The impact of effective management on quality education in South African public schools

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the effective management in public schools in South Africa and the impact this may have on quality education. An investigation into what is regarded as effective management is done and looks at the different role players that are responsible for a school's management. In this study the primary focus was principals. The concept of quality education was also investigated and other elements that could influence the outcomes of quality education was discussed. This study also looked at the major projects and studies currently being done to investigate school effectiveness.

Research questions and objectives were formulated through an extensive literature review and research data was collected by means of a quantitative research method. The responses were analised by means of statistical methods and the findings discussed, which included some major findings about the link between non-monetary inputs, socio-economic conditions of learners and the teacher-learner ratio's that have an impact on the quality of education given to learners. Based on these findings, recommendations for principals were made to increase the effective management of schools, as well as recommendations for further studies.

KEYWORDS

Effective management

School effectiveness

School management

Quality education

Public schools

Principals

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The Department of Education (cited by Van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008: 221) has said that there has been a tendency in the past decade "to regard school principals as solely responsible for leadership and management of schools", but this viewpoint is now being changed to include all stakeholders in the education system as being responsible for leadership and management in schools. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008: 221) go on to mention that there has been a move towards site-based management and its associated management approaches.

Moloi (2007:464) has said that many daunting challenges are emerging in South Africa since 1994 and these challenges have raised questions on how the education of learners is best managed. Moloi (2007:467) also mentions that "there is limited material on the management of teaching and learning", but that the awareness of the importance of it in South Africa has increased.

The General Education System Quality Assessment Report done by the Department of Education in 2013 has said that in recent years they have seen a worldwide shift in focus from education quantity to education quality and most relevant in South Africa. The Department of Education (2013) cites Hanushek and Woessman by saying that "internationally, research has emphasised that quality education is more important for the country's economic development and individual life chances than merely the amount of schooling attained". Many countries in Africa have made schooling more accessible in recent years, but the low performance on standard assessments have raised a debate on whether these expansions in education quantity have led to deteriorations in education quality (Department of Education, 2013). The Department of Education is of the opinion in this report that "virtually all children of primary school-going age are now enrolled in school. But numerous local and international surveys conducted over the last decade or so have shown that the majority of these children are seriously underperforming in basic literacy and numeracy" (Department of Education, 2013:21).

1.2   Categories of public schools in South Africa

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (cited by Hansraj, 2007) makes provision for 2 categories of public schools, namely section 20 and section 21 schools. Section 20 of the Act outlines the "Functions of all governing bodies". This will be discussed in more detail in the literature review.

Section 20 is the term used when referring to those schools that have not applied for section 21 status and they are known as section 20 schools, but more appropriately as Non-section 21 schools (Hansraj, 2007). These schools need to present the Department of Education with a budget and they will receive an allocation in terms of the Resource Targeting List and purchases will be made against the budgeted items (Hansraj, 2007).

Section 21 schools may be allocated further functions if the school has shown that it can perform these functions effectively. Hansraj (2007) is of the opinion that these schools are synonymous with self-managing or self-reliant schools. These functions will also be discussed in detail in the literature review.

1.3   Problem statement

The Department of Education (cited by Moloi, 2007:470) has acknowledged that "existing management and leadership training has not been cost effective or efficient in building management and leadership capacity, skills and competencies for the transformation process or in enabling policies to impact significantly on the majority of schools".

Numerous studies like the SACMEQ Project and NSES have found that South Africa's rate of attainment in education is among some of the lowest compared to other middle-income countries. National averages of 30-35% on tests of numeracy and literacy can be seen in both the NSES and the ANA evaluations, which is much lower than the grade appropriate performance as a 50% score (Spaull, 2012).

1.4   Purpose of the research

The practice of regularly reporting educational statistics is important to tell if an education system is improving or deteriorating over a specific period of time. This is necessary for accountability purposes, as well as being able to identify what does and does not work. This is applicable especially in developing countries where it is possible for large changes in educational outcomes to occur in a single decade (Spaull, 2012).

The purpose of this research is to determine what is effective management, especially in the perception of principals of schools and if this has an effect in the quality education that is provided to learners.

1.5   Research questions and objectives

From the literature review it was seen that a great deal of previous research has addressed the many questions that stem from the South African education system. However, for the purpose of this research, the research questions and objectives have been narrowed down to specifically determine:

- what impact a school's management has on the effectiveness of a school;
- if there are other factors that could influence school effectiveness;
- if there are other factors that could influence the outputs of quality education;

For the purpose of this study, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

- Is there a correlation between education of principals and their schools' effectiveness and do they participate in constant training and development?
- Are principles aware of constant projects being conducted on school effectiveness and do they know what their objectives and goals are?
- Do the socio-economic conditions of learners impact the school's effectiveness?
- To what extent does the government have an impact into how effectively a school is run?

- Do the teacher-learner-ratio and non-monetary inputs have in impact into how effective management runs a school?

1.6   Research design

1.6.1 Research approach

The study is based on a quantitative research approach and was conducted with field surveys with structured questions. This was used to ensure that the right statistics were gathered to effectively determine the viewpoint of participants. Primary data was used to determine the viewpoint of principals and secondary data was used to compare the current findings with previous studies in the past and to determine if viewpoints have changed since the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Statistical analysis was used to describe the findings.

1.6.2 Research method

1.6.2.1 Literature review

The sources that will be consulted include:

- Journals (South African Journal of Education)

- Internet

- Acts and other legislation

1.6.2.2 Research participants

The target population included principals in public schools in South Africa and a sample was taken out of every province.

1.6.2.3 Measuring instrument

Measurement took place in the form of questionnaires (Annexure 2) based mainly on the Likert Scale with responses based on agreement. This scale enabled me to find correlations between attitudes and viewpoints of the participants. The questionnaire also included categorical questions based on gender, age, race, qualification, productivity and job satisfaction.

1.6.2.4 Research procedure

Questionnaires will be sent out to the chosen sample participants via e-mail and received back via e-mail.

1.6.2.5 Ethical considerations

Protection for the identity of the participants was ensured. Detailed information was given about the content and specific reasons and objectives of the study were given (Annexure 1).

1.7 Limitations of the study

As this study was conducted on public schools around South Africa, the first limitation was the time and financial constraints. The questionnaires needed to be submitted via e-mail and also returned in the same manner. As mentioned previously some schools, especially in the rural areas, do not have access to these facilities. It came to light in the literature review that there are a number of factors influencing the quality of education learners receive and their ability to learn within the classroom, such as non-monetary inputs and the learners' socio-economic conditions.

The second limitation, coupled with the above time and financial constraints, was the geographical area that needed to be covered. Although a sample size was taken of schools around South Africa, a bigger sample size could be taken.

The third limitation, and what could have contributed to the data not being completely reliable, was human pride in answering the questions stated. Although the anonymity of the participants was guaranteed and kept strictly confidential, there can be some participants that answered the questions based on self pride.

Thirdly, due to time constraints only principals were approached for the purpose of this study. However, the management of a school includes other members, like the School Governing Body and heads of departments.

Lastly, the study was conducted only by means of responses received through a questionnaire and it came to light from the literature review that what happens in the classroom itself, is one of the determinants of the outcomes of quality education. Although this study is focused on the effective management within South African public schools, observations and interviews could have been another measuring instrument. However, this research method was not included due to time and financial constraints.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

Constant surveys and projects like the SACMEQ project and the NSES are being conducted to determine the level of literacy of South African scholars and then compare this to other countries. According to Taylor (2011) South Africa's rate of attainment of levels of education is high compared to other middle-income countries over about 11 years. After that, from 12 years onwards, South Africa's rate of attainment is among the lowest. Where access to education is concerned, South Africa is doing well in primary and secondary phases, but very poorly thereafter. Many of the problems in the higher grades concerning drop-outs before reaching the standardised matric examination, is caused by a general low quality of schooling according to Taylor (2011). SACMEQ III was conducted in 2007 and is a survey based on the reading and mathematical skills of Grade 6 pupils across Africa. According to this survey, South Africa performed below most African countries and it highlighted the fact that an alarmingly high portion of Grade 6 learners have not mastered even the most basic reading and numeracy skills (Taylor, 2011). The current SACMEQ Project is in implementation from 2012 to 2014.

2.2   Conceptualising school effectiveness

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2014) defines effectiveness as "The degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result". Therefore, school effectiveness can be seen as a school successfully producing their desired results. The concept, according to Botha (2010), can mean different things when talking about school effectiveness. Sun, Creemers and De Jong (cited by Botha, 2010) is of the opinion that school effectiveness has two aims and that is to firstly identify the factors that characterise effective schools and secondly identify the differences between education outcomes in these schools. This study will focus more on the impact of this effectiveness on learner's education. Bennet, Crawford and Cartwright

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(cited by Botha, 2010) define an effective school as "a school in which students progress further than might be expected".

Many aspects within the organisation and structure of a school is determined by government, for example schooling hours, the amount of teachers allocated to a school and the teaching curriculum, but there is still a large role for parents and the community to fill and can also widely impact school effectiveness. Botha (2010) notes that school effectiveness can also take into account non-monetary inputs such as the number of textbooks available, training of teachers, organisation of classrooms and learning schedules, etcetera. Cheng (cited by Botha, 2010) is of the opinion that there can be distinguished between internal and external school effectiveness. Internal school effectiveness is when a school's effectiveness outcomes are based on what happens during school time and just after school for example acquired skills and learning behaviour. The external school effectiveness is regarded as the impact that a school's outputs have on society or on individuals' lives, for example work productivity and earning power (Botha, 2010).

2.3   Two current sub-systems

Several authors like Fleisch, Van der Berg, Taylor and Yu have characterised the South African education system as consisting of two sub-systems. One system includes the historically disadvantaged, which serves mainly black and coloured children. These children show low levels of proficiency in reading, writing and numeracy (Msila, 2011).

The second system includes schools that historically served white children, but now includes Indian children and middle class income black and coloured children. Taylor (2011) mentions the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) demonstrated that grade 5 learners in historically black schools perform worse on average compared to grade 3 learners in historically white schools. This means that even in early primary school, children in historically black schools carry an educational backlog of about two years (Msila, 2011).

Taylor (2011) mentions that the quality of education within the historically disadvantaged part has been largely unresponsive to increased resources. Van der

Berg (cited by Taylor, 2011:4) argued that the resources themselves do not necessarily make a difference, but it is rather the school's ability to convert these resources into outcomes. Therefore, a school is seen as efficient when they are able to do this. Taylor (2011) mentions further that recent research has been unable to point out the specific organisational features or teaching practices that promote greater school efficiency. Taylor is of the opinion that large-scale sample surveys of educational achievement "are not always designed for developing countries and therefore have typically not adequately captured the salient aspects of school management practice in South Africa". Taylor makes a great example in his study about the functionality and efficiency of schools of being in a "black box". With this example he means that the same resources flow into the box, but different outcomes emerge and little is known as to what exactly occurs within the "box" to determine the different outcomes.

Therefore, for this study it is important to look at what is happening within the system, where the same resources go into and why the outcomes differ.

2.4   Measuring school effectiveness

2.4.1 SACMEQ Project

Botha (2010) states that despite all the recent implementations and initiatives to enhance effectiveness in school, there are still no guidelines that assess school effectiveness that are clear and uniformly accepted. Botha (2010) furthermore cites Giles who states that evaluative work on school effectiveness has been conducted only as part of research and monitoring implementation guidelines. School effectiveness can not only be measured by the academic output that a school produces, but also how school processes are run as well as a range of other outcomes (Botha, 2010).

As mentioned earlier the SACMEQ Project measures the performance of pupils in mathematical ability across Africa. In this project they also take into account the socio-economic status, further on referred to as SES. The last project completed showed results of South African children performing worse than equally poor children in other African countries (Van der Berg, 2007 cited by Taylor, 2011). These poor

figures are in spite of South Africa's favourable teacher-learner ratios, qualified teachers and the availability of textbooks. Taylor (2011) is of the opinion that aspects that were not observed in this project such as school functionality, management efficiency and teacher behaviour can also contribute to the gap seen in Figure 1 between South Africa and other African countries.
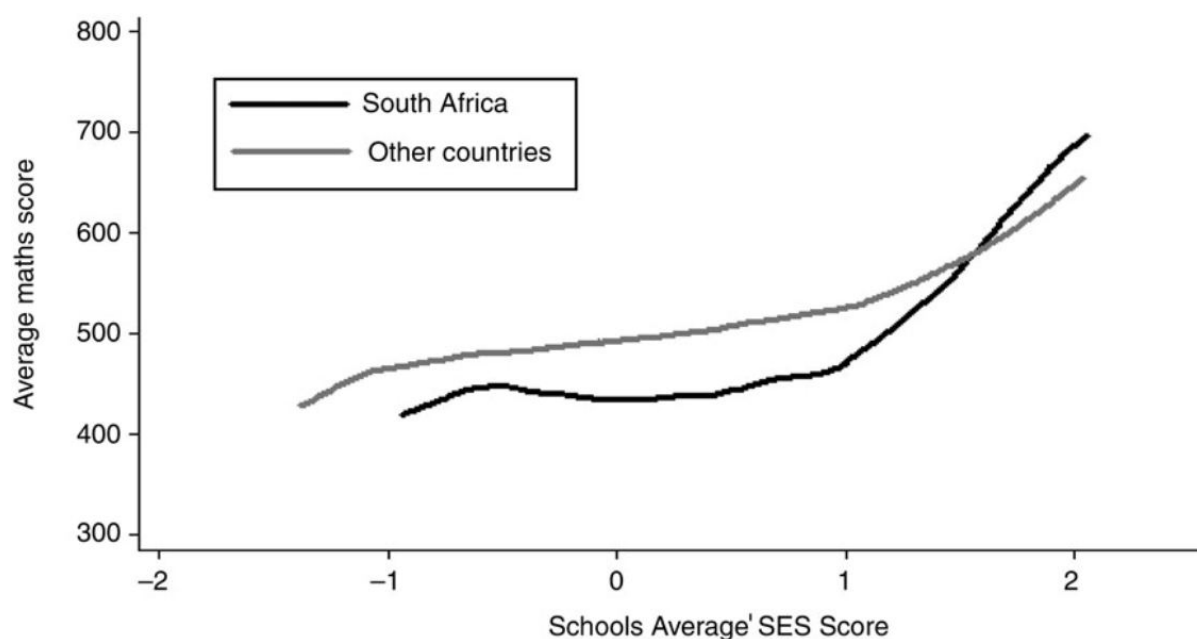
Figure 1: SACMEQ III results

(Source: Taylor, 2011:6)

2.4.2 National School Effectiveness Study

The NSES measures learner performance through literacy and mathematics tests and is administered in English at the end of the year. The last study was conducted between 2007 and 2009 and included a nationally representative sample of schools in South Africa. It included students in 266 schools and the same students were tested each year in numeracy and literacy from grade 3 to grade 5.

2.4.2.1 Multivariate Modelling Techniques

The model is based on investigating the relationship that exists between educational activities at home and classrooms and the test scores (Taylor, 2011). The study looked at students' exposure to English at home through reading, speaking and hearing. Further on, the study looked at school resources that were available and included teacher-learner ratios and facilities. The level of education of teachers and principals themselves were included

What makes this study different from other large scale studies such as SACMEQ, as pointed out by Taylor (2011), is that further information was collected through questionnaires distributed to teachers and principals. Furthermore, elements of socio-economic status (SES) were included in the student questionnaires about the household items present in their homes. They were asked about the presence of a fridge, tap water, a toilet, electricity, a car, computer, etcetera. (Taylor, 2011). According to Timaeus *et al.* (2011) the main factors behind disparities in progress of learners at school are also their socio-economic and demographic backgrounds. Moloi (2007) mentioned some of these factors in his study and these include:

- The high level of HIV infection among learners
- Learners who fail to complete homework or don't spend enough time studying
- Parents struggle to maintain sufficient contact with their children
- Children are only able to afford "cheap" foods that are usually saturated
- Communication problems between teachers and learners due to language barriers.

Timaeus *et al.* (2011) are also of the opinion that the type of policy interventions that are put in place, should address these factors that are creating inequitable opportunities for these learners. These policy interventions will be discussed in more detail later.

Large scale studies that rely on questionnaires do not always provide the most valid data as teachers and principals tend to answer questions in a favourable light (Taylor 2011). The NSES study is seen as more effective as it also relies on interviews and direct observations as opposed to just questionnaires. However, Taylor (2011) pointed out that the limitation of this study is that it did not include classroom

observations due to budget constraints and teaching quality is important for learner performance. However, a short test was administered to teachers in their respective maths and language subjects.

2.4.2.2 Results

Throughout the analysis it seemed apparent that home SES was strongly connected to achievement but that the level was also connected to school effectiveness. It is not the presence of resources that determined levels of achievement but rather how well they were managed. Taylor (2011) is of the opinion that the resource that is most poorly used is time and that the most positive effect obtained in the model was obtained in schools where the principal was present on the day of the survey and where no teachers were absent. Better scores were also achieved when schools had inventories for their textbooks and whether it was up to date (Taylor, 2011).

In the results it is evident that English-speaking students showed higher scores than Afrikaans-speaking students, as the study was administered in English (Taylor, 2011:9). This factor has a definite influence in the outcome of the study.

	Literacy 2007	Literacy 2008	Literacy gain	Numeracy 2007	Numeracy 2008	Numeracy gain
Females	20.39	28.63	8.23	29.42	35.65	6.23
Males	18.27	25.28	7.01	27.33	33.41	6.08
African language	16.93	24.14	7.21	25.08	31.01	5.92
Afrikaans or English	32.75	42.81	10.06	46.62	54.08	7.46
Total	19.38	27.03	7.65	28.42	34.58	6.16

Table 1: Literacy and numeracy results by gender and home language

2.5   Principals and school management

O'Hanlon and Clifton (cited by Msila, 2011) is of the opinion that meticulous school principals strive for effectiveness and that effective principals show a strong commitment to the teachers in their school and that they have well-built relationships with learners. Msila (2011:435) also goes on to mention that "schools that are beset by adversity, struggle to achieve success" and principles often complain that their school is "under-resourced and teachers are burnt-out, hence it is not possible for schools to succeed".

According to Mathibe (cited by Msila, 2011) there is one reason that has always been a factor in failing schools and that is that principals are not skilled and trained in school management and leadership. Thurlow (cited by Msila, 2011) is of the opinion that the "core purpose of education management is to facilitate effective learning through effective teaching". Thurlow goes on to mention that "the process of management is concerned with the transformation of schools so that effective learning can take place". Various studies over the past few years since the start of South Africa's democracy have mentioned the fact that school principals in South Africa are faced with a number of challenges that need to be addressed in different ways (Spaull, 2012). Heystek and Bush (cited by Msila 2011) mentioned that the relationship between school principals and School Governing Bodies (SGB's) have not always been sound and not based on cooperation from either side.

Bush (cited by Msila, 2011) is of the opinion that leadership and the quality thereof makes a significant difference to school and learner outcomes. Bush then furthermore points out that in South Africa our schools need effective leaders if they are to provide the best possible education. However, Caldwell (cited by Msila, 2011) states that principals have a heavy workload that can become unmanageable and therefore they can lose their understanding of their leadership and management roles. Msila (2011) goes on to say that it is especially important for principals in disadvantaged schools to empower and enhance their management practices. There needs to be continuous research conducted to understand why these poor performing schools exist and the dynamic challenges they face.

2.6   School Management Teams (SMTs)

As teams are vital for the success of any organisation, it is becoming more and more important for schools to have teams that lead to better teamwork and take the lead in strategic and decision making within schools (Cranston, 2005:79). Drach-Zahavy and Somech (cited by Cranston, 2005) mention that in the education sector, team-based structures offer the potential to achieve outcomes better than individuals working alone.

2.6.1 The School Governing Body

The South African Schools Act of 1996 hands a great deal of responsibility to the School Governing Bodies (SGB's). They are expected to lead in developing the mission statement of the school, lay down policies and set standards for the quality of education. The SGB consists mainly of parents but also includes teachers, students and stakeholders. Dieltiens (2000) is of the opinion that the "SGB have real power in the running of schools". They are also responsible for setting the level of school fees, deciding when the school should open and close and under section 21 of the South African Schools Act can decide what subjects to offer and which textbook to use. However, they are constrained in all the educational decisions in the school. Dieltiens (2000) gives the example that SGB can not determine the language policy at the school and the government sets out admission policies to prevent schools from discriminating against learners.

Dieltiens (2000) goes on to mention that "SGB's have the responsibility to ensure education is happening in their schools, but do not have decision making powers in educational matters". She goes on to mention that it is unclear how autonomous the SGB is in relation to the state and can lead to blame being unfairly placed on the SGB for failure to provide quality education.

2.6.1.1 Recent court cases involving SGBs and the Department of Education

There has been much controversy as to what the SGB regards as the best actions in the interest of the school, as seen in the court case of MEC for Education in *Gauteng*

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Province and Other v. Governing Body of Rivonia Primary School and Others of 2013. In this case the SGB of Rivonia Primary did not want to admit a learner into the school as the number of intakes for that school in Grade 1 was 120 and when the application of a learner was rejected by the school based on the number of admissions, the parent turned to the Gauteng Department of Education (Colditz, 2013).

Another court case that has been in the spotlight is that of the *Hoërskool Ermelo v. The Head of Department of Education: Mpumalanga in 2009*. "Ermelo High School was a single-medium Afrikaans school. The Mpumalanga Department of Education was faced by an alleged space shortage for learners from the district who preferred to be educated in English. The Mpumalanga Department of Education then made the controversial decision to withdraw the school governing body's competency to determine the school's language policy" (Colditz, 2009).

In the matter *of Head of Department, Department of Education, Free State Province v. Welkom High School and Another in 2013*, where the school adopted pregnancy policies modelled on guidance provided by the Department of Education. The school's policies determined that pregnant girls were to be excused from school attendance for a certain period. The HOD of the Free State Department of Education intervened and pronounced the school's policies unconstitutional, which led to an ongoing battle into the Constitutional Court where the judge ruled in favour of the School Governing Body (Du Toit, 2013).

2.6.2 Responsibilities of School Management

2.6.2.1 Section 20 public schools

Section 20 of the South African Schools Act of 1996 (cited by Hansraj, 2007) sets out the following functions for the school governing bodies:

> (1) subject to this Act, the governing body of a public school must –
>
>> (a) promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school;

(b) adopt a constitution;

(c) develop the mission statement of the school;

(d) adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;

(e) support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;

(f) determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school;

(g) administer and control the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including hostels, if applicable;

(h) encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school;

(i) recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Educators Employment Act, 1994;

(j) recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school, subject to the Public Services Act, 1994;

(k) at the request of the Head of Department, allow the reasonable use under fair conditions of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school;

(l) discharge all other functions imposed upon the governing body by or under this Act; and

(m) discharge other functions consistent with this Act as determined by the Minister by notice in the Government Gazette, or by the Member of the Executive Council by notice in the Provincial Gazette.

2.6.2.2   Section 21 public schools

These schools have the following additional functions:

- Maintain and improve the school's property, buildings grounds and hostel. This would form part of the school's development plan and include improvement and upgrades that need to be in accordance with the provincial Department of Education's specifications and approved by them.

- They set out the extra-mural curriculum and subject choices in accordance with the provincial curriculum policy.

- A learning support material committee purchase textbooks, educational materials and equipment for the school.

- The finance committee sets up a budget and closely monitors the monthly income and expenditure as the school pays for services rendered to the school.

- Other functions consistent with Act or provincial legislation (Hansjar, 2007).

For the purposes of this study, there was not distinguished between sections 20 and section 21 schools.

2.6.3 Challenges facing School Management Teams (SMTs)

Cranston (2005) focuses on a very important subject when he mentions that there are no identifiable guidelines and actions that members of SMT's can follow and that many of these suggestions don't necessarily take into account the operational context of schools. Cranston (2005) goes on to mention that teams are not static and will more likely be involved in responses to their immediate environment and the issues impacting them. Factors such as different values, different personalities, past history and ongoing dynamics of members make these teams complex and unique. Wallace and Hall (cited by Cranston, 2005) is of the opinion that for these reasons teamwork is problematic even in the most favourable situations.

Another challenge facing school management teams is the fact that the country is not producing enough teachers. South Africa produces about 6 000 teachers annually while the replacement number needed is approximately 20 000 teachers annually (Msila, 2014).

2.6.4 Overcoming some of these challenges

Cranston (2005) acknowledges that there are many difficulties facing SMTs as mentioned above in establishing guidelines and the operation of these teams in schools and then set out five issues that SMTs can consider:

- Clearly defining roles and objectives;
- Member must ensure commitment, competency and credibility;
- Develop a team culture, values, beliefs and effective process among the team members;
- Develop good relations with other staff as well as effective communication with them;
- Ensure learning opportunities for SMT members to operate competently.

Cranston (2005) makes an important point when he states that underpinning all of the above, is the need to focus on the relationship between the team members.

2.7 The Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT)

Many researchers like McLennan and Thurlow (cited by Msila, 2011) have also highlighted the fact that the culture of learning and teaching (COLT) has collapsed and subsequently lowered the confidence in school management. Msila (2011:437) is of the opinion that COLT is in correlation with school management and this is used to distinguish between good and poorly performing schools.

The principal aims of COLT are to:

- foster creative, critical and independent thinkers with skills and competences that are transferable
- foster attitudes and values that are compatible with the ongoing transformation of society
- promote values of critical thinking, self-discipline, empowerment, respect for the dignity of others, and a commitment to lifelong learning

- develop new social relationships in schools founded on new forms of discipline, commitment and accountability of all stakeholders in education according to Chrisholm and Vally (cited by Lethoko *et al.*, 2001).

Lethoko *et al.* (2001) goes on to mention that since the Soweto uprising of 1976 up to 2000, the matric pass rate has deteriorated dramatically and this is one of the indicators that a culture of learning and teaching does not exist in South Africa. Some factors that were pointed out by that have a negative influence on the learning environment can be divided into the three main role players namely students, teachers and principals.

According to Smith and Schalekamp (cited by Lethoko *et al.*, 2001) students overall lack motivation, concentration, self-discipline, punctuality and language skills. Furthermore, there is use of drugs, weapons, alcohol, dodging of classes and cheating in tests and exams. Contributing to this is that many students have non-supportive homes, little parental care and involvement, few resources in the homes and illiterate parents. Masitsa (cited by Lethoko *et al.*, 2001) adds to this by mentioning that the school environment lacks discipline and respect for teachers within a poor infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms.

Whereas teachers and principals are concerned, Smith and Schalekamp (cited by Lethoko *et al.*, 2001) pointed out that there is a lack of professionalism, poor management, a lack of preparation for lessons and that teachers are under-qualified. The concerns of the Department of Education (DoE) are that there is a lack of funding to rebuild and renovate schools and to supply books, teaching aids and other materials to students and teachers. Principals furthermore find it hard to implement policies as outlined by the DoE and in some instances the policies are not implemented at all or not monitored (Letshoko *et al.*, 2001).

2.8   Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)

School managers in South Africa have participated in a number of programmes meant to improve their roles, especially short workshops organised by the Department of Education (Msila, 2011). Probably the most successful development programme initiated since 1994, is the Advanced Certificate in Education – School

Management in Leadership programme was introduced in 2008 and entails a variety of interactive programmes to improve the ethos of leadership and professional growth (Mestry & Singh, 2007). According to Msila (2011) the first pilot group who completed the programme in 2009 reflected its empowering potential. The programme is based on the idea of applying critical understanding, values, knowledge and skills to manage and lead schools within the vision of democratic transformation.

The strength of the ACE is that it focuses on the development of leadership and management in three main ways namely (Department of Education, 2008):

- reinforcing critical learning principles;
- adopting a developmental assessment approach;
- pursuing a transformational agenda.

2.8.1 Critical learning principles

The following underpin the teaching and assessment of the programme (Department of Education, 2008):

- Directed and self-directed learning in teams and clusters;
- Site-based learning;
- Different learning strategies;
- Parallel use throughout of individual and group contexts of learning;
- Collaborative learning through interactive group activities;
- Problem-focused debate and deliberation in group contexts;
- Reflection on group processes and group effectiveness;
- Reflection and reporting on own personal growth and insights that was developed;
- Research and experimentation.

2.8.2 The developmental approach to assessment

Assessments include a strategy where a variety of options to demonstrate and provide evidence of practice, based on the anticipated outcomes and against the

assessment criteria (Department of Education, 2008). "Depending on the institution and circumstances, this could include activities such as case studies, problem-solving assignments, practice in simulated and in real contexts, projects, written and oral presentations. The assessment is focused on applied competence" (Department of Education, 2008). The students should include evidence of assignment, oral presentations, etc. Students will also keep a reflective journal throughout the programme and coupled with the evidence, will contribute towards their final summative assessment (Department of Education, 2008).

2.8.3 A transformational agenda

The Department of Education (2008) has set up the programme so that students can complete it on a part-time basis and that the programme is based on practice so that students can work and learn at the same time. Around 50% of the work comprises of activities that they will plan, execute and evaluate at their school. "By the time they have completed the programme, it should be possible to provide evidence that their participation has helped to change their school for the better" (Department of Education, 2008).

This certificate is registered on the NQF at NQF level 6, but the biggest problem with this programme is that it is a two-year part-time programme and educators will either not have the time to complete it and the incentives for completing it is non-existent. From the above discussion of what the programme comprises, one could see that it is a very time- and resource-consuming programme.

2.9   Government influences on school effectiveness

The South African Schools Act (84 of 1996) was put in place "to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith". Timaeus *et al.* (2011) names a number of other policies that the government has put in place in an attempt to change some of the inequalities through education. These include:

- The bill of rights states that every citizen has the right to basic education as well as further education.

- The socio-economic policy framework views education as an important mechanism that can address some inequities that were inherited from the Apartheid era.

- The schooling and homeland administrations that were once separated along racial lines, have been integrated by the new government into a single system with a unified resource allocation mechanism and equal pay structure for teachers.

- Government spending on education since 1994 has accounted for substantial proportions of the country's GDP, showing government's commitment to education.

Timaues *et al.* (2011) go on to mention that despite the government's dedication and financial commitments, there are still different standards across the country and inconsistencies regarding the following aspects:

- Basic facilities such as buildings, electricity, running water and phone lines;

- Poor training as many teachers are the products of colleges where they were given poor training during the Apartheid era;

- As government funding is not always sufficient, schools are allowed to raise extra funds and it is the Model C schools that have been successful in this. Extra funding has enabled these schools to employ extra teachers and build facilities that can equip students with the necessary skills to do well in their subjects.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1   Introduction

Based on the literature review an empirical study was constructed to find answers to the research questions. This chapter will discuss the research approach taken as well as the results that was found.

3.2   Research approach

The study was based on a quantitative research approach and was conducted by means of field surveys with structured questions. Following the theoretical study, the following empirical research design was formulated and focussed towards principals of public schools in South Africa:

- A cross-sectional design with a sample of male and female principals across all ethnical groups;

- Calculation of correlation coefficients between the variables measured;

- Frequency of responses to categorical questions to establish the general perception of effective management in public schools;

- The perception of training and development available for schools' management.

A sample size of 51 principals from public schools across South Africa took part in the study.

3.3   Findings

3.3.1   Categorical questions

From the responses received, the following can be summarised:

Finding 1

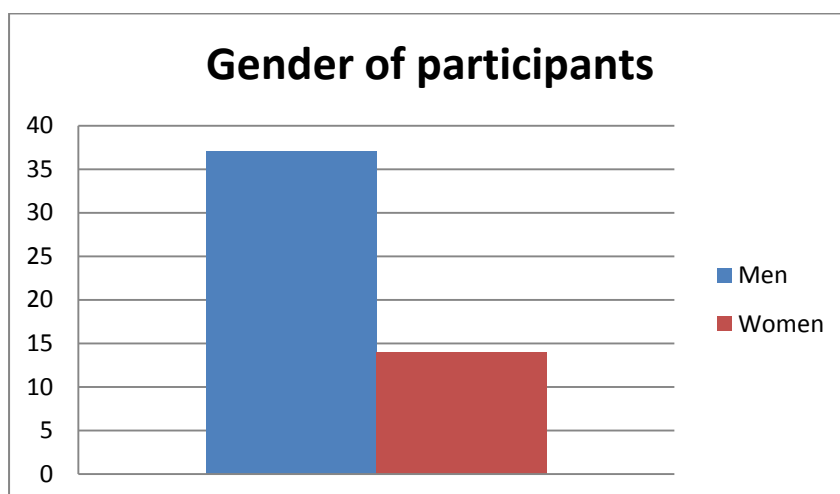72.5% of the participants were male.

Figure 2: Gender of sample size participants

In an article published in the *City Press* on 23 August 2013, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga revealed that only 36% of school principals are women and that the number of women as school principals is particularly low in high schools. However, the number of female teachers outweighs male teachers by 68.3%. Motshekga goes on to mention that "Census 2011 did show that women are in the majority. This should be reflected in all sectors of society, even in schools".

Finding 2

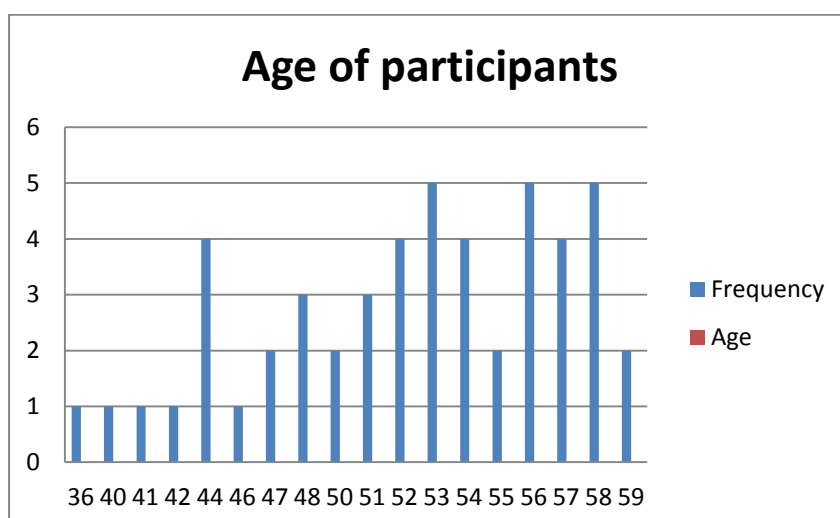70.4% of the participants were between the age of 50 and 60.

Figure 3: Age of sample size participants

Very little research has been done on the age of school principals and there is very little framework. However, in order for a person to be become a school principal they would have to have the right qualifications and experience. It can therefore be derived that it would take some years to achieve these, which is therefore one of the reasons why the average age of the sample size participants is relatively high.

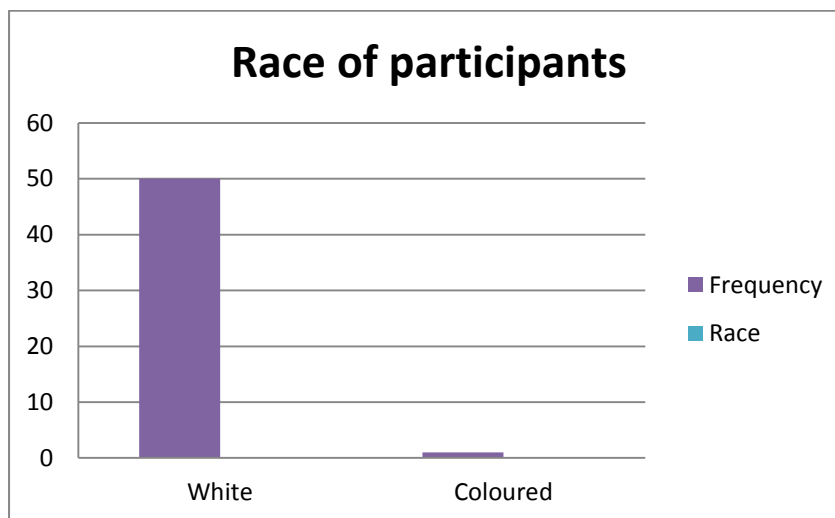*Finding 3*

98% of the participants were white.

Figure 4: Race of sample size participants

The sample size participants was based on geographical location and not based on race. For the purpose of the findings in this research this was further ignored as an influential variable.

Finding 4

78.5% of participants have a Bachelors degree or an Honours degree.
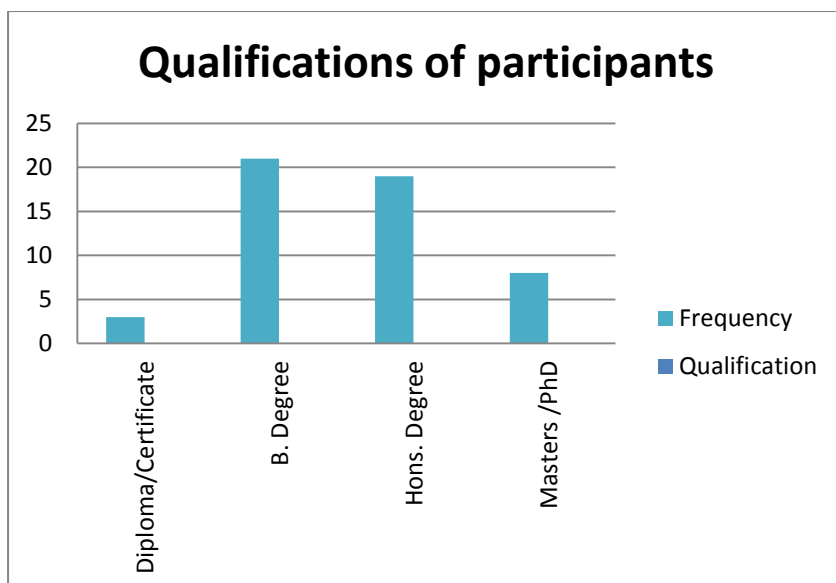
Figure 5: Qualifications of sample size participants

To become a principal, a person would need at least a Bachelors degree or a teachers' diploma and 7 years teaching experience. Other certificates, like Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) and degrees are only additional and up to the individual.
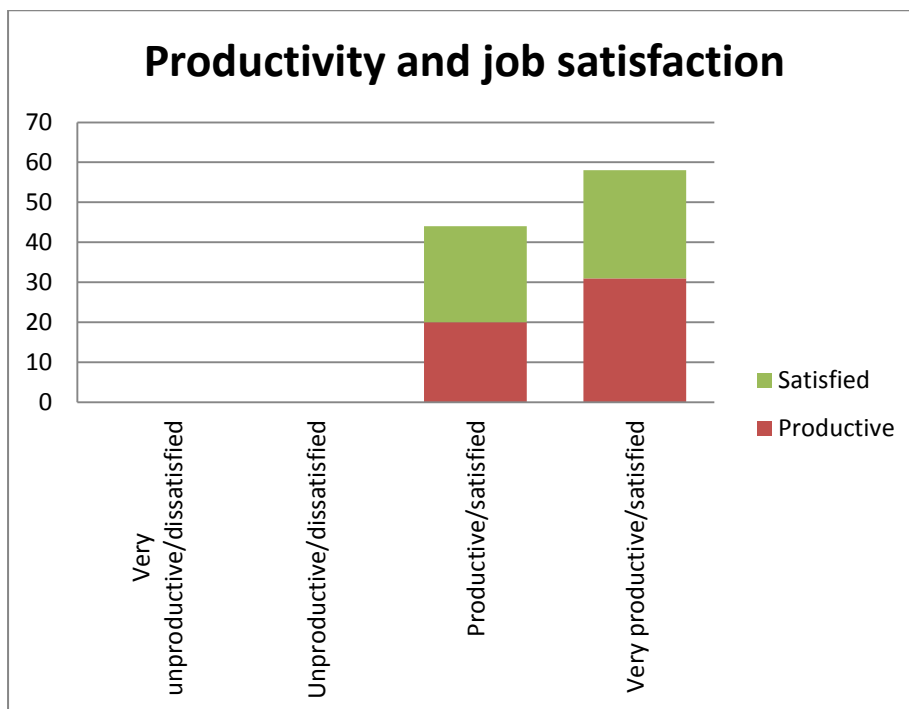
Finding 5

Figure 6: Productivity and job satisfaction of sample size participants

The majority of participants feel that they are very productive and are very satisfied with their role as principal.

Other important factors that were included in the questionnaire as derived from the literature review was:

- whether the socio-economic conditions of learners have a negative impact on the school's efficiency;

- whether non-monetary inputs have an impact on the school's efficiency;

- whether the teacher-learner ratio have an impact on the quality of education;

- whether the government has an impact on the school's effectiveness or not.

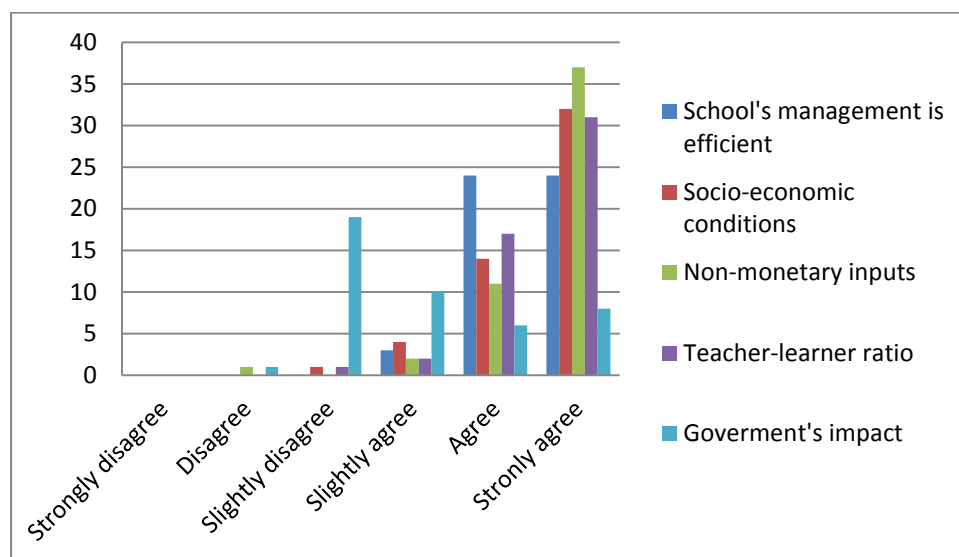Based on the participants' responses, the following was derived:

Figure 7: Responses of sample size participants to categorical questions

Finding 6

98% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that the school's management was efficient.

Finding 7

90.2% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that the socio-economic conditions of learners can have a negative impact on the school's efficiency.

These are aspects fall totally outside of the school's management control.

In the literature review, the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) found in their analysis that it seemed apparent that the socio-economic conditions of learners were strongly connected to achievement but that the level was also connected to school effectiveness (Taylor, 2011:3). It is not the presence of resources that determined levels of achievement but rather how well they were managed.

Finding 8

94.1% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that non-monetary inputs affect the school's efficiency.

This includes the number of textbooks available, training of teachers, etc. Therefore, the number and quality of resources available does have an impact on how efficient a school is managed.

Taylor (2011) mentioned in the literature review that the quality of education within the historically disadvantaged part has been largely unresponsive to increased resources. Van der Berg (cited by Taylor, 2011:4) argued that the resources themselves do not necessarily make a difference, but it is rather the school's ability to convert these resources into outcomes. Therefore, a school is seen as efficient when they are able to do this.

Finding 9

94.2% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that the teacher-learner ratio has an impact on the quality of education.

As seen in the literature review, the higher the ratio, the less time a teacher can spend on focusing on a learner's individual needs. This would then lower the quality of educational outputs.

The last SACMEQ project that was completed showed results of South African children performing worse than equally poor children in other African countries (Van der Berg, 2007 cited by Taylor, 2011:5). These poor figures are in spite of South Africa's favourable pupil-teacher ratios, qualified teachers and the availability of textbooks.

Finding 10

The question asking if the government has no impact on the school's efficiency, received the most distributed answers. The highest response was 37.3% that disagreed with this statement.

It was clear from the literature review that there are many policies and regulations that the government has put in place for various reasons. These could either help with the efficiency of schools or restrict it. From the distributed responses that was received, this is evident.

The last set of categorical questions focused on testing the participants' knowledge about current studies being conducted on school efficiency. As derived from the literature review, the largest studies being conducted are the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) and the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES). The biggest concept used in the education circles is the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT). The figures below show the responses when asked if the participants are aware of these studies and concept and its objectives and goals.

Finding 11

SACMEQ

NO
37.3%

YES
62.7%
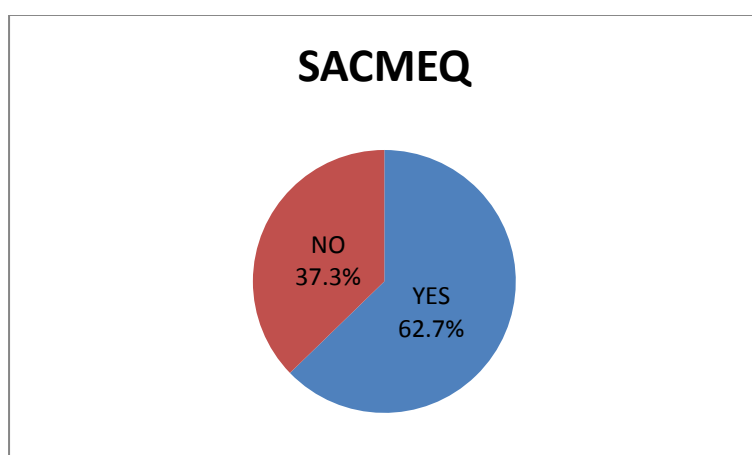
Figure 8: Awareness of SACMEQ by sample size participants

The Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) project is done to determine the level of literacy of South African scholars and then compare this to other countries. According to Taylor (2011) South Africa's rate of attainment of levels of education from 12 years onwards is among the lowest compared to other middle-income countries. This should be a concern, especially for high schools principals, but from the sample size participants 37.3% did not know what the project entails.

Finding 12

NSES

NO
17.6%

YES
82.4%

Figure 9: Awareness of NSES by sample size participants

The National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) measures learner performance through literacy and mathematics tests and is administered in English at the end of the year. Elements of socio-economic stat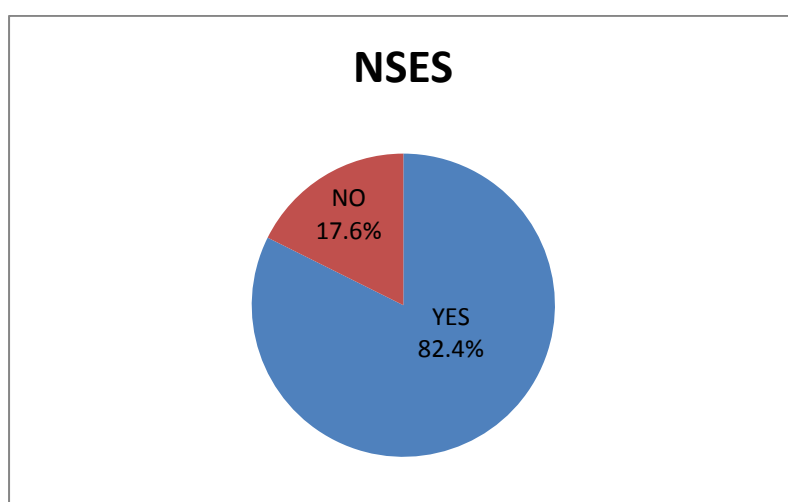us (SES) are included in the student questionnaires and this is important for principals to note as this effects learning conditions in classrooms. Only 17.6% of sample size participants did not know what this study entails.

Finding 13
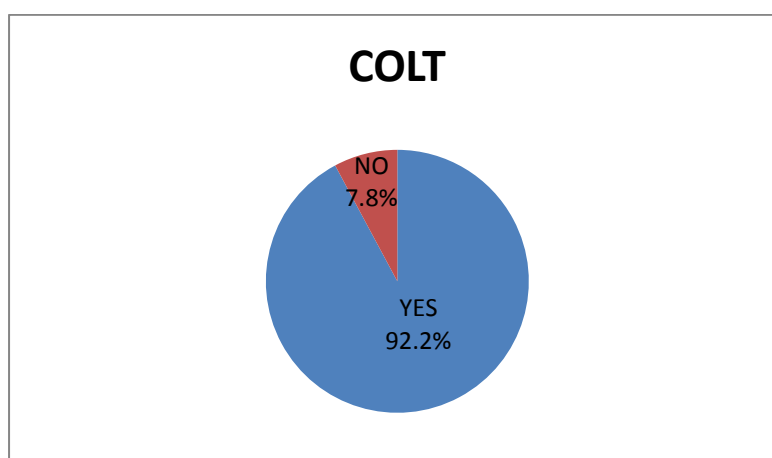
Figure 10: Awareness of COLT by sample size participants

In the literature review, it was discussed that Lethoko *et al.* (2011:311) mentioned that since the Soweto uprising of 1976 up to 2000, the matric pass rate has deteriorated dramatically and this is one of the indicators that a culture of learning and teaching does not exist in South Africa. 92.2% of the sample size participants indicated that they know what the objectives and goals of COLT are and indicated that they have knowledge of this and realise that it should be present in schools.

Finding 14
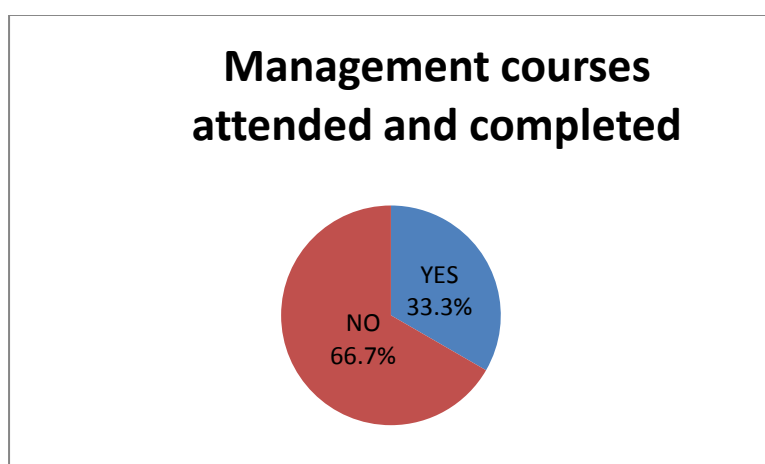
Figure 11: Percentage of sample size participants that have attended and completed a management course in the past year

In the literature review, O'Hanlon and Clifton (cited by Msila, 2011:435) is of the opinion that meticulous school principals strive for effectiveness and according to Mathibe (cited by Msila, 2011:437) there is one reason that has always been a factor in failing schools and that is that principals are not skilled and trained in school management and leadership. Only 66.7% of the sample size participants completed at least one management course in the past year and should be a cause for concern.

Finding 15

Figure 12: Response from sample size participants to the question as to whether there are enough training and development programmes for principals

The response was fairly distributed across all the options, indicating that there are some principals who are in need of more training and development programmes.

3.3.2   Correlations

The main aim of the study was based on perceptions from sample size participants to determine how they perceive their school's efficiency and how effective the school's management is in running the school.

Finding 16

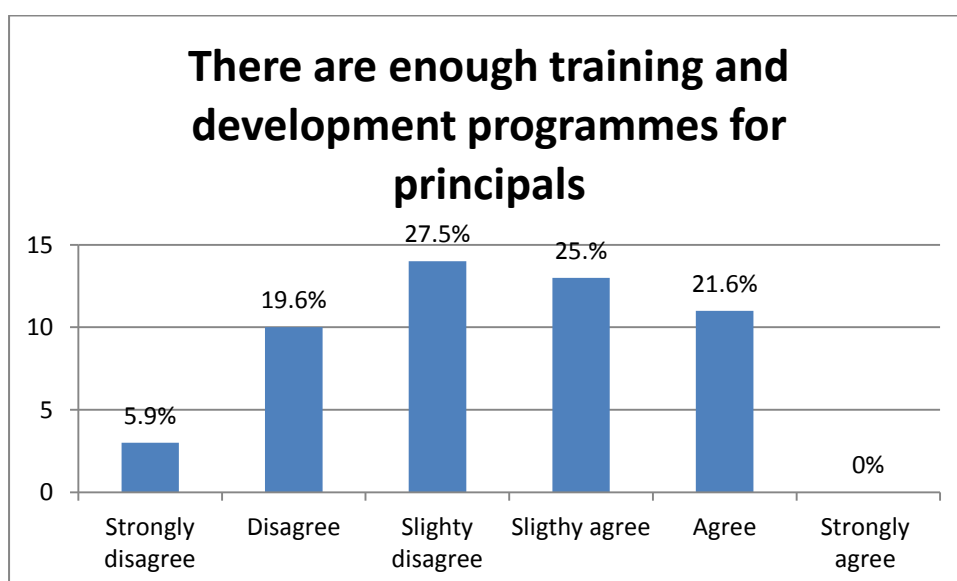The first correlation that was investigated was the perceived productivity of the participant and their satisfaction with their job. The investigation returned a very strong correlation of 0.977, which indicates that the more satisfied a principal is with their job, the more productive they are.

Finding 17

The second important correlation is the perception that the school is run effectively and if there are enough training and development programmes for principals. A negative correlation of -0.2097 was found, which indicates that participants felt that schools were run effectively and that there were not enough training and development programmes for principals.

Finding 18

Another correlation that should be noted is the perception that school management is sufficient and if there is a need for a School Management Team (SMT). The investigation found a relatively strong correlation of 0.7395 indicating that participants felt that the school management is sufficient and there are enough training and development programmes for other members of management.

Finding 19

The question stated is whether the socio-economic conditions can have a negative impact on the efficiency of the school. This, together with the perception that the school is run effectively, showed a correlation of 0.7245. This indicates that the socio-economic conditions of learners in the schools that participated would not have a big impact on the efficiency of the school. However, it was found in the literature review that many schools, especially in the rural areas, do struggle with this.

Finding 20

The effectiveness of school's management can be influenced by other factors outside of the management's control, as discussed with the socio-economic conditions of the learners. Here the government and their interventions also play a big role. It can be either positive or negative. The question was asked if the government has no impact on the school effectiveness when considering a school's operations. A negative correlation of -0.117 was found which indicates that the government definitely has an impact on management running the school efficiently. Many of the participants feel that the government interferes too much in how the school is run and that this curbs the efficiency of the school's management.

CHAPTER 4

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   Introduction

This chapter provides a short review of the study by briefly discussing each chapter, followed by recommendations for principals and other members of a school's management to implement the findings of this study. Lastly, topics for furthering and expanding this study is also discussed.

4.2   Review

Chapter 1 of this study provided a background to the study and classifying public schools in South Africa. The problem statement and reasons for the study was also stated, with the objectives and limitations discussed as well.

Chapter 2 gave a literature review in the background and problems facing education in South Africa. This chapter also discussed the most important projects and studies currently being conducted on school effectiveness and quality education and also discussed the roles and responsibilities of the various key persons in school management. The chapter also included an overview of the most important training and development programmes available to school management.

Chapter 3 focused on the research approach that was taken and the results and findings of the field research was discussed.

Chapter 4 is the final chapter and focuses on the review of the study and includes recommendations.

4.3   Recommendations

As derived from the literature review, it was seen that there is an important correlation between effective management and the knowledge and training that the

management of a school are in possession of. It is important for all parties involved in a school's management to constantly partake in training and development programmes. Although most of the sample size participants, 78.5%, are in possession of a Bachelors degree and/or Honours degree, there is still a need for other principals to attain higher levels of education.

Recommendation 1

As needs and other factors like for example technology changes, it impacts schools as well and it is advisable for management of a school to keep up with trends and needs to better improve the school's effectiveness. Concomitant with this, principals should keep up to date with concepts and studies being done from time to time that would add to their knowledge of what is happening within the education system.

Recommendation 2

70.4% of the sample size participants were between the age of 50 and 60. It would be another recommendation for younger teachers to become principals sooner in their careers, given that they possess the right qualifications and experience. Therefore, they will build up experience that will add to the effectiveness of the school's management for a longer time in their career.

Recommendation 3

As derived from the literature review as well as the field research, it is evident that socio-economic conditions of learners have a very big impact on the school's effectiveness and learner performance. Principals should identify what these are in their school and take active steps to minimise the impact of these especially in classrooms.

Recommendation 4

The quality of the education that learners receive is based largely on non-monetary inputs as derived from the literature review as well as the field research conducted. In the case of available textbooks, principals do not have complete control of the timeous delivery and correct amount of books being delivered, as we have seen in the past couple of years with certain areas in the country where the department was negligent in delivering textbooks on time and in the correct amounts. Principals should take active steps in preventing the non-monetary inputs affecting the efficiency of the school's operations where they can.

Recommendation 5

When considering the teacher-learner ratio, principals should try and keep the ratio at an optimal level to ensure that learners receive quality education with the right amount of attention.

4.4   Topics for further research

With regards to further studies, more research could be conducted into why there are more men than women as principals. The Commission of Gender Equality was established to promote, protect, monitor and evaluate gender equality in South Africa. The education sector, in particularly principals in schools, should be an area to investigate.

Further studies can also investigate the average age of principals in schools and what contributes to the high average age.

This study can also be duplicated and based only in rural schools and can also be furthered by distinguishing between section 20 and section 21 public schools.

4.5   Conclusion

It is certain from this study that there are many factors throughout the schooling system that will impact the effectiveness of a school's management on the quality education that it provides. This is seen from:

- factors outside of the school that impacts a learner's socio-economic background and emotional wellbeing.
- the teachers and their knowledge and how well they are equipped to provide quality education.
- the principals and other members of the school's management team must be knowledgeable in their task and how well they are equipped to fulfil their tasks.

It was found that there are factors that are within the control of a principal and the members of the school's management team but at the same time many factors that are not. Principals should focus on the elements that they do have control over and constantly be aware of the school's shortfalls, as well as their own.

The management of a school can be seen in the same light as the management of a business and it includes an ongoing process which requires daily, monthly and annual analysis and strategising. The changing needs of individuals and groups, changes in legislation, coupled with developments in technology and globalisation should be included as part of the management process.

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ANNEXURE 1

Dear Principal   September 2014

Education in South Africa has been in the spotlight for various reasons, but the main aim of this study as dissertation for my MBA degree, is to determine if there has been a decline in the quality of education provided to scholars and if this can be linked to how schools are run individually. There are constant surveys and projects done to determine the level of literacy of South African scholars and then compare this to other countries as well. South Africa's rate of attainment of levels of education is high compared to other middle-income countries over about 11 years.

I would highly appreciate your input in this short survey that will only take approximately 5 minutes to complete and it is completely anonymous. All feedback is kept strictly anonymous and will only be used for statistical purposes. Please be honest when answering all the questions to ensure accuracy of the data received so that the outcomes can determine what is needed for management in schools to run effectively.

All participants in this research will receive an electronic copy of the final document.

Should you have any questions or concerns relating to this study, please feel free to contact me. Return date for the survey is Friday 19 September 2014.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study in trying to constantly better our education system on all levels.

Kind regards

Ms Martinette Stevens

North West University

Potchefstroom Business School

MBA Dissertation

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ANNEXURE 2

i	Gender	Male		Female	
ii	Age (in years)				
iii	Race	White	Black	Coloured	Indian
iv	Qualifications	Diploma / Cert	B Degree	Hons Degree	Masters / PhD
v	How productive were you during the last 3 months?	*1 = Very Unproductive*	*2 = Unproductive*	*4 = Productive*	*5 = Very Productive*
vi	How satisfied are you with your job?	*1 = Very dissatisfied*	*2 = Dissatisfied*	*4 = Satisfied*	*5 = Vey Satisfied*

Please rate the following questions from 1 to 6:

No	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slighty disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Stronly agree
1	The school is run effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	The efficiency of the school management is sufficient	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	The efficiency of the school can impact the entire community	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	The socio-economic conditions of learner can have a negative impact on school efficiency	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	Non-monetary inputs such as the number of textbooks available, training of teachers, etc. has an impact on school's functionality	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	The teacher-learner ratio has an impact on the quality of education	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	All the school's resources are being fully utilized	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	The School Governing Body (SGB) has a key role in our school effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	There is a need for a School Management Team (SMT)	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	There are enough Training and Development programs for **principals**	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	There are enough Training and Development programs for **other members of management**	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	The government has no impact on the school effectiveness, when considering a school's operations	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please answer the following questions with YES or NO:

13	I am aware of the following concepts and its objectives and goals:		
13.1	The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) Project	YES	NO
13.2	The National School Effectiveness Study (NSES)	YES	NO
13.3	Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT)	YES	NO
14	In the past year, I have attended and completed at least one management course	YES	NO
	If you answered "yes" please state the name of the course:		