

CHAPTER 4

THE EMPIRICAL STUDY RELATED TO CHANGE, SCHOOL CLIMATE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters an attempt was made through the literature review, to find out how the management of change determines school climate in Black schools. Masitsa (1995:111) asserts that the major challenge facing schools today is to establish and manage a teaching and learning culture that will create ideal conditions for teaching and learning to take place. This assertion is strongly supported by Mkhathshwa (1997:2) when he pointed out, on the day of the Culture of Learning and Teaching campaign launch at P.J.Simelane High School in Dobsonville in 1997, that “without a culture of learning and teaching and effective management, all our plans for economic growth, for job creation, a better life for all our plans for a better education system, will come to nothing”. In other words, effective management of change and the establishment of a positive school climate can help all South Africans to realise an ideal culture of teaching and learning.

4.2 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The Minister’s call for action, Tirisano in July 1999, placed increased pressure on all managers in the education system to facilitate and implement education policy and change. The South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996, provides for a uniform

system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools. Perhaps the most important function of an SMT in any public school in South Africa today is to manage change. Since 1994 almost every part of education has changed. Many people welcome the changes, but change is often very stressful. Change is challenging and rewarding. There can be no growth if there is no change. (Education Human Resource Management and Development, 2000:19).

The aim of the study is two folds. The researcher compares the groups of people in the sample, to ascertain whether there is a statistically significant difference in the motivation, culture of learning and teaching, tension and misunderstandings in schools and the effectiveness of the management of change on school climate and its effect on these people. It is furthermore hoped that the information gained from the study can be employed by future researchers to address the problem(s) identified in the present study. It is hoped that the findings of the study may assist in formulating education policy in the future.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Fraenkel (1993:342) empirical research is defined as research that involves asking a large group of people questions about a particular topic or issue (Neuman, 1997:229). Due to the limit imposed on the length of a research essay, the following research methods were used to collect data:

- **Quantitative Research** – involves description and data collection processes, research designs and statistical procedures that enable research in social sciences

to parallel closely the work of natural science researchers. These include questionnaires, interviews and observation. Such research follows the scientific method as far as possible in as much as it attempts to accurately and objectively research social factors. (Vockell, 1995: 192). In using the above methods the researcher obtains first hand information because it is easier to encourage the participants to be as honest and sincere as possible. This research instrument will enable the researcher to probe managers', educators', learners' and stakeholders' knowledge and competence regarding change in education. Nevertheless, the results of this instrument will be validated and checked against the responses on qualitative structured interviews and direct observations by the researcher (Le Compte, 1992: 68).

- **Qualitative Research** – In this research, the researcher experiences, inquires and examines phenomena. Qualitative structured interviews are conducted within the context of real lives of people (Le Compte, 1992: 743). People tend to reveal how they believe things should be, whereas what the researcher observes firsthand is more likely to reveal how things are. In this research method, participants who will best answer the research question are selected. The four parameters in data collection: the setting, the participants, the events and the process will be considered in the selection of the participants. The following components will be included in the research, namely, a heading, instructions to the interviewer, space for recording the interviews' comments and space in which the researcher records reflective notes (Creswell, 1994: 152). Recording minimises bias in the researcher's point of view. A synthesis of what participants tell and what the

researcher observes is imperative, as this will help make sense of data for both the researcher and the participants (Le Compte, 1992:743).

The purpose of using of using data collection is to seek additional information about the problems and needs identified in the research.

4.3.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Calitz (1998:14) as quoted by Lethoko (1999:109) states that questionnaires are conducted to collect information on an existing situation to obtain standards or norms with which existing situations may be compared. In this case a self-administered questionnaire is an instrument used to collect information from people who complete the instrument themselves – that is, each respondent receives a printed questionnaire which is filled in using a pen or pencil (Bourque, 1995:2).

4.3.2 ADVANTAGES OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires are administered to some sample of a population to learn about the distribution of a characteristic or sets of characteristics or a set of attitudes or beliefs (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:83). The most important fact is that in using questionnaires, researchers rely on the honesty and accuracy of participants' responses. If the researcher is available, it is easier to encourage the participants to be as honest and sincere as possible.

The advantages of a questionnaire are as follows:

- They are cost-effective in the sense that the researcher visits the school once only, there is no follow-up in most cases.
- The researcher is available to answer questions.
- The researcher can monitor communication between respondents.
- The researcher can also monitor completion of the questionnaire properly.
- There is a considerable degree of response rate – people are more likely to respond at a given time (Bourque & Fielder, 1995:9) as quoted by Lethoko (1999:110).

4.3.3 THE DISADVANTAGES OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

The following are the disadvantages of a questionnaire:

- There are some factors which one cannot control when dealing with questionnaires.
- Although one gets first hand and additional information, questionnaires are time consuming.
- The researcher visits the school once only, there lies a hole in the accuracy of the information.
- Only a small population is investigated therefore, information on only that small population can be used to draw conclusions on a large population.
- One cannot always rely on the words of other people, as it is difficult to tell when people are being honest and when they are not (Stair and Reynolds, 1999: 548).

4.3.4 INTERVIEWS

An interview is a face-to-face confrontation; it is an oral exchange between an interviewer and an individual or a group of individuals. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:385), there are a number of reasons why a researcher may decide to conduct interviews, for instance:

- a) To check the accuracy of – to verify or refute – the impressions gained through observation;
- b) To find out what is on the mind of the interviewees – e.g. – Management of change;
- c) To find out the things we cannot directly observe.

For the interest of this research, an informal interview was conducted in the schools that were visited during the research. This interview is sometimes called “an open-ended conversation interview” (Anderson, 1994:115).

The advantages of an interview are that one gets additional information; the interviewee is likely to give an honest answer; the best questions are asked to uncover the inherent problems of the researcher; it can be conducted over the telephone; it reveals important problems and opportunities that would be difficult to obtain using other data collection methods; and it allows the interviewer to ask follow-up or clarifying questions immediately (Stair and Reynolds, 1999: 548).

The disadvantages of an interview are: it is time consuming; it is expensive; and it requires a certain amount of skill and personality.

4.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique in research, applied repeatedly to the same object would yield the same result each time (Babbie, 1992:129). That is, if the same questionnaires were to be given to the same respondents after six months, the results could be either the same or show an improvement. An improvement in this case could mean that the respondent has learnt something from the first time that could lead to the effective management of change. The advantage in this research is that the researcher was always available to provide all the respondents with assistance during the completion process.

To ensure content validity the questions were designed within the framework of the relevant topic using four models. Some experts in the research field reviewed the questionnaire to judge the relevancy of each item; even so it is extremely difficult to set a question that everybody reads and interpretes in the same way (Grobler and Van Der Merwe, 1995: 15).

Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under discussion (Babbie, 1992:132). The questionnaire that was used was meant to determine how change is managed and the organisational climate that results from the implementation of change. The analysis, which follows, indicates that all stakeholders in education need to be trained about the changes in

education as well as the implementation thereof. The observations and interviews add to the validity of the questionnaire, because they confirm the results of the empirical analysis.

A detailed discussion of the various statistical techniques is impossible. Hence the discussion will be limited to the following:

- A discussion on the validity and reliability of the research instrument;
- A comparison of the independent groups by stating and interpreting the statistical tests involved;
- A comparison of the independent groups containing three or more groups by stating and analysing the appropriate statistical data.

4.5 RESEARCH POPULATION

The research population is the group of interest to whom the researcher would like to generalise the results of the study (Fraenkel, 1993:80). Researchers would prefer to study the entire population in which they are interested, however it is difficult to do so. It could be a time consuming and expensive exercise. For these reasons, the researcher has decided, instead, to use the Gauteng Province as a sample to study.

A sample refers to a group in a research study (Neuman, 1997: 202). One of the most important steps in the research process is to select the sample of individuals who will participate (be observed or questioned) as part of the study (Babbie, 1992: 106).

TABLE 1. (RESEARCH POPULATION)

RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
SMT (Principals, Deputy Principals and HOD's)	29.5%
MALES	40.9%
FEMALES	49.1%
UNDER 36 YEARS	41.0%
OVER 36 YEARS	59.0%
LESS QUALIFIED PEOPLE	65.9%
HIGHLY QUALIFIED PEOPLE	35.1%

In this research the subjects were drawn from the school management team (Principals, Deputy Principals, and Heads of Department), Educators, Parents and Students (School Governing Bodies) from the traditionally Black schools in the Gauteng Province. Altogether, there were 100 participants, from the Gauteng Province. The significance of using this group was to get the attitudes or beliefs of all stakeholders in education, towards change in education. Their responses would be used to determine how people from different levels of qualifications, age and gender, view the management of change in education.

Schools were visited in person by the researcher to distribute the questionnaires. After they were filled in, they were collected. Interviews and observations were conducted for the purpose of this research.

4.6 COMPARISON OF INDEPENDENT GROUPS

TABLE 2. (QUALIFICATION AND GENDER).

Qualification	Males	Females	Total Percentage
Highly Qualified	17,24	21,84	39,08
Low Qualified	22,99	37,93	60,92

When qualification and gender were compared, it was discovered that most of the participants who were highly qualified were females. This also shows that females were willing to give their opinions with regard to how change was implemented in schools.

TABLE 3. (POSITION AND GENDER).

Position	Males	Females	Total
SMT	6,74	22,47	29,21
Educators	16,85	25,84	42,70
SGB	15,73	12,36	28,09
Total	39,33	60,67	100%

With regard to position and gender, females now can be found in management positions. Before the new dispensation, it was considered that females were inferior to males even though they had the same qualifications. With regard to the position in SGBs, the feeling of male superiority still exists because most males are elected into governance positions. The issue of gender equity is still not totally accepted in the Black community.

TABLE 4. (QUALIFICATION AND POSITION).

Position	Highly qualified	Low qualified	Total
SMT	2,30	27,59	29,89
Educator	8,04	33,33	41,37
SGB	28,74	0	28,74
Total	39,08	60,92	100%

From the response of the above participants, it is evident that the traditionally Black schools have more female managers as compared to the apartheid era. Most members elected into the school governing body position, are not illiterate. Female educators still top males with regard to qualification. This shows that females value education more than males.

TABLE 5. (AGE AND GENDER).

Gender	Less than 36	Over 36	Total
Males	20,22	19,10	39,33
Females	20,22	40,45	60,67
Total	40,45	59,55	100%

With regard to age and gender, the highest number of respondents were the older generation, most of whom were females.

TABLE 6. (POSITION AND AGE).

Position	Less than 36	Over 36	Total
SMT	4,49	24,72	29,21
Educators	16,85	25,85	42,70
SGB	19,10	8,99	28,09
Total	40,44	59,56	100%

In the traditionally Black schools, management positions are held by the older generation. Older people are more respected because of their culture. Teaching is no longer a valued profession to the younger generation due to the changes occurring in education, e.g. redeployment.

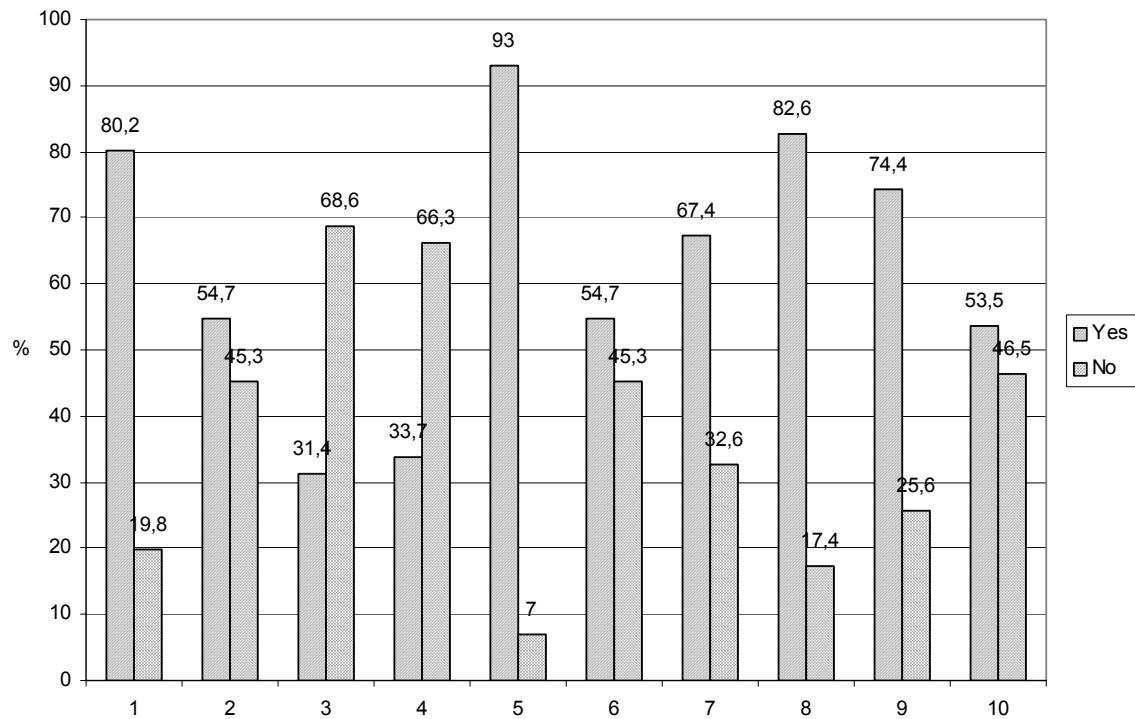
TABLE 7. (AGE AND QUALIFICATION).

Qualification	Less than 36	Over 36	Total
Highly qualified	21,84	17,84	39,08
Low qualified	18,39	42,53	60,92
Total	40,23	59,77	100%

When comparing age and qualifications, it is evident that the younger generation comes into the field of education being better qualified because the new dispensation requires a higher qualification for teaching than the one before.

4.7 MOTIVATION

Figure 4.1: The effects of management of change on stakeholders



These results indicate a very high motivation level from the participants, and a desire to perform a valuable service to society. Even though most had received training on the implementation of change in education, they still lacked information on the new changes of education, because training was done haphazardly in a short space of time. This is the reason why change is not accepted positively, leading to resistance to change and lack of co – operation.

From the above functions, the three most important functions existing in schools were listed in the following order of priority: (from one up to ten)

- The participants in this research feel that the implementation of change in education is priority number one, because if change is not implemented properly, the results are: lack of co-operation, strained relationships in the organisational climate, resistance and low morale.
- The second highest on their priority list is the co-operation of all stakeholders in education, as it promotes the implementation of change and goals can be attained through the participation of all. This promotes team spirit and a harmonious working climate.
- The third most important functions is based on motivation to carry out duties assigned but are hampered by lack of information. Lack of information is the major cause of misunderstandings and conflict in the school environment.

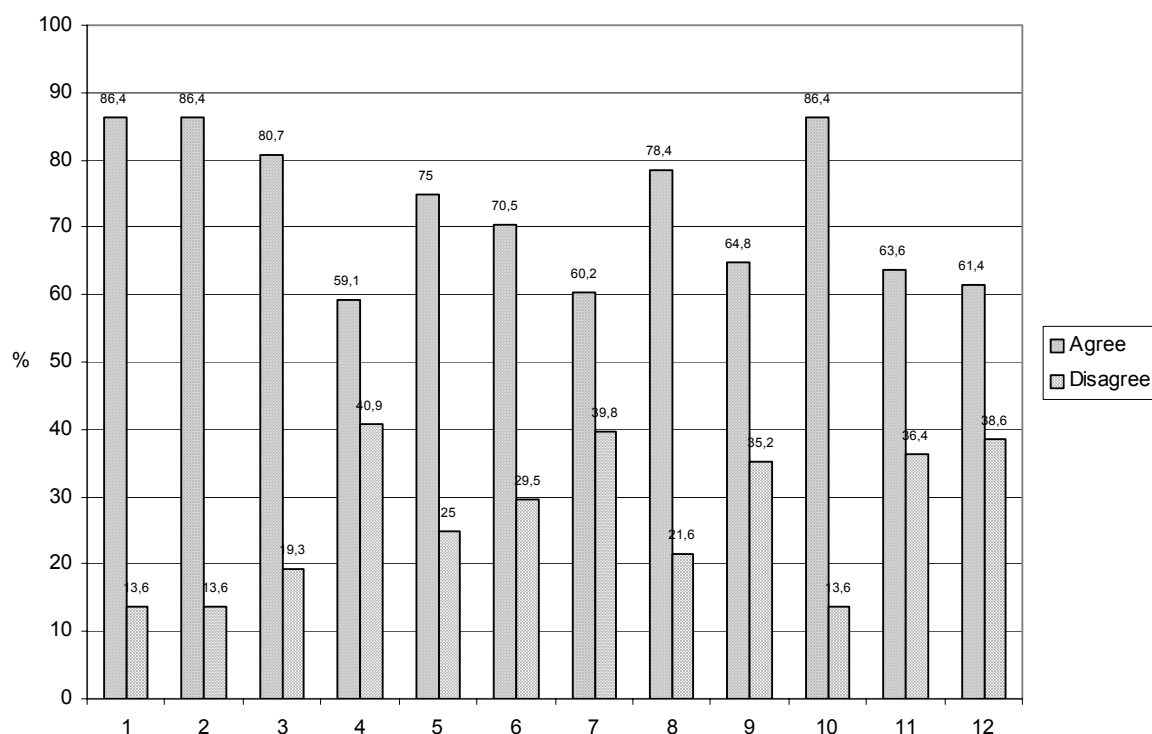
Other functions, which are of much importance to participants, are: to support the principal, educators and learners in the execution of their work, and the enhancement of education through the provision of resources needed. These are important for the upliftment of the culture of teaching and learning through the utilisation of resources to keep up with the changes of education. Overall the response towards motivation is positive because participants feel keen to work provided change is positively implemented. As can be seen in the table below, motivation scored 6.2 out of 10.

TABLE 8. (MOTIVATION).

NAME	CATEGORY	MEAN SCORE
POSITION	1 (S.M.T)	0,62
	2 (Educator)	0,63
	3 (S.G.B)	0,62
GENDER	1 (Males)	0,66
	2 (Females)	0,60
AGE	1 (Under 36 years)	0,61
	2 (Over 36 years)	0,63
QUALIFICATION	1 (Less qualified)	0,61
	2 (Highly qualified)	0,64

4.8 CULTURE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Figure 4.2: The culture of learning and teaching.



With regard to the reasons for the loss of the culture of learning and teaching, the following were cited as reasons:

- Lack of punctuality.
- Poor attendance and lack of commitment to educational issues.
- Strained relationships between stakeholders in education.
- Little praise as a reward for educators who perform well.
- Irresponsible stakeholders having a bad influence on people motivated to work.
- Abolishment of corporal punishment.

Participants feel that the above mentioned results hamper the implementation of change in schools because they lead to loss of culture of teaching and learning. When educators and learners absent themselves from school everybody concerned stands to

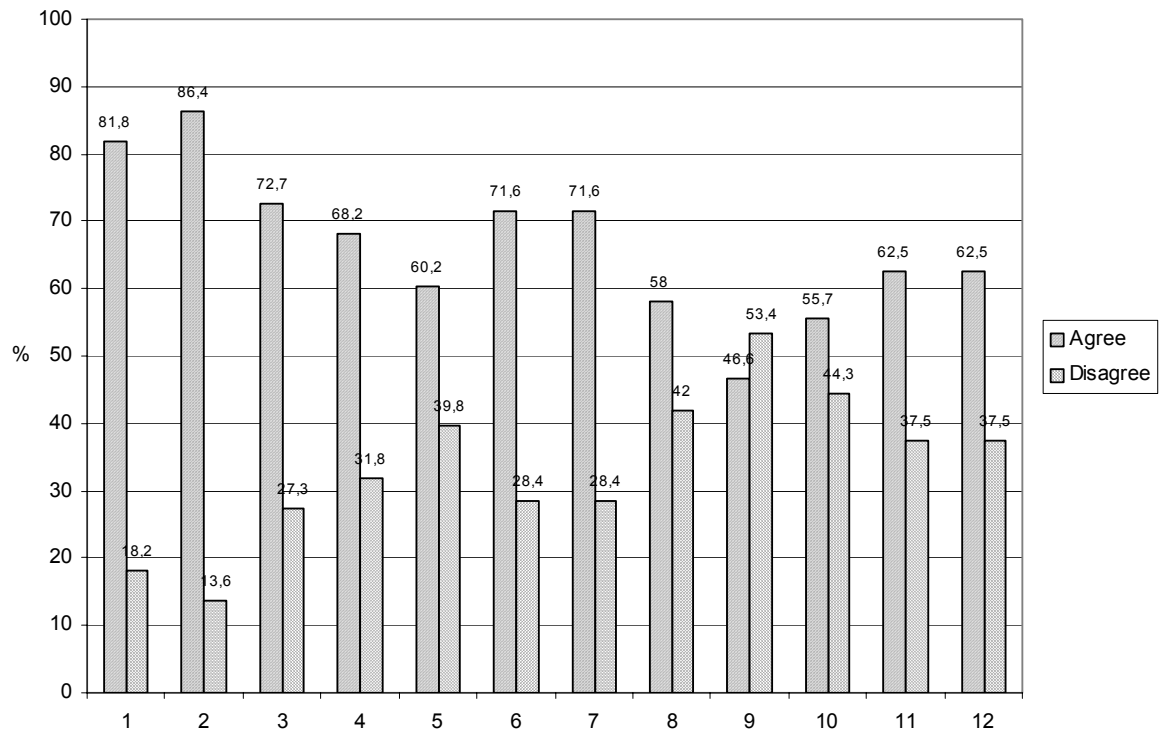
lose. People motivated to work are also discouraged because there is neither praise nor reward. The traditionally Black schools feel that the abolishment of corporal punishment left educators with nothing to discipline learners. Hence there are still some educators who still practice corporal punishment.

TABLE 9. (CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING).

NAME	CATEGORY	MEAN SCORE
POSITION	(S.M.T)	1.8
	(Educators)	2.0
	(S.G.B)	2.1
GENDER	(Males)	2.0
	(Females)	2.0
AGE	(Under 36 years)	2.1
	(Over 36 years)	1.9
QUALIFICATIONS	(Less qualified)	2.1
	(Highly qualified)	1.9

4.9 TENSION AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN SCHOOLS.

Figure 4.3: Tension and misunderstandings in schools.



This section concentrates on the power relationships in schools: relationships among principals and educators, educators and administrators, parents and school staff as well as students and educator. The respondents in this section gave the following responses:

- Management promotes effective teaching and learning.
- There are strategies that focus on change improving the quality of education.
- Management still lacks power to influence the course of events towards change.
- Stakeholders still experience uncertainty that leads to novel ways of doing things.
- Management is not confident about its role in the organisation.

Training given to management, provides strategies for the implementation of change in education, but management still lacks the power to influence the course of events, due to strained relations between members of the school organisation.

With regard to other types of relationships that exist among stakeholders in schools, respondents had to give three more types of relationships, existing in their schools.

The type of relationships given by most respondents at number one and two are:

- Teamwork and commitment to work, at position one.
- Involvement in workshops, and
- A clear vision and mission at second position.

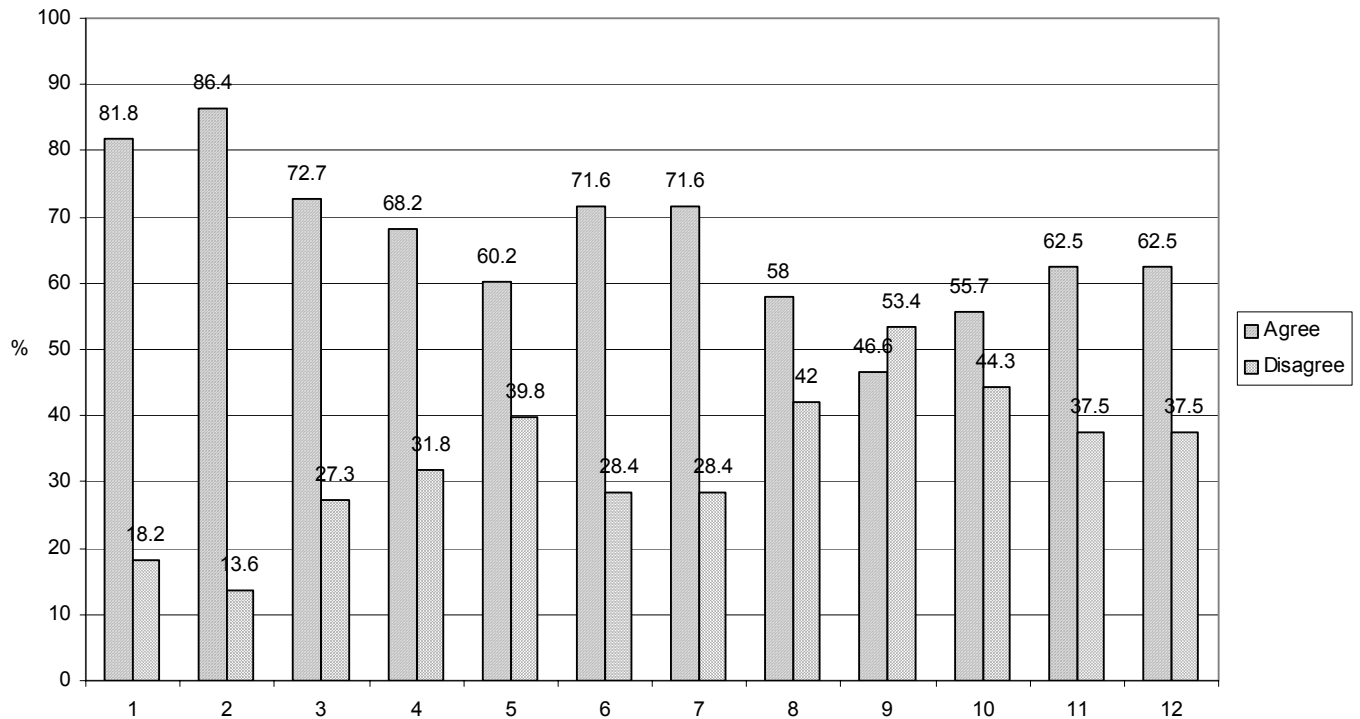
When there is teamwork, co-operation and attendance of workshops on the implementation of change, tension and resistance may be reduced and this may cut down on the time needed for change to be accepted.

TABLE 10. (TENSION AND MISUNDERSTANDING).

NAME	CATEGORY	MEAN SCORE
POSITION	(S.M.T)	2.2
	(Educator)	2.1
	(S.G.B)	2.3
GENDER	(Males)	2.1
	(Females)	2.3
AGE	(Under 36 years)	2.2
	(Over 36 years)	2.2
QUALIFICATIONS	(Less qualified)	2.2
	(Highly qualified)	2.1

4.10 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE ON SCHOOL CLIMATE

Figure 4.4: The effectiveness of the management of change on school climate.



This section will try to determine how the school climate contributes to the effectiveness of education during the management of change. The respondents in this section gave the following responses to the ten given statements:

School climate affects how well schools function. Community support is very important during the implementation of change, because it brings about a harmonious relationship, which leads to a positive school climate. A manager who creates a positive climate keeps the school staff working as a team and this improves the learning climate. Educators working in a positive climate are free to experiment and determine their own instructional activities.

On the whole, a greater number of samples still feel that there is still pressure to conform to the rules of the system, and that they were not free to determine their own instructional activities. The higher qualified tend to agree more strongly than the lower qualified. But this difference is not statistically significant on a 5% level of significance. The score for effectiveness is 1.8%. This is slightly stronger than the previous ones.

TABLE 11. (EFFECTIVENESS).

NAME	CATEGORY	MEAN SCORES
POSITION	(S.M.T)	1.8
	(Educators)	1.9
	(S.G.B)	1.8
GENDER	(Males)	1.7
	(Females)	1.9
AGE	(Under 36 years)	1.9
	(Over 36 years)	1.8
QUALIFICATIONS	(Less qualified)	1.8
	(Highly qualified)	1.9

4.11 CONCLUSION

The empirical research is used to complement the literature review which only gives the theories, whilst the empirical research gives the real picture of the situation.

Observing and talking to respondents gave the researcher the real experience of what happens in each school and how these people feel about management of change.

In this chapter an analysis and interpretation of some of the empirical data was undertaken. The construct validity of the research instrument was investigated by means of a four models, motivation, culture, tension and effectiveness.

From the research conducted it can be concluded that management of change determines school climate. Both of these constructs were shown to have construct validity and high reliability and could thus serve as a basis for measuring and developing the management of change as well as school climate.

In chapter five, a summary of the research will be given. Important findings will be discussed and recommendations will be made.