

4.5 Most important findings from the analysis of the data gathered by means of a questionnaire:

From the data collected by means of the questionnaire from principals of schools in South Africa, the following most important findings can be deducted:

- Gender inequality still prevails in principals' posts at primary schools.
- The majority of principals are between 40 and 60 years of age.
- The majority of managers have a B-degree and a teaching diploma as their highest academic qualification.
- The majority of the schools are larger than 700 plus learners.
- The majority of principals rated their current attitude as positive and their enthusiasm towards their job also as very positive.
- The majority of the principals evaluated their own competency towards staff development as average.
- The majority of the respondent principals have long range plans, but are only sometimes, or rarely, committed to these plans.
- Staff development is mostly done through workshops.
- The majority of the principals as respondents feel a need for their own further training and development in motivational theories, in maintaining discipline, in staff appraisal and in financial management.
- During the planning phase of whatever activities, most respondent principals only sometimes have alternatives.
- The majority of the respondent principals make use of a democratic or situational management style.
- The majority of the principals as respondents view delegating as an important aspect of staff development.
- The majority of the respondent principals only sometimes have good communication skills.
- All the respondent principals are sometimes good listeners.

- The majority of the principals as respondents experience commitment from their staff members as a problem for Capacity Building Programs.
- The majority of the principals hold staff meetings whenever they feel there is a need.
- The factor that influences decision-making the most, is the fact that the specific school is unique.
- The majority of principals consult their management team when they are in the process of policy-making.
- The majority of principals keep their staff's capabilities, interests, as well as training in mind when dividing the work.
- All the principals give appraisal for work done well by their staff members.
- The majority of the principals think that their staff members sometimes experience them as being sympathetic.

4.6 Most important findings from the formal interviews with selected principals in South Africa:

From the interviews held with selected principals, the following are the most important findings:

- The **qualifications** of the primary school principals selected in South Africa for this study are a matter of concern as the highest qualification of 40% of the principals that have been interviewed, is only a teachers diploma. Keeping the latter in mind, it is a matter of concern that 70% of the schools are large primary schools (more than 700 learners).

One of the principals said, "I started out as a novice at this school and worked my way up the promotion ladder to the position as principal. In order to achieve this position, further study or training was not a prerequisite. I would really like to see more in-service-training programs

their specific academic or school related subjects, but for me as a principal it is also very important to have a “healthy” personnel corps at my school. Personal and emotional issues, such as the ability to handle stress and cope with personality differences, to develop creativity, as well as the ability to manage conflict, are some of the issues that I as a principal address in workshops. If I don’t have the necessary knowledge, I get an authority in the specific area to speak to my staff members. I really think this is a method that works and I got positive feedback from my staff members in this regard.”

- **Financial management** (table 4.40) is another area of concern as some respondent principals indicated that they need further training and development in this management area.

One of the respondent principals said, “I must admit, I don’t know much about the financial aspects of my school. I am therefore very glad to have somebody competent on the school governing body to assist me in this aspect of school management.”

Another principal said, “A school’s financial management is very important and can no longer be managed as it has been in the past. The school can today be seen as a business, and should be managed accordingly. Salaries, facilities and the upgrading of school property are all part of the day-to-day management to ensure the smooth running of a school. Therefore the budgeting and financial management is of utmost importance for every school.”

- **Motivation** and a lack of commitment, as well as a lack of time by staff members, are problems that the respondent principals experience with regard to Capacity Building Programs. During the formal interviews conducted, the following tendencies with regard to staff development and motivation became evident as one of the principals said, “My staff is very young and has a lack of experience. I also feel that they are not as

motivated and committed as the staff members that have much more experience. They just don't make them the same as they use to."

Another principal said, " Problems that I experience in my school are that staff members don't see the "bigger picture". They are not self-motivated and lack an attitude of life-long learning. Therefore is it difficult to motivate them to attend seminars and workshops."

- The majority of respondent principals that have been interviewed are in agreement that sometimes one person needs to have the authority and one person to give the assignments. An **organizing** structure is always necessary for all school activities.

One principal said, " At my school I believe in committees for all activities, such as a sport-, social-, cultural- and academic committee. It works very well in my school. I must also admit that since we have introduced this committee system in the school, I have much less complaints to handle in the office. All the problems that may occur in a specific area are referred back to the committee. Only when the committee can't solve the problem, will the problem land on the desk of the principal. I have more time now to attend to other school matters."

- The response of the respondent principals was alarming on the question asked if they, as principals, think their staff members experience them as empathetic and as **good listeners**.

One principal said, " I must admit I am not a good listener at all. I know that this is something that I need to work on, but the staff know me like this." The researcher also felt that the principal was not really listening to her. He was talking and listening to people talking outside the office in the corridor and he would sometimes remark on something that staff members said outside the office, while the researcher was talking to him. Once he even shouted to one of his staff members to enter his office and

to repeat what has been said, because he didn't hear it clearly. This all happened while the researcher was in the office.

- The researcher asked the recently **appointed principals** what they saw as a need in their newly appointed posts. These newly appointed principals were unanimous in their responses, because they all felt that there should be a workshop/seminar in place for newly appointed principals. These workshops could assist newly appointed principals in their day-to-day tasks in order to achieve a smooth running school. What is important? What needs to be looked at? What is important to know as a newly appointed principal? What to do, and what not to do?

This latter response shows that there is a definite need for training for newly appointed principals.

4.7 Norwegian schools

4.7.1 Introduction

The Norwegian school system is in the midst of a thorough school-reform process, introducing new curricula at all levels and emphasizing that teaching should be perceived as a collective responsibility, not merely as an individual skill. Learning is considered a constructive activity, based on reasoning, reflection and action. Teachers are supposed to act as facilitators and to use teamwork to consolidate this new approach.

Local governments (municipal council and administration in the 435 municipalities) are responsible for compulsory education in public primary and secondary schools, for teachers employed in these schools, their salaries and for pre-school institutions. Local taxes and national funding provide the finances for these tasks. In Norway the education, as well as

the school materials, are free for everyone. The manner of implementation within the school system can differ from municipality to municipality and even from school to school

4.7.2 Fundamental principles and basic legislation

The overall objective of the Norwegian education policy is to provide equal opportunities for all, irrespective of sex, geographic location or economic, social or cultural background. This aim is to offer to all children an education that has been adapted to the abilities of the individual pupil.

The basic principles and priorities of Norwegian education are the following:

- A high level of education that benefits the entire population.
- Equal opportunity in the access to education. Equality is a value that is strongly emphasized within the Norwegian education policies. Education is seen as an important means, both on the macro and on the individual level, of promoting investment in human capital and employment.
- Decentralization.
- Meeting both the long-term and short-term qualification requirements of the labour market.
- More emphasis on a broad and general initial education, leaving specialization to the later stages of learning and to further training at work.

Increased knowledge and higher general and specific competence are guiding principles for educational planning and development on all levels of education. Attention is focused on the content and quality of education.

4.7.3 Compulsory education

Children start school in the calendar year they become 6 and finish their compulsory education in the calendar year they become 16. This means that the Norwegian compulsory education system covers both the primary and the lower secondary education.

4.7.4 Choice of school.

At primary and lower secondary level, the general rule is that pupils attend the public school in the area of the municipality where they live. Municipalities are divided into school districts. As some of these schools cover both levels of compulsory education, the learners complete their studies in the same school. In most areas, however, there are separate schools for the primary and lower secondary level. As there are more public primary schools, several of these schools serve as feeding schools for one specific lower secondary school.

In the upper secondary level, pupils have the right to apply for courses at any school in the municipality/county where they live, or in the neighbouring municipalities.

The primary stage: grade 1-6.

The lower secondary stage: grade 7-9.

There are three, three-year blocks in compulsory education: two in the primary and one in the lower secondary stage. These blocks are divided into grades 1-3, grades 4-6 and grades 7-9.

Teachers often teach the same class through a whole stage (and sometimes through two stages). Those teachers responsible for teaching

pupils in the same stage do the planning of the work in co-operation with each other.

4.7.5 School year.

The academic year for the whole education system starts in mid/late August and end in approximately mid June.

The school year for the primary and the lower secondary education consists of 38 weeks (190 days) for pupils and 39 weeks for teachers. The school week is five days long. The time spent by pupils at school varies from 20 hours per week in the first year, to 30 hours per week in the final years. The minimum total of hours that are annually spend for the six years at primary level, are fixed at 147 hours. For the three years of lower secondary school the minimum total is 90 hours per year.

In the primary and secondary schools there are often a holiday break of a week during the month of October. At Christmas there is a two week long Christmas vacation. In the winter/spring semester there are two main holidays with one week in February (winter vacation) and one and a half weeks during Easter. The year is divided into two semesters in primary and lower secondary schools with a summer holiday that lasts approximately 8 weeks.

After the researcher's visit to three selected schools in Bergen, she now wants to share her impressions and the information gathered about these schools.

4.8 A picture of schools in Bergen.

Bergen is known as “The city between seven mountains.” It has, however, also become the proud bearer of the name “The city between seven fjords.” Bergen is still Europe’s largest city with wooden buildings. The researcher’s first impression of this lovely city was that it is a beautiful city! Colourful wooden houses, mountains with snow – picture pretty to say the least.

Currently there are 27 600 pupils in public schools in Bergen and 1 400 pupils in private schools. In Bergen there is all together 63 primary schools (grade 1-7), 9 primary and lower secondary schools (grade 1-10), 16 upper secondary schools (grade 8-12) and 4 special schools.

4.8.1 Impressions of and information on schools visited in Bergen.

The researcher visited one school on an island. To get to the school one had to go by boat, a 20-minute trip. The school’s setting is beautiful, and her first thought was, “What a privilege it must be to be a pupil in this school.” The island has a population of about 20 000 people. There are 20 primary schools on this island. Some are very small with about 28 pupils in a school and some of the bigger schools have 230 pupils.

The first impression one gets when you arrive at the school is one of warmth and hospitality. It was a very cold day and inside the school’s staff room was a fire, burning friendly in the fireplace. During break the teachers were gathered around the fireplace in a relaxed manner, drinking coffee or hot chocolate while eating their sandwiches. In one corner of the staff room was a teacher, playing his guitar and singing softly. This staff room felt like a living room where the teachers came together as one big, happy family.

The school day in Bergen starts at 9:30 for the pupils and 8:30 for the staff members.

The schools are very well equipped and the number of classrooms varies. The classes are very small with a ratio of 1:15, and in some classes there are an assistant to help the teacher in the classroom. A number of smaller rooms are meant for group activities. A library, a gymnasium, as well as rooms specially equipped for teaching cooking, woodwork, pottery, sewing and natural sciences, are standard at all primary schools.

One of the other schools the researcher visited had a beautiful music room equipped with guitars, drums, two keyboards, a piano and six microphones for singing. The playground and sport fields are very small. There are no extra-mural activities organized by the school – pupils have to join clubs to participate in sport activities.

The classrooms in all the schools visited are very informal and a great deal of group work is being done during class work. In the primary school the pupils write no exams or tests. The pupils write their first exam in the lower secondary school at level 10. All assessments in the primary school are done through dialogue between the teacher and students. These dialogues last 45 minutes and took place twice a year. During these dialogues students are informed about their progress and failures and the work that needs their attention.

These above- mentioned dialogues are compulsory and are based on equality and openness. Pupils may also ask questions during these dialogues and if there are any problems, these problems are solved at the lowest level – most probably in the classroom.

Dialogues are confidential and based on a relationship of trust. These dialogues guide the teachers and give them new insight/vision and perceptions on the current situation and problems that may occur in the

classroom. During these dialogues pupils may comment on the teachers' teaching methods. By really listening to the students, the result of this method is that teachers may understand their teaching practices better, and may start using new teaching methods.

The students' evaluation of their teachers during this process may lead to quality improvement.

Something very interesting, is the fact that each pupil has a logbook. They write comments in these books after the lessons, indicating which methods of teaching they would prefer, and what they found interesting, or boring, about the lesson. These logbooks are then handed over to their teachers for their comments.

In the school the emphasis falls on taking responsibility for your own learning. This process empowers students, as well as teachers. The aim is a better learning environment for students, as well as a better environment for teachers. There has been a movement away from an "I school" to a "we school" where teamwork and project work is stressed.

What really made an enormous impression on the researcher was the fact that the schools that she has visited were very informal, relaxed and hospitable, but where good discipline was maintained by the teachers, as well as by the students.

4.9 Similarities and differences between some selected schools in South Africa and Norway:

According to the research findings the researcher will firstly indicate the existence of similarities and there-after the differences which might exist

between some selected schools in South Africa and in Norway with regard to Capacity Building and School Management Development.

4.9.1 Similarities:

The research findings revealed the following similarities between schools in South Africa and in Norway with regard to Capacity Building and School Management Development:

- All the respondent principals rate their current attitude towards their job as positive.
- Some of the selected principals also have a problem with conflict management, financial management and facility management.
- The majority of selected principals make use of a democratic management style.
- All the selected principals communicate the Capacity Building Programs through circulars and staff meetings.
- A lack of commitment by the staff members, as well as a problem with the availability of sufficient time, are problems that the respondent principals experience with regard to Capacity Building Programs.
- The respondent principals themselves have a need for further training and capacity building in the following management areas:
 - Staff appraisal
 - Conflict management
- Planning, as well as the priorities during the planning process, is very important.
- Respondent principals consult other people when planning.
- During the policy making process the respondent principals consult their staff members and management team.

- Values and beliefs, school environment and the fact that the school is unique, are very important factors that influence the decision-making process.
- All the respondent principals think it is important to divide the work, keeping in mind the staff's capabilities and interests, as well as training. All these principals keep the latter in mind when organizing.
- All the respondent principals always view delegating work as an important tool for staff development.
- All the respondent principals say that they give staff appraisal when work is well done.
- All the respondent principals have an open door policy.
- The question was asked how the principal think his staff members experience his empathy, and the majority of respondent principals said that their staff members sometimes experience them as empathetic.

4.9.2 Differences:

- The majority of the selected schools in Norway's principals are female.
- The majority of respondent principals are in the age range of 51 – 60 years.
- All the respondent principals have longer years of experience: between 6-15 years in their current positions as principals.
- In general the majority of respondent principals have higher academic qualifications which vary from a B-degree to a Masters-degree.
- All the selected schools in Norway are much smaller – the number of learners varies from 100 – 500 learners.
- The number of staff members is much less as result of the school size as mentioned above.
- The Norwegian schools system does not make use of governing bodies.

- The majority of respondent principals evaluate their competency towards staff development, as well as managing change as good.
- The majority of respondent principals know how to motivate their staff members.
- The majority of respondent principals determine the need of their staff members through observation and hearsay.
- Staff development is done through in- service- training and seminars.
- The respondent principals themselves have a need for further training and capacity building in the following management areas:
 - Time management
 - Management of facilities and resources
- All the management teams at the selected schools consist of 5 managers.
- All the respondent principals said that an organizing structure is sometimes necessary for all activities at their schools.
- The majority of respondent principals feel that rarely, or never, one person should have the authority and one person should give the assignments.
- All the respondent principals always have a good relationship with their staff members.
- The majority of respondent principals hold staff meetings every month.

4.10 Critical perspectives on the empirical investigation

The researcher acknowledge with regard to the statistical issues of this research, that a very low number of schools both in South Africa and in Norway have been included in this survey. The reason why so few schools have been consulted were the following:

- a) The researcher acted on the advice of both supervisors to include only 13 schools in the survey.

- b) Practically it is difficult to establish quality time for interviews even at the included schools – due to the time constraints of the principals and the researcher.
- c) The researcher was of the opinion that the information gathered at these schools was adequate to get a feeling and clear picture of capacity building of these schools.
- d) She spent 2 hours on average per school for the qualitative interviews.

4.11 Conclusion

All the respondent principals in South Africa, as well as Norway, have a very positive attitude towards their job. Values and beliefs, school environment and the fact that the school is unique, are very important factors and influence the decision-making process at schools in both South Africa and Norway.

All the principals have an open door policy and view delegating as an important tool for staff development – keeping in mind the staff's capabilities and interests, as well as training.

The respondent principals themselves have a need for further training and capacity building in both South Africa and Norway in the following management areas, namely staff appraisal and conflict management.

The tendency in South African primary schools is that most of the principals are male. In Norway the majority of principals at the selected schools, were female. The academic qualifications of the selected principals in Norway are higher than their counterparts in South Africa.

The selected schools in Norway are much smaller and the number of learners varies from 100 – 500 learners.

All the selected primary schools in Norway are very well equipped with gymnasiums and rooms specially equipped for teaching cooking, woodwork, pottery and sewing. They also have well equipped natural science laboratories.

The Norwegian schools' emphasis falls on taking responsibility for your own learning. This process empowers students, as well as teachers. The aim is a better learning environment for students, as well as a better teaching environment for teachers. There have been a moving away from an "I school" to a "we school" where teamwork and project work are stressed. This latter mentioned fact is definitely something that South African schools can strive to achieve, that is to empower our students and teachers.

In the next chapter the researcher will give some guidelines for specific capacity building areas that needs to be addressed according to the questionnaire and formal interviews.

Major needs	Minor needs
Staff development (SA)	Curriculum development (SA & Norway)
Classroom management (SA)	Staff development (Norway)
Classroom management (SA)	
Financial management (SA)	
Methodological theories (SA)	
Staff working discipline (SA)	
Staff appraisal (SA & Norway)	