

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at giving an account of what the researcher undertook to do in this study. In this chapter it will be indicated whether the research problem(s) as stated in Chapter 1, paragraphs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, have been successfully solved. The aims of this study as outlined in Chapter 1 paragraph 1.3 was to investigate whether the educational changes as introduced since 1994 in the South African education system has lead to the adoption of the total quality management approach in schools. This study was also to investigate whether effective management of change can lead to the creation of quality or effective schools, and thirdly this study was aimed at determining how the school management teams can adopt total quality management as their operational philosophy to create quality schools and provide quality education. In this chapter the relationships between the statement of intent in Chapter 1 and the findings of this research study will be juxtaposed.

6.2 An overview of the investigation

This section seeks to give a short summary of all the preceding chapters.

Chapter 1 introduced the problem statement for this research project together with the formulation of the hypothesis. This section also reflected the aims of the research study and the methodologies employed. The research programme of the whole research undertaking was diagrammatically presented, discussed and all the important concepts in this research project were clarified.

In Chapter 2 the concept of total quality management (TQM) was fully explored and explained. From the various definitions given, it was clear that total quality management is an approach of continuous improvement of performance which ensures quality and increases productivity.

Chapter 3 dealt with the issue of change and its management. This chapter focused on determining whether the changes which were introduced since the inception of the democratic education system in 1994 were changes which were aimed at and are indeed bringing about continuous improvement in the new education system.

Chapter 4 dealt with the research design and the methodology used in capturing data. The questionnaire used in the collection of data was constructed. The steps followed in the construction of a questionnaire used in the collection of data were outlined. Permission to administer the questionnaires in schools was obtained from the Regional Director of Education in the Northern Region of the Northern Province Department of Education (see Annexure 4). Principals, Deputy Principals, Heads of Department and educators were asked to complete the questionnaires (Annexure 1). Questionnaires were sent to randomly selected schools, responses collected and data analysed through the SAS-statistical package and the results were tabled. Responses were analysed and interpretations made. Certain key statements from the questionnaire were analysed and interpreted (statements V8 – V19 and Tables 4.17 – 4.52).

In Chapter 5 a model and strategies for the implementation of TQM in schools were tabled. The requirements of a good model and the reasons why the model was recommended were also cited. The effectiveness of the model was also evaluated.

This sixth and final chapter seeks to conclude the first three chapters which dealt with the literature study and the analysis and interpretations done in chapter 4 as well as the development of the model in Chapter 5. Findings of this study, conclusions and recommendations for further research are now presented.

6.3 Findings of the research study

The problem statement in Chapter 1 was formulated in a question form and comprised of six questions (to follow hereunder). In order to address these questions, they were included in the questionnaires which were sent to the respondents. The same was also done with regard to the aims and the hypothesis. Questions incorporating the aims and hypothesis were also formulated and included in the questionnaires to which respondents were requested to respond

in writing. The results are indicated below, first those pertaining to the aims and the problem statement and then those pertaining to the hypothesis.

Responses were received from respondents and the data was extracted and converted into scores for the computer to do a grouping of similar responses. This data was analysed using the SAS-statistical package while the researcher did the interpretation. The results of the empirical study are indicated below. The questions with the responses from the empirical investigation are now presented:

- **Can the adoption of total quality management by schools lead to quality education and quality schools?**

Quality education and quality schools means education of the highest standards and this can only be offered by schools which also maintain a high standard of teaching. This question is similar to statement V13 on the questionnaire and the responses from respondents reflected that 92,72% of the respondents agree that schools which view quality highly and engage in continuous improvement of their performance will most probably be quality (effective) schools which offer quality education. The empirical investigation therefore confirmed the assumption that if schools are managed in a continuous improvement way, their total performance will also improve, thereby transforming them into quality schools which offer quality education.

- **How can school management teams adopt the total quality management approach as their daily operational philosophy so as to create schools of quality and provide quality education?**

This question is similar to statement V34 on the questionnaire which sought to gauge the principal's loyalty, dedication and commitment in leading change. Most respondents (79,1% in Table 4.31) view the principal's dedication, loyalty and commitment as good and this augurs well for continuous improvement to take off. Top management's commitment to total quality is crucial for its successful implementation. By embracing change as shown in the investigation (79,01%), the principal is in a better position to turn his school into an effective school which offers quality education in a total quality management approach. The model outlined in Chapter 5, paragraph 5.3.3,

should be his starting point in mobilising his co-workers to accept and implement continuous improvement.

- **How can the effective management of change lead to the adoption of total quality management in schools?**

The educational changes in the South African education system are planned and aimed at continuous improvement (TQM), an ongoing improvement process that must never be allowed to deteriorate. This question is similar to statements V20 – V27 on the questionnaire which were aimed at determining whether the changes as introduced since 1994 have brought about an improvement, in other words, whether they have led the education system to continuous improvement. The responses from the respondents ranged from 56,39% – 81,75% (Tables 4.17 to 4.24), all of them indicating that there are significant improvements as a result of all the changes introduced. The empirical investigation determined that despite problems in some areas (lack of provision of facilities and supply of water, electricity, writing materials and textbooks (Tables 4.29 and 4.30)), all do, however, concur that the changes wrought by the new education system did bring about some improvements although much still needs to be done.

- **How can the effective management of change and the adoption of total quality management by schools curb the movement of learners from one school to another?**

Total quality management (TQM) as a programme of continuous improvement encourages hard work and excellence which should be ongoing and never-ending. If schools can understand and implement it (as the South African Education Department wants all public schools to engage in continuous improvement programmes (Department of Education 2000 – 2004:2 – 3), then the exodus to other schools, be they private or former Model C-schools, will not be necessary because those schools which are regarded as the best schools are regarded as the best because of their continuous improving performance. What is needed in all schools, is total commitment to continuous improvement by both educators and learners. Statement V25 on the questionnaire hinted at this commitment to continuous improvement and 66,79% of the respondents (Table 4.22) indicated that the commitment to continuous improvement by

both educators and learners exists. The basis is therefore there and this needs only to be reinforced to reach the 100% mark and then the exodus will cease.

- **Does the adoption of total quality management by schools influence parental choice of schools for their children?**

All human beings want the best in life. Parents also want the best for their children. They prefer schools which will satisfy their needs and expectations. Schools with continuous improvement of their performance year after year, will always merit the attention of parents and learners alike. Engagement in total quality management will put a school on a higher level than others because it will always strive for continuous improvement of performance in all its aspects of schooling. This question can be likened to statement V8 on the questionnaire which asked respondents to indicate whether their school focuses on satisfying its customers. The response was 95,8% positive with only 4,17% respondents in disagreement. In other words, the empirical investigation also confirmed that schools which focus on satisfying the needs and expectations of their customers will always be preferred by parents and learners.

- **Since the introduction of educational changes in the South African education system in 1994, do we now have quality schools which offer quality education and have adopted the total quality management approach in South Africa?**

Statements V8 – V19 on the questionnaire requested the respondents to indicate whether their schools do have those qualities which characterise schools which are following the continuous improvement route. The response to statements V8 to V19, ranges from 62,21% – 95,8% indicating that there are schools which possess those qualities. The empirical research confirmed that as a result of the changes since 1994, there are schools which are becoming schools of quality, offering quality education.

- **Other findings** pertain to the research hypothesis which guided this study which stated firstly that the implementation of and commitment to total quality management ensures quality education and the creation of quality institutions and secondly, that the effective management of educational changes in the South African education system can help schools in implementing total quality management. The empirical study revealed that

commitment to continuous improvement of performance by both educators and learners has improved slightly (66,79%, Table 4.21) and that as a result of the changes there has been an improvement of 0,13% (1999), 13,7% (2000) and 2,5% (2001) on the overall performance of the grade 12-examination results for the past four years (Table 4.16). Although the improvement percentage is small, this reflects, however, that there is a relationship between the hypothesis and the findings of this study.

- This study further revealed that there is an acute shortage of facilities in most schools (lack of classrooms, libraries, laboratories and security fences). 48,85% of the respondents contend that the provision of the above facilities is worse with only 13,46% saying there is an improvement (better), whereas 38,69% say provision is the same as before 1994 (see Table 4.29). This study also revealed that the supply of water, electricity, writing materials and textbooks has not improved. 42,37% state that it is the same as before 1994, while 35,50% say that there is an improvement with 22,14% indicating that the supply is worse than before 1994 (Table 4.30). The Minister of Education in his Corporate Plan 2000 – 2004 (p 3 – 4) also confirmed this great backlog in infrastructure, further validating this empirical study.
- The study also revealed that there is a tendency of general absenteeism, indiscipline and tardiness amongst learners and educators. 28,68% of the educators (Table 4.23) and 35,71% of the learners (Table 4.24) see no improvement in attendance while 9,81% of the educators and 17,30% of the learners say the situation is worse than before 1994. This trend is worrying and should be remedied as a matter of urgency as it is alien to schools pursuing continuous improvement programmes.
- It also emerged from this study that there are shortages of top management personnel at schools in the region which may lead to lack of frequent monitoring of learner progress (as there are few HODs) which may ultimately lead to poor performance. Only 2,25% of the respondents were Deputy Principals, with HODs constituting only 20,60%. The study revealed that Deputies and HODs are in very short supply in the region (Table 4.14) (although most schools have been allocated Deputies and HODs in the new post provisioning supplied before the commencement of the redeployment process). The sooner this situation is remedied, the better for the implementation of total quality management.

Finally, from the above findings it is clear that the responses elicited from the respondents confirmed that the changes introduced in the South African education system are aimed at achieving quality education and turning all public schools into quality schools.

6.4 Limitations of this research project

This study could not establish what the opinions of school governing body members and learners were regarding their views on change as introduced since 1994 and whether these have brought about quality or continuous improvement. The questionnaire did not make provision for this. This was left for further research which might be conducted in future.

In the second instance, this research study was skewed because educators were over-represented at 59,99% as opposed to the management teams overall 40,45%. Principals who are at the forefront of change and TQM-implementation represent 17,60%, deputies 2,25% while HODs constitute 20,60%.

Finally, the model developed by the researcher in this research project still needs implementation to establish its effectiveness and viability.

6.5 Solutions of the problems and attainment of aims

Regarding the statement of the problem(s) (paragraph 1.2.1) and the hypothesis formulation (paragraph 1.4) and the aims of the research project (paragraph 1.3), the researcher holds the view that all the above problems, aims and hypothesis have been solved satisfactorily. In Chapter 5 a model for the implementation of TQM in schools was developed which management teams could employ in successfully implementing improvement programmes. The findings of the research undertaken tabled in paragraph 6.3 are an indication that the researcher succeeded in resolving the research problem(s).

6.6 Conclusions

In view of the findings in paragraph 6.3 above, the following conclusions are drawn:

Since the hypothesis of this study correlates with the research findings, total quality management is therefore the vehicle for changing to continuous improvement of performance. The empirical study confirmed what the hypothesis stated at the beginning of Chapter 1. The literature review also supported the view that continuous improvement is the only sure way to quality (paragraph 2.2.2).

The study also confirmed the hypothesis that educational changes in South Africa are aimed at bringing about improvement (paragraph 3.12). Respondents demonstrated that the changes introduced in South Africa brought about continuous improvement which further confirm the hypothesis.

It also emerged from the study that the provision of adequate teaching facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories and security fencing as well as the supply of water, electricity, writing materials and textbooks is at an all time low. 48,85% of the respondents state that the provision of facilities is worse than before 1994 and this may hamper the progress being made towards achieving continuous improvement unless this matter is urgently addressed. The findings also confirm what the Minister of Education in his "Call for Action" document said, *viz*, that the system of education is failing because in most schools "... there are still people who continue to attend decrepit schools, often without water or sanitation, electricity and telephone, library, workshop or laboratory" (Asmal 1999:3-4). The findings of the research project vindicated the above assertion.

Most respondents indicated that the policy documents and legislation have indeed reached their schools (77,16% – 94,92% of respondents in V46 – V50) but the problem lies in the implementation of the contents of the documents where only 81,20% of respondents indicated that the stipulations are being followed, with 18,80% indicating that they are not being followed nor implemented. A lack of supervision might be the cause, as the above-mentioned documents have been gazetted and passed as laws by the South African Parliament. The findings of the research project revealed that there is lack of supervision by education personnel, hence the deviation from policy documents and laws (18,80% not complying).

This is a cause for concern which needs immediate intervention by those charged with the responsibility to do so.

The study also demonstrated that although governing body members have received documents explaining to them how the South African Schools Act functions (86,38% respondents acknowledged receipt thereof), the implementation stage poses a problem to them. Only 72,77% of respondents indicated that the contents of the document in statement V53 are understood and implemented whereas 27,23% disagreed. This indicates that there are still schools whose governance is not up to standard as a result of a lack of knowledge on the part of the governing body members. Training should be increased to bring all governing body members on an equal footing. It is then that the governance of schools will be sound and all schools will be transformed into effective schools.

This study further demonstrates that the lack of healthy human relationships between the principal, staff, learners and parents and a lack of complete co-operation, teamwork amongst teachers, might have been caused in most schools by the redeployment process initiated by the Department to address equity. Only 71% state that there is a healthy relationship while 69% indicate that there is co-operative teamwork. For total quality management to occur, all educators in a school, the school management teams and the governing body must share and own the vision and mission of the school. Any reservation or compromise on the part of any of the stakeholders will render the whole process ineffective.

The above-mentioned conclusions were based on the findings tabled in paragraph 6.3. Some emanated directly and others indirectly from the literature study and the interpretation of the findings by the researcher.

6.7 Recommendations

In view of the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- All public schools in South Africa should engage in a continuous improvement programme – they should have Development Plans with vision and mission statements and always strive towards achieving the set goals. This should be obligatory. The Department should ensure that all schools have these and have to monitor this regularly.

- Education personnel, that is, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Chief Education Specialists, Curriculum Advisors and Subject Advisors should regularly visit schools to develop and evaluate the work done at schools. In other words, schools should no longer be no-go areas for education personnel and they should be more than welcome as they should work more closely with schools.
- The provision of facilities like classrooms, libraries, laboratories and security fences should receive first priority by government as a matter of urgency. The Department should ensure that first priority be given to those schools with no facilities and reduce the number of classrooms under trees and temporary shelters.
- The supply of water, electricity, writing materials and textbooks should be done speedily in advance. Failure to do this, more specifically regarding writing materials and textbooks, will render all efforts towards improvement useless.
- All laws governing education should be enforced. Failure to observe them should result in charges of misconduct levelled against whoever is guilty of contravening them.
- All educators should be committed to teaching all periods on all school days. Absenteeism without valid reasons should be viewed as misconduct and the remuneration of that particular day be deducted from the offender's salary.
- Attendance and punctuality by learners should be made obligatory (unless with valid reasons). Quality cannot be achieved if learners and educators absent themselves at will and do not arrive to school on time.
- Training for governing body members on various aspects of governance should be regularly conducted (eg financial management, disciplinary problems, misconduct and conflict resolution).
- Educators should be workshopped on change and the management thereof. Workshops on various other aspects of schooling should be conducted for all educators to equip them with various management skills for example conflict management.

- School management teams are to be trained on the performance of their roles and on other managerial skills. The success of change and TQM in any school is dependent on the ability of the school management team to spearhead this initiative. It is crucial that they acquire various skills including team management skills.
- Schools should be provided with deputies and HODs in accordance with their enrolment and post provisioning as a matter of great urgency. In the area of research there were still many schools with vacant HOD and Deputy Principal posts. Filling these posts will enable schools to function effectively and efficiently as all the departments in schools will have their respective HODs to run them.
- Common grade 12-examinations should be written nationally. The issue of provinces conducting different grade 12-examinations should be something of the past. One common grade 12-examination for the whole country should be conducted. Although a start has been made in 2001 with six subjects, namely English, Mathematics, Biology, Agricultural Science, Physical Science and Economics, this should include all the subjects.

6.8 Recommendations for further research

It is recommended that further research be conducted on TQM and outcomes based education in the South African education system.

The opinions and attitudes of learners and parents with regard to change and total quality management need to be investigated.

Evaluation of the proposed flowchart model needs further research regarding its applicability in practical situations.

6.9 Summary

Currently, more attention is paid to total quality management because it holds the promise to help schools transform into quality institutions. Expectations and needs of parents, stakeholders and organisations who will employ our students and citizens who depend on and

view today's youth as the leaders of tomorrow, have never been this high. On the other hand, the gap between those expectations and the perceived current school performance may never have been this low. Total quality management provides a comprehensive view of the continuous improvement process and change. The adoption and the implementation thereof in schools will change schools for the better, thus realising the needs and expectations of parents and stakeholders.

From the literature study and the empirical investigation of this study it emerged that changes in the South African Department of Education as introduced since 1994, are indeed transforming most schools into effective and quality schools. The call for quality is a call for schools to adopt the continuous improvement programme which will ensure continuous, ongoing and an un-ending process of performance and service delivery of the highest standard.

The relationship between the statements of intent and the hypothesis and the findings of this research study were highlighted. Findings of the research study were formulated and properly outlined. The limitations of the research were also highlighted and the conclusions drawn. Several recommendations were made and recommendations for further research were also given.

In conclusion, it must be stated that all the findings and recommendations made are aimed at bringing about positive contributions to all schools in particular and the South African education system in general.