

CHAPTER 6

OVERVIEW, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 An overview of research

As we move into the twenty-first century, there is a need for principals to be competent and effective in managing their schools. If South African schools want to break decisively with its past and implement its vision for a new education system, which has the improvement of teaching and learning at its heart, it will be necessary to draw on aspects of the following three resources:

- first, to develop structures and systems appropriate to develop decision-making within the content of new policy legislation
- second, to develop the leadership skills needed to manage people, lead change and support the process of transformation
- third, to develop individual and team competencies – the understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes – appropriate to the day-to-day management of education

By making use of a literature review, the important aspects of education leadership and components of capacity building are stressed. The empirical study determines in which areas of capacity building there exist a need for further development at different primary schools. This research tries not only to determine how principals and school management, through capacity building, motivate themselves and their staff members and encourage them to produce work standards of excellence, but also to encourage them to personal higher education aspirations.

A study between some selected primary schools in South Africa and Norway will be conducted to determine if there are any similarities and differences between the management of schools.

Chapter one dealt with the following aspects:

- Orientation
- Problem statement
- Aims and objectives
- Research methods
- Clarification of concepts
- Research program

Educational leadership is described in **chapter two**. Too many schools are overmanaged and underled. Therefore, in chapter two, a high priority is placed on the meaning of effective leadership, managerial roles, leadership for improvement in schools, new leadership values and successful communication for school leadership.

Chapter three addresses suitable components for capacity building and in the first section of the chapter the researcher refers to the report of the Task Team on Education Management Development (1994).

An important element in the capacity building process is joint decision-making which steers empowerment. Capacity Building Programs, as well as capacity building quality contributors, are also addressed in this chapter.

Other components are school performance, change and Educational Management Development. These are concerned with the search for quality schools.

Chapter four focusses on an empirical research that involves asking questions to some selected principals, as well as other school managers. Questions about a particular issue or component of capacity building were asked.

This chapter includes:

- The most important findings from the empirical survey
- a study of Norwegian schools
- a picture of schools in Bergen
- similarities and differences between selected schools in South Africa and Norway with regard to Capacity Building and School Management Development

Chapter five attempts to point out the necessity of competence and to determine the major and minor needs for Capacity Building in selected South African and Norwegian schools. This chapter provides guidelines on how to go about building capacity in schools.

6.2 Addressing the research problem

In **section 1.3** of **Chapter one** the problem that guided this research were formulated as follows:

- **What are the most important leadership skills and capacity building components needed for effective leadership in the school management team that would lead to an overall improvement in the school system?**

- Which management areas will be identified through an empirical study as problem areas in the current primary school system of South Africa and Norway?
- Are there any similarities and differences between primary schools in Norway and South Africa?

Evidence from the literature study points out that important leadership skills can be learned mostly from experience, reflection, observation and dialogue, as well as from exemplary practices (Chapter two, 2.4). There are three facilitator styles recommended for leadership and school improvement namely: responders, managers and initiators (Chapter two, 2.5). Successful communication is also an important aspect for school leadership.

Effective communication includes written, verbal and nonverbal communication, listening skills and methods of evaluating whether the communication is effective (Chapter two, 2.8).

Suitable components for Capacity Building is addressed through referring to the report of the Task Team on Education Management Development (Chapter three, 3.3.1-3.3.5). Managing change is also an important component in Capacity Building that can eventually lead to school improvement (Chapter three, 3.4.1).

Another important component of Capacity Building is the joint decision-making process which steers empowerment. The more power that is given away, the more powerful leaders become. If principles themselves are not empowered in school management functions, it follows that they cannot share what they do not possess (Chapter three, 3.5).

According to the empirical survey the respondent principals in South Africa have a need for training and capacity building in the following management areas:

- Staff development
- Motivational theories
- Listening skills
- Managing change
- Financial management
- Maintaining discipline
- Staff appraisal
- Conflict management

Management areas in selected primary schools in Norway that needs to be addressed are:

- time management
- staff appraisal
- conflict management

Comparisons between some selected primary schools in South Africa and Norway were drawn. See **chapter four 4.9** for similarities and differences between schools in Norway and in South Africa.

6.3 Attainment of aims and objectives

Referring back to **chapter one section 1.4**, the aims and objectives for this research is stated.

The aims and objectives of this research project have been achieved:

- The importance of Capacity Building has been addressed in **chapter three**.
- The meaning of effective leadership has been discussed in depth in **chapter two**.
- The nature of changes that are effecting schools have been discussed, as well as how these changes should be managed by empowered principals.
- Finally, **chapter five** contains guidelines for School Management and School Management Development as well as Capacity Building for principals of schools that would lead to school improvement and ultimately to more effective schools.
- The resemblances and differences between some selected schools in South Africa and Norway have been identified in **chapter four**.

6.4 Shortcomings of the research project.

Like any other study in the human sciences, this project does not claim to be an authority in this field, but gives probabilities in Educational Leadership and Capacity Building as School Management Development in education. Nevertheless, there are limitations that stem from the course of the research.

For instance, this study was limited to principals and deputy principals, whereas other stakeholders, such as the school governing bodies, are also important in the recognition of competence, empowerment and capacity building.

As previously mentioned in **chapter four**, the researcher acknowledges with regard to the statistical issues of this research that a low number of schools, both in South Africa and Norway, have been included in the empirical survey.

This, however, does not mean that this research project is not valid and reliable.

6.5 Motivated recommendations with regard to Capacity Building and School Management Development.

The following aspects can be included under this heading:

- Leadership in schools calls primarily on intangible human qualities

Leadership styles and leadership skills, as well as personal characteristics, are very important and are linked to important and desired outcomes. Leadership qualities such as ethical commitment, risk taking, self-knowledge, character, courage and a long-term vision are important for school leadership in a current changing school system in South Africa. Leaders, in order to be effective, must have integrity. No matter how well a person communicates, nor how inspirational that person is, over a period of time, lack of integrity will ultimately bring his/her downfall. School leaders should have passion. They should know how to present things in a compelling way. The opposite of fear is courage and thus leadership in schools should take heart and deal with change in schools.

- Leadership by empowerment

Highly successful leaders have a capital view of power and authority. They spend it to increase it. They have learned the great leadership secret of power invested: the more you distribute power among others, the more you will get back in return. Teachers need to be empowered to act, to be given the necessary responsibilities that release their potential and make their actions and decisions count.

- Staff development

Courses in teacher leadership, human relations and group processes become crucial in educating teachers for empowerment. Principals should know their staff members well because not all staff members are interested in empowerment. Some teachers avoid leadership and dislike power.

Increased participation of staff is a powerful means of improving the quality of staff performance due to enhanced ownership. Democratizing schools and empowering teachers imply that the schools' structures need to change to allow for greater participation. Structures need to be designed to promote empowerment through participation. The school organization should be structured in such a way that hierarchical differences are deminished and that teachers are given professional autonomy and collegial involvement in decision-making.

Delegation is another powerful tool for staff development. Principals, who cannot delegate, cannot get the best input from their staff members. It is often difficult for principals to "let go" and delegate responsibilities to teachers. Skilled principals, however, have saved themselves much time and create a tremendous sense of ownership by practicing delegation.

If principals pay careful attention to the teacher's talents and interests when matching the teacher to the task, teachers are empowered. Principals should convince staff members that they are valued and their contributions are appreciated.

Principals have to remember that the more power they transfer, the more powerful leaders they will become.

In-service-training is seen as an indispensable contribution of principals towards the development of teachers. In-service-training creates the opportunities to break down the isolation among staff members, build new networks, develop self confidence, expand subject knowledge and educational knowledge and to involve teachers in projects to give them opportunities to take part in organizational matters and to have access to the decision-making process.

The major challenge facing principals in teacher empowerment, is the shift from being the sole authority figure to sharing authority with others in the school.

- **The importance of listening**

Management Training

The ability to listen and understand is one of the most important skills of an effective school manager. There has been a significant move away from a task-oriented approach to a people-oriented approach in modern management. In many ways listening is the most crucial of all communication skills, yet it is probably the most neglected. Listening should not be confused with hearing. Hearing is merely a physical process of perception, whereas listening is a complicated process of absorbing, judging and acting upon what is heard. If principals only hear others, they may ignore valuable suggestions, new ideas, opportunities to avoid mistakes and particularly the problems and frustrations experienced by their staff members. When principals really listen to their staff members, they will be able to extend their knowledge, improve

interpersonal efficiency and strengthen their powers of understanding and persuasion.

- **Financial management**

The aspect of financing public schools highlights the principal's role in managing the finances of the school in an effective and efficient manner. The South African Schools Act has therefore in essence changed the role of the principal with regard to school financial management as an important aspect of overall management of the school. Since financial management in schools is a relatively new concept in the majority of South African schools, it may be vital that training programs are implemented and advice is given to principals and prospective principals. Blanchard, Lovell & Ville (1989:99) echo this view when they mention that the rapidly changing role of the principal goes without saying that training is essential and vital. Without the necessary training any new system is threatened with failure.

- **Management Training**

Organizational problems are indeed complex and principals often lack the necessary management skills to lead effectively and to foster organizational commitment. Management training with the emphasis on acquiring leadership expertise and skills should become available to school principals.

At present principals are expected to manage their schools effectively, although little has been offered to them in terms of appropriate high-level management training or even basic management training. This deficiency needs to be addressed without delay.

6.6 Further research

7. Bibliography

This research project is not an end in itself, but opens up room for further research. Further research projects can be carried out in the following aspects of Education Management:

1. The need for vertically

- 2. - How the changing education system in South Africa affects the role of the principal.
- 3. - By means of an empirical survey one of the main problems that was identified as being very serious is the maintaining of discipline within the current education system where corporal punishment has been banned.

6.7 Conclusion

Recognition of competence and the importance of Capacity Building and School Management Development are of prime importance in a fast changing educational system.

The principal occupies a unique leadership position and exercises influence in structural, operational and instructional matters in the school. What is achieved in the school in terms of the quality of education, will invariably depend on the crucial leadership role of the principal and his ability to foster organizational commitment among the staff, learners and parents.

Therefore School Management Development and Capacity Building is important for school leaders in order to attain work standards of excellence.
