Strategies Used By Rural Secondary School Governing Bodies to Enhance the Quality of Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the strategies employed by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to enhance the quality of education in three selected secondary schools in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Despite some improvement in Grade 12 results within the province, a downward trend was observed until 2016, raising concerns given that SGBs are legally mandated to improve educational quality. This qualitative research employed semi-structured interviews to gather data from twenty-two participants, including eighteen SGB members, two school principals, and two Education Development Officers (EDOs). The study applied Governance Theory as a framework to investigate the strategies used by SGBs to promote educational quality in their schools. The findings revealed that while SGB members were often inadequately trained for their governance roles, some employed strategies such as goal-sharing, fostering a common purpose, and engaging the community to improve education. However, the study also highlighted divergent views, with some participants questioning whether SGBs had any concrete strategies to enhance educational quality. Based on these findings, the study recommends the development of clear guidelines to assist SGBs in formulating effective strategies to improve the quality of education in schools. This paper will contribute to the body of existing knowledge, practice, and policy development to enhance the performance of the SGB to enhance the quality of education in South Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

The poor trend of low academic achievement among South African learners has generated heated arguments among stakeholders (Iwu, 2019; Nxumalo, 2017). Due to the consequent low academic performance of South African learners, several schools have been designated as Matric Intervention Program (MIP) schools. This terrible trend has existed since the start of the democratic era, and despite the efforts of stakeholders, the intended outcome has not materialized. The South African government enacted the South African School Act (SASA 2006) which led to the establishment of the School Governing Board to assist in the development of the school by providing quality education. The SGB members consist of parents and school representatives. The SGB members according to the SASA Act of 1996 are responsible for providing governance to schools through the appointment of educators, provision of resources, Provision of support for effective delivery of teaching and learning in the classroom, and management of the finances. The SGB members are also responsible for ensuring discipline in schools and helping to provide support for the principals, educators, and other support staff. They are also responsible for providing a code of conduct for learners to improve academic performance

and enhance the quality of education. One of the important aims and objectives of the school is to improve the quality of education through effective governance and support by the SGBs. The present administration democratizes the school governing body to improve the quality of education while addressing the problem of low learner academic performance. However, learner academic performance, the beast that haunts the educational system, is one of the most crucial elements of a high-quality education. Although the Grade 12 results have improved recently (DoE, 2023), Eastern Cape has been counted amongst the lowest-performing provinces until 2016 (DoE, 2014; DoE, 2015; DoE, 2016; Fleisch, 2008). This improvement in Grade 12 results in the past five years is a commendable effort by the Department of Basic Education. However, the quality and caliber of these results remain problematic because most learners are not able to achieve university admissions requirements in South Africa (Mahlangu, 2020; Sekonyela, 2021). This may be a sign that the policies and governance practices adopted by SGBs do not sufficiently address and uphold the quality of education offered in schools. Since most learners in South Africa have not been able to become literate adults, the system needs to be drastically reviewed. SGBs must, nevertheless, keep an eye on and support schools. While it is true that they are fulfilling their governance obligations in schools, they must also support the school principals and teachers by providing the necessary resources required for the provision of quality education. This paper, therefore, investigated the strategies used by the SGB to enhance the quality of education in three secondary schools in the Buffalo City Metro Education District. Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

Which strategies do SGBs use to enhance the quality of education in their schools?

This paper aims to explore the strategies of the SGB members to enhance the quality of education in South African rural secondary schools. The study will also give insight into how the academic performance of learners can be enhanced following the poor performance of learners in the Matric exams in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The study sought to investigate the strategies used by rural secondary school governing bodies to enhance the quality of education. This study is significant in that its findings will add to the existing empirical literature on the role of SGB members in enhancing the quality of education. The study is also important because it will provide strategies by the SGBs to improve the quality of education in South Africa. Findings from this study will assist in policy formulation and practice and provide a platform to enhance the performance of SGB and improve learners' performance in Matric exams in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The study is limited to selected rural secondary schools in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of SGBs in enhancing the quality of education in schools

South Africans had high hopes and aspirations for the nation's advancement in education following the African National Congress (ANC) party's 1994 election to power. Policies to democratize, reduce inequality, and improve the inclusion of all citizens in the educational system, regardless of skin color, have been put in place in South Africa after twenty-two years of democracy. A partnership in education was created after the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, passed by the Department of Education, decentralized the country's educational system (Mavuso & Duku, 2014). By ensuring that the required policies, processes, and structures are in place, the SASA 1996 granted the SGBs the legal obligation and mandate to minimize and manage conflicts in order to guarantee that schools are secure, safe, and conducive to teaching and learning. Section 20 outlines the various responsibilities and functions that SGBs have. One of the main responsibilities is to represent the school's best interests and work to ensure its expansion by providing all students enrolled in SASA1996 with an

excellent education. SGBs are school administrators whose main duty is to improve the caliber of education in classrooms by creating regulations and allocating resources (SASA, 1996). This suggests that they should concentrate all of their efforts and governance processes on providing excellent education.

On the other hand, according to the Eastern Cape Department of Education (2010), the matric classes' persistently low performance over time is a problem that defies all of the Department's present strategies and fixes. Education experts and stakeholders in the Eastern Cape were similarly concerned about school underperformance, according to the report, which stated that it was an intractable problem. Some of the factors responsible for school underperformance in Matric exams were highlighted in a number of scholarly works (Maile 2019; Mokoena & Van Breda 2021; Nkosi & Farhangpour 2017; Adebayo et al., 2020) that have been done to unpack and explain the reason behind the poor performance of high school learners. A student's academic performance or achievement can be severely impacted by a number of factors, such as their family history, the media used for instruction, the caliber of their teachers, the high rate of drug usage and crime in the community, and the lack of proper support for students in their education. Members of school governance must have the required skills, knowledge, and experience in order to fulfill their legal responsibilities and face accountability (Maimane & Ndlela, 2015). The way the curriculum is presented, how learners are supported to learn, how special needs and socioeconomically disadvantaged students are catered for, how learning environments are made palatable, and whether or not instruction takes place in a formal school are some of the factors that Galetuke (2017) claims determine academic performance. In this sense, Xaba (2004) argues that effective teaching and learning ought to be offered in schools. Each component member must therefore fulfill their duties and commitments in a way that best benefits the entire student body at the school. Similar claims are made by Southworth (2002), who contends that in order for principals to engage in school governance, they must be both managers and leaders of effective teaching and learning.

On the other hand, research indicates that parents, who play a significant role in their kids' education, frequently view themselves as outsiders when it comes to certain facets of school governance, especially when it comes to instruction and learning (Maimane & Ndlela, 2015; Mavuso & Duku, 2014; Xaba & Nhlapo, 2014; Olawumi & Mavuso, 2022). This puts in jeopardy the SASA's mandates that SGBs make sure their kids attend top-notch public schools and that they are crucial in making sure staff members, principals, and instructors have all the tools they need to do their jobs. The Schools Act delineates the responsibility of the SGB in determining the strategic orientation of the school, encompassing the establishment of benchmarks for academic performance and standards for educational attainment (SASA, 1996b).

It should be noted that, although teaching and learning are professional duties, SGB also plays a part in defining academic achievement targets by formulating a plan for a school's learning and teaching direction (SASA, 1996b). SGBs make a substantial contribution to enhancing the teaching and learning environment in schools as community members (Mutekwe & Sedibe, 2017). However, the SGBs' deficiency of mentorship in carrying out their duties gives rise to elements detrimental to school government (Chauke, 2017). Student motivation and attitudes toward learning, institutional features, a lack of parental support, and resource restrictions are other causal variables that undermine the role that SGBs are expected to play in improving the quality of education in their schools (Tshabalala & Ncube, 2013). Consequently, regardless of political party, parental relationships enhance children's educational attainment in low-income socioeconomic settings (Park et al., 2017). These partnerships serve as a means of competition or even as a means of communication to improve the effectiveness of the educational process for all students.

To secure the growth and development of minds, the School Governing Body, like any other individual directly involved in teaching and learning daily, seeks to promote the best interests of the learners under their care. SGB develops a vision and mission statement that serves as the cornerstone upon which the school is constructed (Chauke, 2017; Makhuvele, 2016). Subsequently, it adopts policies and procedures and a code of conduct for teachers and students that outlines the disciplinary measures that will take place at every stage of the school. It is a legally mandated group of parents, teachers, support personnel, and learners who collaborate to advance the efficacy and well-being of the school community and improve instruction (Fahmi Gadalla, 2021). However, SGBs are not fully involved in supplementing resources supplied by the state to improve the quality of teaching and learning, they are not effective in forming school policies, they are not effectively supporting educators in carrying out their professional duties, and they are not effectively engaging the community in the schools (Mbengashe, 2014).

The role of SGB in assisting principals and teachers in carrying out their professional responsibilities.

In the SASA (1996), SGBs are required to, among other things, formulate policies and ensure that these policies are implemented. As it deals with school governance, this committee is expected to create a positive teaching and learning environment by ensuring no challenges in the provision of education (Faranaaz, Thom & Hodgson, 2017;). This implies that SGBs should ensure that school principals and teachers are supported in their professional obligations. They are also obligated to develop a school code of conduct that promotes good school ethos and teaching and learning environment. Furthermore, they should ensure that school finances are properly managed (Baloyi, 2023; Mavuso et al., 2022). The South African Schools Act provides for the functions of the governing bodies within the education system. The role of the SGBs is clearly stated in the SASA 1996 to include the provision of governance that supports the development of quality education in their schools.

In light of these responsibilities, the SGBs are required by the SASA to work in conjunction with all stakeholders to establish robust relationships and encourage goal alignment in the best interests of school growth (Baloyi, 2023). Working together with stakeholders guarantees that schools have an atmosphere that is favorable to teaching and learning. Additionally, the principal and the teachers handle day-to-day operations of the school, not the governing body. On the other hand, the governing board makes decisions about the creation of school policies and assists with the growth and administration of school funds.

According to Loock and Gravert (2014), in this particular context, "governance" is still believed to entail making policies, even though the Schools Act makes it clear that the governing body is more than just a body that sets policies. The school governing body is also in charge of managing the school's physical assets, opening and maintaining bank accounts, purchasing curriculum and equipment, and other administrative duties. The original responsibilities of the governing body of a public school are related to the general oversight, legal personality, and governance of the establishment.

Because they are jointly and equally responsible for the child's education, this so boosts the SGBs' engagement. In their capacity as parents' and guardians' representatives, SGBs are required to help their constituents' local schools achieve better educational achievements. To learn from the staff and share knowledge, SGB members should engage with school administration. This indicates that one of the main duties of the school governing bodies is to oversee and manage the schools. But according to the Department of Education (DoE, 1996) and SASA (1996), the Head of Department has the authority to intervene, suspend or remove the SGBs from their position, and designate a replacement if they are

unable to carry out their responsibilities in a competitive manner. It is intended to abide by the Constitution and the laws passed to foster inclusive governance in schools. It is important to emphasize that SGBs have a lot of responsibilities because they have to dedicate themselves to their jobs and duties and answer to both the Department of Education and the community. Although the role of parents and guardians in school governance is highly valued, several studies regrettably demonstrate that many of them—especially in historically underprivileged rural and township schools—either don't engage in any school-related activities at all or don't assist schools in improving their performance.

Challenges faced by SGBs in executing their roles

SGBs face significant obstacles when carrying out the duties and obligations outlined in SASA (1996). These challenges, which have existed for some time, include parent governors' lack of knowledge and expertise in school governance, school governors' lack of trust, the influence of suspicion and poor teamwork among school governors, and school governors' inadequate understanding of their role in promoting the best interests of the school (Kumalo, 2009). Recently, King and Mestry (2023) observed that SGBs give budget monitoring functions relatively little weight, which typically leads to the mishandling of school funding. The deficiency in the development and execution of financial policies and the lack of operational tools such as budget variance analysis to reduce unnecessary spending indicate this supervisory role's diminished importance. The difficulties brought on by a finance policy's non-compliance and SGBs' inability to respond promptly to address the issue exacerbate the adverse effects of inadequate financial management ((King & Mestry, 2023). SGBs are unable to guarantee that school instruction is of a high quality.

Another challenge encountered by SGBs pertains to the fact that principals serve as ex officio members of the SGB, signifying that they represent and advance the interests of their employer in their official role (Xaba & Nhlapo, 2014). As per Section 23(1)(b) of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996), this is the legal framework that delineates the principal's responsibility in school governance. The phrase "the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department" appears in Section 16(3), explicitly referring to the responsibility of the principal to act as the employer's representative and safeguard its interests (Heystek, 2004). This suggests that when it comes to school governance issues, the principal answers to his or her employer by supporting the SGB in carrying out its duties and obligations concerning laws and policies. In addition to handling strictly professional issues on curriculum management and execution, professional management also entails implementing delegated governance tasks. However, being a legitimate member of the SGB also means that the principal is a member of the SGB. As the Schools Act requires, the principal must represent the school's best interests with other school governors. Accordingly, the principal's function in school governance can be understood as an SGB member on par with other SGB members who work to advance the school's best interests (Xaba & Nhlapo, 2014).

SGBs appear to face significant obstacles in the new information era regarding digitization. These responsibilities include upholding and monitoring school policies by the information age (Duku et al., 2023), managing school finances to accommodate expanding technological innovations, creating a curriculum and calendar that is technology-focused, drafting school rules and determining the school's vision and mission statement to include digitalizations, maintaining and monitoring school property, fostering positive relationships between SGB members and the school, and, finally, acting as a mediator between learners and the SGB in resolving technology-related issues (Nwosu, & Chukwuere, 2017).

3. METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative research approach due to the following reasons. According to Hennik, Hutter, and Bailey (2020), a qualitative research approach is a style of inquiry in which statistically undefined or summarised data is gathered, examined, and analyzed. As suggested by Oosthuizen et al. (2020), the interpretive paradigm assumes an inductive approach to social reality. This implies that to conclude, the researcher moves from specific to general. Focus group conversations of six SGB members from each school were purposefully selected to solicit the views of the SGB members about the strategies they use to enhance the quality of education. Through semi-structured interviews, two principals and two Education Development Offers were requested to share their views about how SGBs improve the quality of education in schools. A thematic approach was used to analyze the data collected for the study. Participants were coded as P1, P2, EDO1, EDO2 and FG1, FG2, and FG3 to achieve anonymity. P1 and P2 are the school principals, EDO1 and EDO2 are Education development officers, and FG1, FG2, and FG3 are the focus groups.

Trustworthiness of data collection

The study employs four criteria to determine the trustworthiness of the data collection for the paper, they include Credibility, Dependability, Confirmability, and Transferability. The authors determine the credibility of the data by conducting a mentor check and peer-prolonged participation. Also, we ensure the dependability of the data by seeking the advice of experts in the field and following every step involved in the data collection process for accuracy. To establish confirmability, the authors ensure that data are accurately collected and reflect the views expressed by participants. This we do by subjecting the data to the participant to check if their views are captured accurately. On transferability, although qualitative researchers are not primarily interested in generalizing the findings, transferability will depend on the context the researcher is interested in applying it.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The governance theory had to be one of the lenses used in the research because the main goal of the project was to understand how SGBs contributed to improving the quality of education in a subset of secondary schools in the Buffalo City Metro Education District. The governance philosophy promotes the use of group decision-making. Similarly, Chhotray and Stoker (2009) defined governance as "the rules of collective decision-making in a setting where there are multiple actors or organizations and no formal control system can dictate the terms of the relationship between these actors and organizations" (2009, p. 3). Chhotray and Stoker (2009) continued in this vein. According to Chhotray and Stoker (2009), governance aims to comprehend how we formulate group decision-making. In contrast to the hierarchical control model, a new, more cooperative form of governance is being shaped by governance theory. In this new mode, state and non-state actors engage in mixed public and private networks wherein a governance framework can substitute hierarchical control. The governance framework tries to solve problems as a group outside of the current hierarchical structures (Mayntz, 2003). Among other things, school governors are supposed to develop the mission and vision of their institution, which implies that as strategists, they should be able to figure out what has to be done to turn their vision into reality. Furthermore, the researcher thinks that group decision-making is the most effective strategy. Different stakeholders make up SGBs, and each one may have unique interests. But, to enhance group decision-making and provide everyone with a more comprehensive understanding of their roles, the stakeholders must work together as a cohesive unit. Their actions will affect how well their initiatives to raise educational standards are implemented.

5. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the study. The collected data is presented in two subthemes: SGBs use goal-sharing, common purpose, and community engagement. Within these two major themes, there appeared to be divergent views about how SGBs enhance the quality of education in their schools, with some participants disputing that SGBs had any strategies to improve the quality of education in their schools.

Goal-sharing and common purpose approach

Regarding the SGB's use of goal-sharing and common purpose to enhance the quality of education, it was noted that participants' views were divergent. Most participants confirmed using this strategy by their schools whilst others did not.

This is what P1 had to say to confirm the non-existence of goal-sharing and common purpose:

"*There is no clear strategy that guides the SGB in the school, and the root cause is that their level of education is too low. In this case, I am responsible for developing different working documents as strategies, not the entire SGB. I influence the SGB to take a particular direction, and in this situation, there is a schedule of meetings to ensure that everyone is on board regarding what must be done*".

The principal's remark above describes a pitiful situation in which one person's opinions govern the entire school. It is arguable from this passage that the principal decides who should or shouldn't engage in the SGB. The absence of goal-sharing and a shared purpose among the school governors was further corroborated by two focus groups. This validation is shown in the focus group responses, as FG1 agreed with P1 and noted,

"*We do not want to give any false information; here in our school, we are not guided, or rather, we do not have any strategy we are using as a roadmap. Instead, we are using our wisdom to deal with issues as they come. Hence, we cannot boast that we have a uniform approach to dealing with issues in our school. Let us be frank and say that in our school, we do not hold meetings as required by any structure. The principal only calls meetings when he feels like doing so.*"

While P1 highlighted the lack of clear strategy, P2 differed as he confirmed their operations in his school. P2 concurred with the majority of SGBs that were interviewed. The divergent views among the participants confirm the non-uniformity in the operations of the school governors in various institutions. This becomes very clear on what P2 had alluded to as he noted that,

"*Yes, we do have strategies. From time to time, the school governors report back on our performance. The SGB visits classes and motivates the learners, especially the Grade 12s. Parents are also roped in and called to meetings so that they are aware of the developments in their school and propose a way forward.*"

FG2 brought another version about the availability of goal-sharing and common purpose as a strategy, wherein it highlighted challenges it encountered, resulting in the non-implementation of strategies agreed upon by school governors. FG2 noted that:

"Eish, as the chairperson of the school governing body in this school, I can safely say that the entire SGB is very clear on its roles and responsibilities as outlined in SASA (1996). We are further aware that our mandate seeks to ensure our effectiveness and functionality, which will depend on how the different components of the governing body interact and carry out school governance functions as outlined in SASA. I am giving this introduction so that the synopsis of our operations in this school is fully understood. Goal-sharing and common purpose are supposed to be the strategies we use to enhance learners' academic work. However, I must say that strategies are developed but hardly implemented in this school. I am saying this because the SGB is selective in its implementation process. This is caused by the misunderstanding between the SGB and the school principal."

The scene depicted above, which the participants painted, suggests that various dynamics are at work while the school governors carry out their duties. This indicates that the many stakeholders' or the school governance's constituents' educational attainment may not always be the primary obstacle to the organization's ability to function. Rather, another issue facing our school governors is their lack of will, as evidenced by their inability to carry out the decisions they make. Additionally, this undermines the standard of good governance that should be upheld in carrying out the duties and responsibilities spelled out in the South African Schools Act (1996). FG2 further hinted that as an ex-officio member, the principal plays a crucial role in the SGB.

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Conversely, the storyline presented by EDO1 refuted the notion that school governors employ certain tactics to improve the standard of instruction. For example, EDO1 was very forthright when it acknowledged that school governors in historically underprivileged schools are still having difficulty in this area. He mentioned that:

"By far, one can see that in as much that the SASA seeks to encourage public participation, it does not yield the expected outcomes in all areas because of political imbalances of the past. Lack of skills and expertise speak to illiteracy that will have a burden in the execution of the roles and responsibilities. This is one of the weak areas in previously disadvantaged areas."

It is evident from the aforementioned passage that after two decades of progress toward democracy, historical inequalities continue to exist. This demonstrates unequivocally that some historical inequities have not been addressed by the policies and reforms supported by the ANC-led government. Moreover, SASA (1996) mandates that school governors carry out specific duties and obligations without taking their educational background into account. This could be considered a crisis because someone needs to be able to do their duties as required. Lack of literacy and abilities has put school governors in a quagmire. This is a surefire formula for trouble because school governors are supposed to make sure that students receive public education of a high caliber (SASA, 1996). It is absurd to believe that SGBs lacking in knowledge and experience could carry out this duty. In addition, their educational background made

them vulnerable to being duped by well-informed parties; therefore, the issue of manipulation surfaced in this context. EDO 2 noted:

"*This results in the lack of an integrated approach in dealing with issues about school governance as expected by the Act. The level of academic qualifications regarding the parent component of the school governing bodies makes them rely more on teachers in terms of executing their roles and responsibilities.*"

It can be claimed from the preceding excerpt that the ways in which the school governors operate do not align with the SASA (1996), which advocates for cooperation and a collaborative approach to decision-making in the management and governance of South African schools.

Community engagement approach

With regards to the community engagement approach, P2 painted the anticipated picture of what the school environment should be and noted:

"*We invite the stakeholders to motivate our learners based on their academic achievements. More often, we target our former students. Also, neighboring academics are working together to enhance learners' academic performance. Parent involvement is paramount in the schools' activities in line with public participation principle.*"

The same sentiments were echoed by FG2, and noted that:

"*The SGB is trying its best to engage the broader community in order to enable learners' academic work to be achieved in our school. Different categories of individuals are invited to share their expertise with our learners to motivate them. Businessmen are also assisting us in terms of plowing back to the community by donating in cash and kind so that our school can be financially sound and functional.*"

FG2 further argued that:

"*The broader community is also roped into the school programs and becomes active participants in the rolling out of these programs. Some community members are heeding the clarion call by the SGB to render voluntary service to ensure school development. For example, during the learners' camp and Saturday classes, parents, not only those with kids in our enrollment, would come and render services, including security and meal servers. So, in this regard, we are doing very well.*"

The assertions by P2 and FG2 painted a very healthy environment in the education system in their respective areas of operation, which can be assumed to be the results of different levels of education and capacitation. The notion of public participation is evident, and so are the positive results thereof. With regard to the wider community's involvement as a facilitator for improving students' academic achievement, EDO1 made clear what each stakeholder is expected to do in terms of their involvement in their children's education. They mentioned that:

"*Teachers are supposed to teach, the businesspeople within the communities are expected to plow back to the communities in terms of supporting certain needs of the school as part of their community responsibility, and the general community is supposed to ensure safety and security of the school against any acts of vandalism.*"

The aforementioned views expressed by EDO1 aim to highlight the idea that education is a social issue as well as a government one. This is derived from the government's statement made in 1996 when SASA was enacted. Communities must fully participate in their children's education, according to SASA (1996). Thus, it is anticipated that members of the general public, whether or not they are employed by SGBs, will play a part in guaranteeing high-quality education, safety, security, and any other progressive intervention that would make it possible for institutions of higher learning to create an environment that is favorable to the realization of high-quality public education. Conversely, the majority of participants concurred that the majority of SGBs lack sufficient understanding regarding the SASA (1996).

Despite their awareness of SASA, they lack a thorough understanding of the conditions that must be met to guarantee efficient school administration, which will improve the standard of instruction. He said that in reality, the opposite is happening in our schools: rather than ensuring school safety, it is our communities that seek to improperly profit from the educational system. EDO1 made the following observation in this regard:

"*However, in our communities, it is surprising to find taverns just at the doorsteps of the school, and as a result, our schools are vulnerable to gangsterism, hooliganism, and vandalism. Furthermore, some community members perceived the schools as cows to be milked. Instead of providing voluntary services, they would ensure that school finances are milked; in some instances, school governors are found to be central. In some cases, you will find out that the community is spreading a lot of negativities about the school.*
"

The passage above paints a terrible picture of a situation in which the communities reject or downplay their supposed involvement in their children's education. Diverse populations hold varying opinions about education and the services it provides. The passage suggests that schools are not operating as they should because of the external environment rather than any internal ones. Because of their self-interest, community members occasionally decide to delegate their duties to improve education, which lowers the standard of education. Since it is inappropriate for bars and shebeens to be located next to schools, the Liquor Board Act specifies the appropriate separation between alcohol-selling establishments and educational institutions like churches. This can be used to shut down shebeens and bars that endanger the security, safety, and education of schools. This is only possible if the school governors possess the necessary skills to handle all of these difficulties and carry out their duties impartially, fearlessly, and without favoritism. Additionally, he pointed out that communities do not view schools as workshops that will free them from societal evils. EDO1 further emphasized that the government is no longer in charge of schools, pointing out:

"*SASA has changed the notion of schools from a sole government entity to a public entity. This is where the principle of public participation comes in. Our communities are central in ensuring that our kids get quality education, and their involvement is critical. Communities should take responsibility in making use of democratic structures to enhance the education of their children.*"

It is clear from the foregoing passage that the governors of schools have a similar perspective to that of other members of the community. Schools can only be safe from acts of vandalism when communities take responsibility for their protection and stop viewing them as government buildings. They must be continued in their children's education. Therefore, it is the duty of parents to make sure that their children receive a top-notch education in order to help them overcome social evils.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results demonstrate that although serving SGB members lacked the necessary training to carry out their governance responsibilities, they nevertheless employed strategies such as goal-sharing, common purpose, and community participation to raise classroom educational standards. Divergent opinions exist on how SGBs improve the quality of education in their schools, with certain participants, Education Development Officers in particular, denying the existence of SGB-implemented tactics. Views expressed by stakeholders indicate that some EDOs are failing to perform their role due to a poor understanding of their responsibilities for school governance to enhance the effective schooling system. This shows that the EDOs are failing in their responsibilities to provide adequate monitoring and evaluation to ascertain the extent of the provision of effective governance by the SGB members and the challenges in providing quality education in their schools.

It became apparent that SGBs employed various tactics, some of which relied on school principals when implementing the goal-sharing and shared-purpose approach to improve the quality of education in schools. This was the case even though SGBs, according to SASA (1996), are supposed to oversee schools while working with educators and the community. Low levels of academic competence among parents working for SGBs made it difficult for all parties involved to collaborate, which posed a risk to the schools' ability to carry out their mandate of providing high-quality public education.   Thus, it may be claimed that SGBs who serve as facilitators for improving educational quality are challenged to carry out their duties. The results show that the selected SGBs are illiterate and unable to carry out the tasks by SASA (1996). This finding corresponds with the literature that SGB members not being adequately educated to carry out their governance responsibilities (Maimane & Ndlela, 2015). However, literature also supports the need for SGB members to be capacitated on how the curriculum is presented, how learners are supported to learn, how special needs and socioeconomically disadvantaged students are catered for, how learning environments are made palatable, are some of the skills that will enhance their capacity to provide effective governance (Galutuke, 2017 This shows clearly that skills and capacity must be instilled as essential tools to achieve desired goals. After hearing opposing or diverse points of view on the same issue, one can attest that our schools and the education system are in a very deplorable state. This situation can be linked to a lack of awareness by the community and school governors regarding their respective roles in their children's education.

The fact that there was a lack of cooperation among school governors and that efficient SGBs were not providing any capacity to help the weaker ones was an indication of a lack of collaboration among SGBs. This was the fact that Mayntz (2003) advocates for governance to solve problems as a group outside of hierarchical structures. The data also revealed that not all governors participated equally in school governance matters, indicating that some SGB members were pseudo-partners. This goes against the principles of governance theory, which encourage stakeholder cooperation. Governance theory according to Chhotray and Stoker (2009) is the rules of collective decision-making in a setting where there are multiple actors and organizations where no formal control system can dictate the terms of the

relationship between these actors and organizations. These findings negate the principle of collective decision-making where some participants in governance are dormant members.

The governance philosophy promotes the use of group decision-making. Similarly, Chhotray and Stoker (2009) defined governance as "the rules of collective decision-making in a setting where there are multiple actors or organizations and no formal control system can dictate the terms of the relationship between these actors and organizations" (2009, p. 3). Chhotray and Stoker (2009) continued in this vein. According to Chhotray and Stoker (2009), governance aims to comprehend how we formulate group decision-making. In contrast to the hierarchical control

Concerning the community engagement approach, the data suggests that to a certain considerable extent, SGBs were able to involve communities and understood that parents have a significant role to play in their children's education. However, there were instances where school principals better-understood school governance, which showed a lack of collaboration between the school and the community. This is even though Fahmi Gadalla (2021) suggests that partnerships between the major players in education, such as school administrators, educationalists, parents, learners, and the community, may be one strategy to improve learners' academic practices. According to Fahmi Gadalla (2021), the common consensus is that education begins at home and that parents and teachers have different but complementary educational roles that must work together to be most functional and successful. This implies that the parties involved in education appreciate moral, academic behavior, and performance since it allows learners to grow in their education.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be noted that SGBs, who have a very important role to play in the quality of education in schools, lacked strategies to discharge this responsibility. Furthermore, it can be concluded that SGBS does not seem to collaborate effectively with stakeholders to pursue and promote quality education in schools. The fact that there were differing views between parent SGB members and school principals and EDOs, which are government employees, indicated that department officials better understand school governance. Yet the school governance is in the custodian of SGBs, of which parents are the majority. Therefore, this paper recommends that communities and schools form school-community partnerships and guidelines that will assist SGBs in developing strategies to enhance the quality of education in their schools. Also, the study concludes that to achieve effective governance SGB members must be capacitated to carry out their roles to provide qualitative education and increase learners' academic performance. Data for this study was collected from three rural secondary schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, hence the study is limited to the Eastern Cape Province. This limited the scope of the study to the Eastern Cape, one of the nine provinces in South Africa. A broader scope of the strategies adopted by SGB members to enhance the quality of education could be undertaken to cut across the nine provinces in South Africa in future research. Further study could be conducted to investigate training programs for SGB members to enhance their capacities to provide governance to support school development in Africa.

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