that all opinions on the matter of achieving quality are heard. This inclusion is sought to give managers the guidance they need to consider quality issues, specifically in education.

Multilateral agencies such as UNESCO play a vital role in mobilising for education so that every child has access to quality education - quality education that has been recognised as key in addressing the Millennium Development Goals of society's sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016). In striving to achieve sustainable development, UNESCO's message has never been more important: society must create holistic policies that are capable of addressing the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Closely linked to the aforesaid is the claim that policy is more effective when stakeholders are able to participate effectively in its addressing of organisational issues (Barnes, Newman, Knop & Sullivan, 2003). This means that the participatory approach in policy-making will need to be adopted and this in turn will require the participation of stakeholders as active participants in policy development (Pahl-Wostl, 2002).

This study addresses the problem of not having all necessary stakeholders included in the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* development processes.

The study also aims to explore, in more detail, the necessity for stakeholder inclusivity in the development process of this policy and the significance of such inclusivity in the achievement of quality learner outcomes delivered by the basic education system of South Africa.

*The national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements* presents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools. The policy statement gives guidelines on the curriculum and assessment for all approved subjects, programme and promotional requirements, and the protocol for assessments.

It is against this background that the aim of the study is guided by these research questions:

1. Which approach – expert or polycentric – is used in the development of *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* in basic education?
2. What value is given to stakeholder inclusivity in the policy development of the basic education system?
3. Which stakeholder groups are included in the development of the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*?
4. How effective is stakeholder communication during policy development engagements?

The study comprises a literature review, a discussion of the research methodology used, the presentation of the research results as well as a discussion of such results and recommendations made to remedy the implications that the results have for basic education and its goal of improving quality learner outcomes. The following section contains the literature review.

#### 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Success in education depends on involving all parties affected by and having an effect on the vision of education. The education sphere will achieve rational outcomes if all stakeholders are involved in its policy formulation process (Enders, 2004; Vidovich, 2006; Forari, 2007). Therefore, educational policy developers have to adopt an overall stakeholder inclusive approach throughout the life cycle of the policy development to avoid missing out significant and innovative views that might result in policy failure.

The literature review section first presents the discussion of what constitutes a stakeholder. There is an assertion that stakeholders are the center of organisational success (Cooper, 2000). If the abovementioned is anything to go by, there is a need for the Department of Basic Education to consider all their stakeholder groups as contributors in the realisation of their mandate. This is followed by a discussion of the stakeholder theory which, according to Miles (2011), seeks to define the specific stakeholders of an organisation and examine the conditions under which managers engage these parties. This discussion is key as it guides the study to explore specific stakeholder groups of the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*. It further guides the study to explore how these stakeholders have to be engaged in the policies formulated so as to advise on the issue of improving quality learner outcomes.

The literature review section also covers the importance of involving stakeholders in a policy development process. Pahl-Wostl (2002:4) is of the view that organisations that strive for sustainable development are moving towards a polycentric consideration of policy-making. The polycentric approach is the adoption of a participatory approach that requires the participation of stakeholders as active participants in the policy development processes. The discussion of a stakeholder participation approach in policy development is presented to underline the importance of integrated thinking as a quest to achieve quality learner outcomes in the basic education system of South Africa.

This is against the background of the fact that the delivery agreement of the Department of Basic Education (2014) identified achieving quality learner outcomes as the greatest challenge, while the United Nations (2012) has acknowledged that education is important for society's sustainable development. It is for this reason that the proposed remedy to the challenge is presented.

Lastly, the discussion of the role of communication in the stakeholder-approach policy development is presented. Traditionally, the role of communication was to transmit a strategy in order for stakeholders to understand and accept it. In recent years there has been a call for communication to be considered in the strategy development process as opposed to it being utilised only to communicate the final strategy of implementation (Angelopulo & Thomson, 2006). The exploration of this concept will assist the study in realising the significance of having to consider communication in the development phase of a strategy.

#### **4.1 Stakeholder**

A key issue that is mentioned frequently in the literature is whether the content of what the body of stakeholders who have a say is restricted, by virtue of their power to those who are crucial to the achievement of corporate objectives (Friedman & Miles, 2006). A significant area of interest for theorists has been the question of what constitutes the definition of legitimate stakeholders. Freeman (1984:46) defines a stakeholder as "any group or group of individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives". Clarkson (1991) describes stakeholders as those constituents that are affected by the operations of a corporation. Such constituents are said to have a stake in the corporation, that is, something at risk, and therefore something to gain or lose as a result of its corporate activities. Building on the work of others, Gray (1996:45) defined stakeholders as "any group or individual that can be influenced by, or can itself influence the actions of the organisation".

From these definitions, the study argues that stakeholders are those groups or individuals that are powerful enough to influence or affect an organisation and are also influenced or affected by the organisation. For the purposes of this study, Freeman's (1984) definition of stakeholders as being any groups or individuals who can affect or who are affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives is adopted. The definition is considered most appropriate in guiding the concept of the necessity of stakeholder inclusivity in achieving quality learner outcomes in basic education. The definition emphasises the influence of stakeholders in the achievement of an organisation's goals. This definition proposes that stakeholders have it in them to influence the achievement of improving quality learner outcomes.

Most stakeholder engagement studies on the topic of education such as the studies of Meinjes (2004), Baxter and Clark (2013), and Ondura (2012), employed Gray's (1996) definition of a stakeholder as any group or individual that can be influenced by or can itself influence the actions of the organisation. The definition emphasises the influence of stakeholders on the actions of the organisation; this reinforces the idea that previous studies in this field have focused on how stakeholders can influence or are influenced by the actions of the organisation. These actions referred to can contribute positively or detract from the success of an organisation. There is thus a need to focus more closely on stakeholder contributions. This study intends to bring a new perspective contrary to that expressed by most previous studies. Proposing that stakeholders are not the main influence of positive or negative actions that can affect educational outcomes, but rather that they influence the achievement of educational goals where such achievement refers to success. Therefore, their relationships with organisations have to be properly managed in accordance with the stakeholder theory discussed below.

## **4.2 Stakeholder theory**

The stakeholder theory is concerned with the quality of relationships between the organisation and all its stakeholder groups (Friedman, 2009; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Clarkson, 1991).



According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), the stakeholder theory strives to describe what managers should do with regard to stakeholder relationships, and detail the consequences if managers do not adhere to the stakeholder management principles – the principle being that managers should “create value for all stakeholders”. The value incorporates the following: allowing individuals to influence the achievement of the organisation’s goals, to influence and share control over innovation initiatives, to contribute in shaping the success of an organisation, and value also includes their involvement in formulating principles that guide the organisation and the decisions that affect it.

An empirical research from (Clarkson, 1991) indicates that companies do explicitly manage their relationships with different stakeholder groups as per the advocacy of the stakeholder theory. Donaldson and Preston (1995) point out that although this is descriptively true, companies appear to manage stakeholders for an instrumental reason (i.e. performance based). When that happens, companies are operating with the risk of not receiving compliance from all stakeholders as a result of failing to adhere to the stakeholder theory, which requires them to manage relationships with all stakeholders and not only those that perform the duties of an organisation for financial returns. When other stakeholder groups are reluctant to act in accordance with the objectives of the organisation, quality outcomes detract (Friedman, 2009). That is the reason Monks and Lajoux (2010) stipulate that good stakeholder relationships result in a sustainable organisation. It is against this background that the study views the stakeholder theory as enabling organisations to achieve sustainable relationships with stakeholders who affect the quality outcomes of an organisation.

### **4.3 Stakeholder approach to policy development**

Stakeholder participation is widely encouraged, but there is little structured pragmatic research into its necessity in policy development (Pieter & Bots, 2011:1). A gap that the study is concerned about is the necessity for stakeholder participation in policy development.

When it comes to policy development, the expert-based approach is followed. This approach may include some interaction with stakeholders, but not to the extent that would characterise a participatory approach. However, public participation and an overall move towards a polycentric consideration of policy-making have become very popular over the past few years, yet corporations have not adopted this.

Policy is a source that guides the decisions and achievements of the organisation's rational outcomes (Forari, 2007); it is more effective when stakeholders are able to participate effectively in its development process Barnes, Newman, Knop and Sullivan (2003). Therefore stakeholder participation in policy development processes is imperative.

The concept of inclusivity - stakeholder participation is at the heart of all value-based leadership, because listening to and responding to the concerns of stakeholders – whether they be powerful or weak – remain fundamental to corporate excellency (Waritimi, 2011:167).

This concept implies that all the different voices should both be heard and actively included in the organisation and that the environment in which people voice their opinions should be conducive to this, allowing mistakes and vulnerability with no blame being apportioned nor any power games being played. It is proposed that, within the inclusivity - participation spectrum, people ought to be given a platform from which to air their opinions. This should be achieved with stakeholders having no fear of being shuttered and not having to face a situation where they cannot openly voice their opinions – opinions that may give insight to achieving quality learner outcomes.

#### **4.4 Achievement of quality learner outcome**

Quality learner outcomes, according to the UNICEF report (2000), are an intentional expected effect of an educational system and refer to the ability of children to understand what they ought to know and do.

The delivery agreement of basic education outlines that quality learner outcomes result when students are better prepared by their schools to read, write, think critically and solve numerical problems. The agreement further outlines that improving educational quality in the sense of improving learner outcome stands out as the greatest challenge. In this regard, Naidoo (2009) is of the view that challenges in education can be addressed through education policies that seek to serve the purpose of education. This brings to light that education policies are key to attaining excellent outcomes in education.

Most of the literature on continuous quality achievement focuses on the benefits of achieving organisational goals and not on what it takes to attain these achievements. The literature is centralised around continuous quality achievement as a mainstay for a corporate competitive stand (Hart & Milstein, 2003; Lo & Sheu, 2007; Marshall & Brown, 2003). According to Pahl-Wostl (2002), previous studies have not addressed the issues of polycentric practices as key to achieving organisational goals, specifically in education. Edelenbos and Klijn (2006) look at how the relationship between citizens and elected politicians in the Netherlands is improved through experimented interactive decision-making on public policy development. They found that when citizens are engaged in decision-making on public policy, their relationship with elected politicians strengthens. Beierle (2002) explores the quality of environmental policy developed from stakeholder-based processes and found that when environmental policies are developed from a stakeholder approach, the end product is an effective workable policy that addresses a challenge. There is consensus in these studies that a policy developed with stakeholders is effective.

While these polycentric studies have been conducted in the European context, there is a paucity of research in the context of a developing country like South Africa, particularly in the Department of Basic Education policy development.

This is because following traditional passive stakeholder consultations will not be sufficient in the new education context where inclusivity, polycentric approaches and quality issues have become important.

The study proposes that the ability to achieve quality learner outcomes is realised through effective educational policies, which are attainable through the stakeholder-inclusive approach to policy development processes. However, Smit (2001) outlines that teachers are best acquainted with determining what works and what does not work. They are key role players in the implementation phase of education policies but they are, more often than not, the silent voices in the process, ignored and often discounted in the stage of policy development. Bowe (1992) outlines that, although teacher unions may represent them at policy level, teacher's voices are seldom heard.

In many instances, studies conducted in the field of education focus on a teacher's delivery of the curriculum as the significant element in the achievement of quality outcomes. The work of Nermalili (2014) on the contributing factors of quality education in South Africa outlined that the teacher's ability to deliver lessons with methods suitable for the type of students and subjects taught is the major influence in attaining quality education.

This study intends to inform the Department of Basic Education that the inclusivity of stakeholders, particularly teachers, in policy development also contributes towards achieving policies that yield quality learner outcomes. It therefore proposes that taking heed of the voices that are seldom heard in these issues might be the breakthrough being strived for in developing policies that will lead to the achievement of quality learner outcomes.

#### **4.5 Role of communication in stakeholder relations**

Effective communication is crucial for successful organisations as it affects the ability of strategic managers to form quality relationship with stakeholders, engage stakeholders in the strategy making, and achieve organisational objectives (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Traditionally, the role of communication was seen as a support function to the strategy-making processes of the organisation – that is, communicating strategy in order for stakeholders to understand and accept it.

From this perspective, the communication role was not integral to the strategic decision-making processes (Angelopulo & Thomson, 2006). In recent years, there have been calls for communication to be considered in the strategic-making processes.

The call came about with the realisation of the significant role of communication in strategy development. Marchiori and Bulgacov (2015) outline that communication is what brings strategic process to life. This is because interaction is a condition for an organisational strategy's existence and strategy is a condition for organisational success. Nevertheless, interaction is the product of communication. Therefore, communication is the vine from which strategy branches. With all these arguments documented, an unanswered questions remains: Which form of communication is the lifeblood of organisations?

The work of Mukhudwana (2015) puts forward that within an organisation there exists symmetrical communication for negotiations and asymmetrical communication for dictation. One seeks to know whether the literature of “communication as a lifeblood” refers to symmetrical or asymmetrical communication.

Morsing and Schultz (2006) stipulate that asymmetrical communication is a one-way form of communication. Within the asymmetrical communication spectrum the stakeholders' role of influencing the organisation's ability to achieve its goals is opposed; their participation and contribution of ideas are not valued. Decisions are mainly taken by top management and then later communicated to stakeholders through the downward communication channel. One-way communication is the focus of the public information model, which focuses on only spreading information and not receiving feedback. Press release brochures, and even static web content, are tools used by these information dispensers. The model encourages public relations to be persuaders as opposed to being mediators.

Symmetrical communication, on the other hand, is an overall move towards an all-inclusive consideration in organisational communication. It is a participatory approach where stakeholders actively participate in organisational communication processes.

This is where the concept of integrated approaches to addressing challenges and the embracing of stakeholder opinions are endorsed. Grunig (2001) perceives symmetrical communication as a give and take communication process, where there is a balance of the organisations' and the stakeholders' interests. Furthermore, Waddock (2000) perceives symmetrical two-way communication as a way to discover resolutions for complex issues. Boons (2004) stipulates that solutions to complex issues and quality outcome attainment requires the adoption of policies created by organisations and stakeholders through two-way symmetrical communication to facilitate valuable corporate transformation. Therefore, exercising two-way symmetrical communication in the policy development process is fundamental in guiding the achievements of quality in an organisation.

Consequently, the study proposes that linear communication using "one size fits all" hard copies or simple electronic duplicates without any added value scarcely addresses issues of achieving quality. An enterprise's certification to operate and grow is no longer seen exclusively in terms of maximising revenues. Engaging with stakeholders in policy development processes through two-way symmetrical communication has become a condition for continuity and growth. It is this study's view, therefore that it is not just communication that is the lifeblood of an organisation, but rather that such communication needs two-way symmetrical communication that assumes dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders. The latter is, therefore, the type of communication that is the lifeblood of the organisation, the development of its policies, the achievement of its goals and the success of its mandate.

This section presented the literature review; the following section discusses the methodology used in this study.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Research approach

According to Mounten and Marius (1990) (as cited by Durrheim, 2006:37), the aim of the research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a way that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximised. The study was cross-sectional, giving allowance to compare many different variables at the same time. It allowed the exploration of quality learner outcomes, stakeholder communication and the value of stakeholder's opinion in relation to policy development all at once.

Creswell (2013) recommends a qualitative study in situations where the focus is to investigate and gain new insight into an unknown phenomenon. For this reason it was deemed appropriate to employ a qualitative exploratory method as the research approach of this study.

A qualitative approach does not only result in a definitive conclusion being reached about a phenomenon, but also gives an exploratory outcome due to data that is gathered from a smaller sample, primarily consisting of respondent's opinions and theoretical explanations. The research approach did not attempt to generalise the outcome of the research into the larger population, but rather attempted to furnish pockets of insights into the phenomenon concerned.

### 5.2 Research process

The study had two streams: The first necessitated policy exploration of the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, the projected learner outcomes, and the Department of Basic Education's purpose sourced from the Department of Basic Education's website. An analysis of their communication plan was also conducted, specifically the stakeholder engagement plan.

The aim of this process was to understand the aims of the developed policy and to understand whether the policy speaks to the expected learner outcomes and serves the purpose of the basic education system. The stream also gave insight on the planned engagements in policy development matters.

The importance of this first stream was to prepare the researcher by providing the background of the current working state of the policy and allowing a more intuitive and interactive interview session. The initial stream also allowed the researcher to identify any questions from the questionnaire that have to be answered in the next stream. Any ambiguity noted and gaps pointed out were followed up in the second phase. Items on the interview guide were structured as per the analysis of the first stream and the purpose of the study. These items were pre-tested for the actual interview.

The next stream consisted of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with respondents, who were given a consent form to sign prior to the interview. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, the issue of voluntary participation in the study, the duration of the interview session, and the valuable contribution that the respondents will make towards the study.

The respondents were individuals directly involved in the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* development processes, stakeholder engagement activities, and teacher's council. More importantly, these individuals all contribute to the systems' achievement of quality learner outcomes.

The interview questions were open-ended, thus adding a lot of enthusiasm to the process by allowing respondents to give deeper insight as the conversation proceeded, and also affording the researcher the opportunity to explore the presence of stakeholder inclusivity in the development of the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*. The interview results were recorded and transcribed during the interview with adherence to the ethical issues of not influencing respondent's responses and transcribing respondent's names.



### 5.3 Population and unit of analysis

The population of the study comprises policy developers of the South African Department of Basic Education, teachers and teacher council officials. The accessible population encompasses the aforementioned that are located in Gauteng. The unit of analysis for this study consists of practitioners involved with the *national policies pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12* development, stakeholder management practitioners from the offices of the Department of Basic Education’s national office, the South African Council of Educators officer from the Pretoria central region and Gauteng district officers, and school teachers from Gauteng.

### 5.4 Sampling

Purposive sampling was used where the researcher’s judgment was utilised to actively choose participants who were in a position to best respond to the research question and meet the objectives of the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2012:86). This sampling was chosen because it focuses on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest and which best enable the answering of research questions. The sampling allowed the researcher to pick respondents who were best able to answer the research question. Therefore, this sampling saved time and money when choosing and accessing respondents.

The sampling size included one of three development practitioners involved with the *national policies pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12* development, two of the four stakeholder management practitioners from the offices of the Department of Basic Education’s national office in Pretoria, one of the three communication managers of the South African Council of Educators office from the Pretoria central region, and six of the sixteen other stakeholder members from the Gauteng district office and school teachers from Gauteng. In total, 10 people out of the 25 sampled were included in the study.

## 5.5 Data collection

Data was collected through face-to-face semi structured interviews. The interview guide allowed flexibility to probe and follow-up on core issues as the interviews progressed. Flexibility allowed for a strong element of discovery, while a structured focus enabled greater analysis of commonalities (Gilham, 2005:186). The questionnaire was open-ended to stimulate discussion. Data was collected during each interview by means of an electronic recorder with the participant's responses being drafted on a transcript and later transcribed into a Microsoft word document, which served as the basis for data analysis. A pre-interview run was completed using a convenience sample of approximately 20 low-level employees in order to test the effectiveness of the instrument as well as obtain feedback on the clarity and flow of the questionnaire.

## 5.6 Data analysis

For the analysis and interpretation of data, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, Atlas-ti, was used. Data collected was in the form of tape recorded interviews that were transcribed into text. The software allowed for the importation of raw data, in the form of the text transcript, into a project set up for the specific analysis. The data was then coded and categorised in order to label the unit of qualitative data into themes. An inductive approach to thematic analysis was used in order to identify and group similar thematic aspects in the data. A second stage to the data analysis was linking the most significant themes into concept families. The software allowed a view of these abstract families in a network in order to illustrate the higher level relationship and association emerging from the data. In the final analysis process, the emergent themes and concepts were evaluated in light of the relevant literature and the research question in order to draw insight that aided in concluding the research proposal.

This section presented the methodology used; the following section discusses the results of the study.

## 6. RESULTS

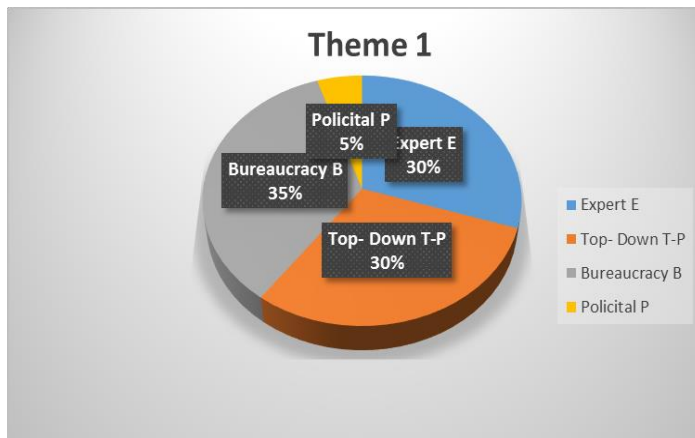
The following results are thematically discussed, and come from focusing on the necessity of stakeholder inclusivity in the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* development processes in basic education of South Africa. The focus was necessitated by a call to address the challenge of improving and achieving quality learner outcomes in education.

Among the problems that a developing country like South Africa is facing, is producing quality learner outcomes. In general, the results show that the necessity of stakeholder inclusivity has not yet been treated as a crucial matter in policy development processes by the South African Department of Basic Education.

### **6.1 Research Question 1: Which approach expert or polycentric is used in the development of *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the national curriculum statement Grades R – 12* in basic education?**

In response to research question one on the approach used to develop a policy, the results reveal that the Department of Basic Education uses an expert approach as opposed to a polycentric approach when developing a policy. This confirmed the literature's stipulation, that when it comes to policy development, an expert-based approach is usually followed and that this approach may include some interaction with stakeholders, but not to the extent that characterises a participatory approach. However, an overall move towards a polycentric consideration of policy-making, which adopts the participatory approach that requires the participation of stakeholders as active participants in the policy development processes, is a matter of great concern (Pahl-Wostl, 2002:4).

Themes that emerged in response to research question one are: bureaucracy, top-down approach, political and expert approach.



**Figure 6.1 Approach used**

The themes were drawn from the following interviews’ responses: “It’s bureaucracy that drives the process of formulating a policy document”; “Policy development is a top-down activity, policy writers will write a policy and call for input”; and that “...policy is developed and put on a public comment phase, information about that policy on that phase does not reach us, only the political will know”; “...we are never involved, so I would say an expert approach is used, experts who are not even experts because experts are us in the classroom..”; “If I was involved, I was going to raise many loopholes in the policies but no we are not called in for consultation so it is not polycentric.”; “Bureaucracy informs policy in education”; “Policy is drawn from a political perspective”; “...policy is developed from a top- down approach”; “..its development is as a result of an instruction form top politicians, down to policy developers” and that “Experts develop a policy and others are asked to comment on it when it is on a public comment phase, not all of us, I for one, I was never asked to comment on a policy..”.

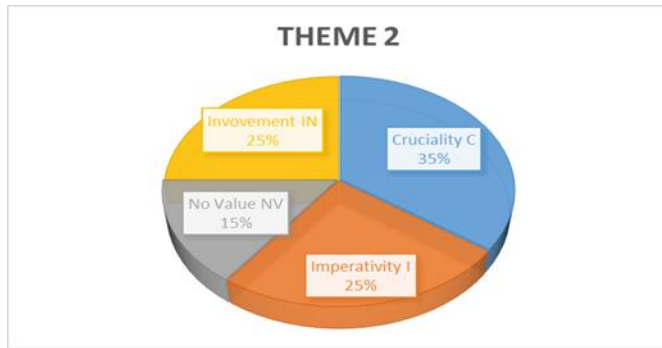
From the above, it can be deduced that bureaucracy drives policy development in the basic education system of South Africa and that stakeholders are often only included during a public comment phase, which is made known to the powerful and not the weak. This means that the weak fail to participate and end up being included only at the level of being informed of the policy to be implemented.

Perhaps, the solution lies with practicing the concept of inclusivity, which is at the heart of all value-based leadership, because listening to and responding to the concerns of stakeholders - whether they be powerful or weak – remain fundamental to corporate excellence (Waritimi, 2011:167). Therefore the ability of the Department of Basic Education to listen and respond to the concerns of all their stakeholders is fundamental for the achievement of their endeavoured quality learner outcomes.

## **6.2 Research Question 2: What value is given to stakeholder inclusivity in the policy development of the basic education system?**

In response to research question two, on the consideration of the necessity of stakeholder inclusivity, the results reveal that the value of the consultation and involvement of all stakeholders, especially teachers, in policy developments of basic education, is not yet acknowledged. The results also reveal that stakeholders are included because of the adherence to policy, not because they are valuable. However, stakeholders themselves believe that their views are critical and count for something; their inclusion is for reputation, not acknowledgement of the value carried by their opinions. This shows that, the point made by Morse (2010), suggesting that good workable policies are those in which stakeholders are involved during the formulation process and that an organisation can run more effectively when stakeholders are involved in its policy and strategy formulation is not considered by the Department of Basic Education.

The most crucial themes that merged in response to research question two are: the vital need of stakeholder involvement; the imperativeness of stakeholder views; and the reduced value placed on their engagement.



**Figure 6.2 Stakeholder Value**

The interviewed participants' revelation is that: "...consultation with our teachers is more crucial"; "...consultation and involvement of stakeholder's is very imperative..."; "For any policy to be implementable it needs the –buy-in of every stakeholder"; "...the governing party says education is should be a societal matter, society is made up of different stakeholder, teachers are key stakeholders, whatever policy formulation that takes place it has to consider their views"; "As a former unionist, they would come to me ask me questions, I would answer politically, but the person who teaches on the ground is that poor teacher over there whose views must be heard since they know what does not work with a learner to achieve outcome"; "... a top-down approach is a problem, we are not considered, not involved but informed and then lambasted when the same policy fails"; "It is a policy to include all stakeholders", "..Stakeholder inclusion is very crucial"; "...because we are undermined, our opinions are not valued at all" and that "...Stakeholder inclusion is very crucial".

From the above, it can be deduced that the views of the teachers working on the ground have to be valued because they understand what works for learners in order to achieve specified outcomes. They can also create an environment in which weak learners can cope and they do so simply by seeing to the achievement of quality learner outcomes. For policy to be implementable it has to involve the views of all stakeholders. Societal education is societal only when key stakeholders' views are considered in its decision-making processes.

Therefore, all stakeholders, specifically teachers, are key in achieving quality learner outcomes beyond the point of the classroom to the point of involvement in policies that guide this achievement. Implementing a policy from a political perspective denies other stakeholders the opportunity to raise their concerns.

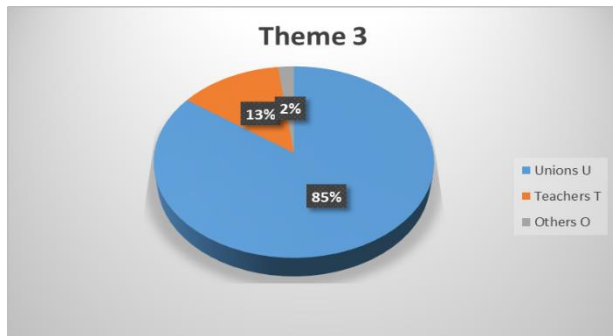
Perhaps the solution lies in the stakeholder theory that describe what managers should actually do with regard to stakeholder relationships, the consequences if managers do not adhere to the stakeholder management principle, and what managers should do when dealing with organisational stakeholders and that organisations should create value for all stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston 1995). The value incorporates the following: allowing individuals to influence the achievement of the organisation's goals, to influence and share control over innovation initiatives, to contribute in shaping the success of an organisation.

Therefore, the Department of Basic Education should see value in all its stakeholder's contributions so that it does not face consequences of missing important views in their policies.

### **6.3 Research Question 3: Which stakeholder groups are included in the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 development?***

The response to the third research question on the included stakeholder groups is as follows: Results show that major stakeholders – with the exception of teachers working “on the ground” – are directly consulted, with the voice of the last mentioned being heard only through union representatives. Contrary to this, the concept of inclusivity implies that all the different stakeholder voices should both be heard and actively included in the organisation.

The theme that strongly emerged in response to research question three is that: Unions are used as the teacher consultation point.



**Figure 6.3 Stakeholder groups**

Themes emerged from the face-to-face semi structured interviews, where participants revealed that: “unions are consulted as teacher representation”, “teacher consultation [takes place] through unions” and that “stakeholders can participate on the public comment of the formulated policy”. “Universities, independent boards are also included in policy formulation”; “Parents and society at large is included in policy formulation”; “Unions are called in when policy is developed and they later communicate outcomes to us”; “We as teachers are included, but through unions”; “Proper consultation is with Unions”; “School governing bodies, councils, districts and the public is included” and that “... All necessary stakeholders are included”.

From the above, it can be deduced that teachers are not directly included in the policy development processes of the Department of Basic Education.

A possible solution lies on the constituent of what a stakeholder is. Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s objectives.

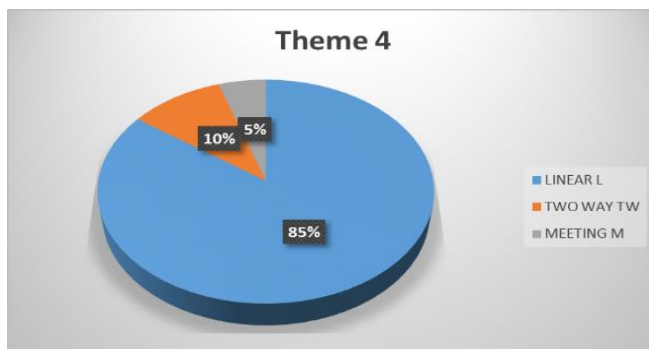
Therefore the Department of Basic Education’s direct inclusion of all stakeholders, particularly teachers in their *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* development can affect the achievement of quality learner outcome. If they can have an effect, then they should be considered imperative contributors.



#### 6.4 Research Question 4: How is the stakeholder communication during policy development engagements?

In response to the fourth research question, concerning how stakeholders are engaged, the results reveal that stakeholders are involved through a linear form of communication during policy development. This is contrary to the call of engaging with stakeholders through two-way symmetrical communication in policy development processes as a condition for continuity and growth.

Themes that emerged in the context of research question four were: linear communication being mostly used, meetings being occasionally used, and two-way communication being slightly occasionally used.



**Figure 6.4** *Communication during engagements*

The interviews revealed that “...even the bureaucracy, they have a certain thinking around consultation. To them consultation is coming to you, this is what we implement, period, they have consulted.”, “... when a policy is at a public comment phase, stakeholders are informed, national informs provinces, they will inform districts, districts will inform schools and they will inform society at large.” “As soon as a policy is gazetted for public comment, face-to-face consultations are conducted with all unions.” “Communication is one way, we just informed”; “I think a dictation communication is used”; “One way communication, informing is the only communication with policy”;

“Communication is from the top, an instruction of what needs to be done”; “...a call from top management will come to say develop such and such policy documents”; Meeting are never utilised to form a policy, you are just told to formulate it and send it for review, then it is gazzeted” and that “Two way communication is only used with unions when they are called to discuss the formulated policy and with us on the ground, one way communication is used to just inform us of what we need to implement”.

From the above, it can be deduced that dialogue consultation is limited to unions. Whether or not stakeholders “receive the message” of participating on the public comment phase of a policy, and whether or not their views were considered or rejected on specific grounds, it is never known with linear communication that flows through a hierarchy.

Perhaps the solution lies on communication as the lifeblood. Angelopulo and Thomson (2006) postulate that there has been a call for communication to be considered in the strategy development process as opposed to it being utilised only to communicate the final strategy of implementation. The Department of Basic Education can create valuable policy for the system through a two-way symmetrical communication with their all stakeholders during policy formulation.

This section discussed the results of the study, the following section presents recommendation that will remedy challenges that called to study.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Department of Basic Education adopt a polycentric and participatory approach that requires the participation of stakeholders as active participants in the policy development process. The question of teacher involvement in policy-making is crucial and the study recommends that they be included from the ground levels of policy development. Questionnaires could be sent to all of them to collect their views.

A sampling of the stakeholder population can be taken simply to obtain a certain percentage of their views directly, heard in face-to-face meetings. The consultation and involvement of all stakeholders is crucial.

Furthermore, the study recommends that specifically, the involvement of teachers should not stop at union teacher presentation meetings as a point of consultation. When other stakeholder groups such as parents, are given the platform to comment on a formulated policy, they should be informed that their participation is required and that it is of value – and then their views should be valued. Stakeholders should not be included because it is policy to involve them; they should be included because their views are considered necessary in policy formulation. By so doing an environment conducive to stakeholders voicing their opinions will be created – one in which mistakes and vulnerability are allowed with no blame being apportioned nor power games being played.

## 8 CONCLUSION

Among the problems that developing countries such as South Africa are facing, is the issue of producing quantitative instead of qualitative learner outcomes.

Education policy is focused on the numbers that the system turns out and not on the quality produced. Concerns have recently endeavoured to advocate stakeholder inclusivity in educational policies in an attempt to address the problem – with very little success to date.

The purpose of this study was to explore the necessity of stakeholder inclusivity in the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* in basic education.

The face-to-face interviews allowed the identification of the crucial concern of involving all stakeholder groups in the *national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* development processes. Specifically, this refers to teachers who are involved through a point of consultation with unions and who are consulted again only when they are informed of the policy they ought to implement. Listening and responding to stakeholders' concerns is fundamental for business continuity. Therefore, basic education's adoption of the stakeholder inclusivity practice is essential in achieving their objective and addressing their challenge of improving quality learner outcome.

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