

Exploring the Impact of Effective Communication and Principals' Leadership Styles on Educators' Teaching Performance at Primary Schools: A Qualitative Study

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KEYWORDS delegation, collaboration, organizational culture, authoritarian, self-esteem, conflicts,

ABSTRACT This paper reports on an investigation of effective communication among educators and principals in Fezile-Dabi District, Free State Province, South Africa. The study utilized a qualitative paradigm. Open-ended questionnaires were used as a method to collect data from six purposively selected educators in one primary school. The findings revealed that working with authoritarian principals is a major debilitating factor because there is no effective communication. As a result, there is low- morale, conflicts and job-dissatisfaction, which contribute towards deterioration of culture of learning and teaching (COLT) because educators are deprived opportunities to participate in school-restructuring processes. Furthermore, research participants stated that owing to a toxic environment and unhealthy relations they have with the principal, their psychological well-being has been adversely affected. For example, they reported stress, depression and insomnia. Given that authoritarian leadership style could be destructive in any organisation, the recommendations are that professional development and support for the principal from the district is a necessity in the democratic dispensation.

INTRODUCTION

In terms of the South African School Act, 1996 (section 16) management in schools is the responsibility of the principals. Within the school, through effective communication, human relations can be improved and the objectives be achieved because of dialogues which are aimed at developing responsible and accountable citizens (Arlestig, 2008). However, majority of the principals in previously black schools find it hard to adapt to change which requires democratization, effective communication and sharing of responsibilities with the educators (Heystek, 2004). When there is no effective communication among educators and principals, the organisational goals aimed at producing excellence in teaching and learning, sustaining human development do not succeed (Keil & McConnahan, 2006). Also, when the formal channels of communication (upwards, downwards and horizontally or laterally) are not created within the organization, conflicts are inevitable (Haines, 2007).

Communication is defined as the process through which the information that is elicited creates a response between the sender and receiver. Such communication may be facts, ideas or images that relate an event, describing behaviour, or asking a question (Rebore, 2014). In almost all school activities, communication plays an important role, and the manner in which the principal interacts with the educators can determine the organizational culture and organizational expectations. According to Arlestig (2008) the amount of time the principals invests in motivating educators and reinforcing communal activities tend to yield positive results within the organization and cooperation among the staff- members because there is positive communication. However, Naicker and Mestry (2013) found that in a research conducted in Soweto primary schools, educators reported that their non- involvement in leadership environment was exacerbated by ineffective communication as the power remains in the domain of the SMT. These participants, cited that the principals' attitudes contributed immensely to the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the schools.

Principals who support their educators by using positive reinforcement have been found to be instrumental in generating healthy working environment and improving the self-esteem and self-efficacy of educators (Rebore, 2014; Steyn, 2011). Owing to a high level of cohesion and positive atmosphere at school, educators become productive, assertive and display positive attitude (Niemann, 2008). Various scholars assert that self-esteem has been shown to buffer against physical and mental health problems. Educators who have high self-esteem demonstrate optimism, enthusiasm and continually strive for the best pertaining to their learners' academic performance (Louw & Louw, 2007; Mc Devitt & Ormrod, 2010). According to Kheswa (2006) self-esteem shares the same characteristics of self-worth which improves self- acceptance, invigorates renewal and self-actualization.

Effective communication and Transformational leadership

Effective communication is tied to transformational leadership. In transformational leadership, principals involve the educators in exchange of ideas for the betterment of the school. Such principals in improving the organization apply open-door policy which encourages innovative ways, collaboration and accountability for all. As opposed to being the sole custodian of information and confrontational, the transformational principals display interaction, empowerment, vision and passion in what they do. In any activity, they seek clarity and opinions of their educators (Rowland, 2008; Steyn, 2011). For example, Power and Thomas (2007) found that principals who communicate with their colleagues and trust those who are experienced, tend to be helpful to educators who begin to use new instructional technology, such as graphical calculators and/or computers, when feel lost and unsure about what to do owing to inadequacy of skills.

Transformational leadership correlates with the teachers' morale. Rowland (2008) found that principals who are transformational tend to;

- have good communication
- have good human relations, both within school and between school and community
- quality time for collegial interaction; planning, decision- making and problem-solving
- devote attention to professional needs such as in-service training of educators.
- create opportunities for meaningful and professional growth

Because effective communication prevails within the school as an organisation, Niemann (2008) found that educators may subscribe themselves to a collectivistic culture which may result in; preference of group decisions when dealing with a challenge which could hamper the smooth running of the school; all staff- members getting involved to attain organizational objectives; development of respect for one another rather than divisions amongst educators.

Effective communication and strategic planning

Undoubtedly, in many black South African schools, educators are faced with too much paperwork (Chisholm, Volmink, Ndhlovu, Potenza, Mahomed, Muller & Mphahlele, 2005) understaffed and affected and infected by HIV/AIDS (Mosoge, 2008). Therefore, principals should communicate immediately with the staff to avoid unnecessary conflicts as research indicates that the success of any organisation lies in effective communication of its strategic management and planning (Crowther, Fergusson & Hann, 2009). To be strategic, principals should be aligned to the principle of priority for scarce resources and the principle of

colleagueship. As strategic planners and effective communicators, principals must address the staff- members or circulate a notification addressing how the resignation or leave of educators will be approached, without any delay (Crowther et al., 2009; Keil & McConnahan, 2005). In doing so, Clarke (2007) found that there might be no need for overloaded educators who belong to the Teachers' Union to report their principals. Contingency plans should be in place to replace educators who may be terminally ill or taking care of their loved ones due to HIV/AIDS while on leave. Although the recruitment of state-paid educators to public schools may be time-consuming and complex, effective principals communicate with the staff- members, parents and district to ensure that remaining educators do not become overloaded or experience stress and learners are not neglected or deprived of their constitutional rights (Clarke, 2007). Education stress could be described as personal reaction of educators to extreme demands or other types of pressure placed on them, resulting in unpleasant and negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, anxiety and depression (Younger & George, 2013). For example, in a study carried out in Mpumalanga, South Africa, Thakathi and Lemmer (2002) found that a female principal in one primary school organised the School Governing Body (SGB) to approach the department's offices to deliberate on how to resolve the scarcity of resources encountered at their school. However, it is important to note that at some schools, there is no collegiality between the SGB and principals and such unpleasant relationships may result in the principals' performance being perceived as inefficient by educators and create tension (Msila, 2011). Clarke (2007) posits that reliance on situational analysis to address the present challenges faced by the school and to procure future goals may bear benefits such as ensuring that there is careful control over funds, basic school benefits are in good condition and all stakeholders are involved in governance of the school.

Principals as agents of positive change

According to Rowland (2008) competent principals communicate effectively and fulfil the role of working with educators to strengthen skills, imparting knowledge of academic content and pedagogy and possess leadership skills. Consistent with the South African School Act, Section 8 (2) principals as the agents of change, are expected to maintain law and order, and teach educators that illegal objects are not allowed in schools and not to contravene or fail to comply with any law relating to education (Clark, 2007). Drawing from the *Trait Theory of Leadership*, such principals possess emotional stability, self-confidence, communication skills and knowledgeable about conflict management. In dealing with inexperienced educators, they apply achievement- oriented communication style to show confidence in the follower to perform well than being sarcastic and egoistic. Clarke (2007)

found that effective principals adopt a management style that motivates educators to further their studies (i.e. professional development), supports educators with appropriate career development and provides a programme of continuing professional development. In the same vein, such principals employ servant leadership which demonstrates qualities of altruism, hope, humility, integrity and interpersonal acceptance (Madsen & Mabokela, 2013; Staeheli & Hammett, 2013).

From Brofenbrenner- ecological theory, it becomes easier for the district to intervene when there is cooperation between the principals, educators, learners and parents. According to Forget and Lebel (2001) ecological theory states that interconnectedness of families, schools and community agencies can influence the development and behaviour of children. For example in cases where AIDS orphaned learners live in fear and discrimination from other learners or educators, Mayimele (2009) mentions that principals with effective communication skills and conscientious personality may refer educators to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Bill of Rights, which advocates that under no circumstances that a learner may be discriminated against on the basis of health status, gender, culture and race.

Delegation and collaboration

Because the principal's role is embedded in shared ideals and goals (Steyn, 2011) when allowing experienced educators to mentor the young ones, in this way the self-esteem and self -worth of all educators become enhanced (Niemann, 2008). Educators develop intrinsic motivation, become competent, confident and display commitment to teaching and learning. In schools where there are younger members of the teaching staff, who are perceived to be amenable to change and less constrained in comparison to senior educators, Ngcobo and Tikly (2010) propose that through allocating new staff members to lead time-table committees, extra mural activities and to be in charge of task teams to deal with learners experiencing learning barriers, that contributes towards the success of the school. Clarke (2007) assumes that because positive communication prevails among staff members, in the process they learn to be democratic citizens. By democracy, the belief is that both the principals and educators should work together towards devotion to tolerance to diversity and mutual assistance, friendship, honesty, trust and enhancement of self-respect. Crowther et al. (2009) further go on to describe democracy at school as a process which involves respect for work and dignity of individuals and their cultural traditions, recognition of interdependence in working for the common goal and the reverence for and proactive facilitation of free and open inquiry and critique. Crowther et al.(2009) view this type of relationship as the power

of parallel leadership and it refers to the collective efforts of the principals and educators in building school capacity and embodies mutual trust, shared purpose and allowance for individual expression.

In contrast, when the principals are authoritarian in their leadership and management style that could hamper the organizational culture because they may domineer, determine policies and procedures with no group participation or consultation, resulting in little or no effective communication flow among staff-members. In such a climate, there is no sense of belonging and the staff tends to lack the zeal to perform to the expectation (Ogunyika & Adedoyin, 2013). Authoritarian leadership style is characterized by detachment, strict expectation for behaviour and conservative rules that educators are expected to obey without asking questions or expressing their views (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2010). Owing to the schizothymic personality (cold, aloof and detached) (Schultz & Schultz, 2013) majority of authoritarian principals may withhold important information, threaten followers, display inconsistency and communicate poorly with the followers (Mahlangu, 2014; Moloi & Bush, 2007). They do not trust their educators and have the tendency of isolating and attempting to power or control their subordinates. A distinction must be made that female principals are perceived to be less hierarchical, more democratic and sensitive, foster cohesiveness and value openness in comparison to their male counterparts who display aggression and dominance (Thakathi & Lemmer, 2002).

In designing and implementing school-specific pedagogical principles, the principals and educators should engage in shared learning, focused reflection and in-depth problem-solving. In other words, both the principals and educators should refrain from use language of hierarchy which emphasizes superiority and inferiority complex (e.g. *"I'm just an educator," "My subordinates," "My superior", "Let's see what the boss wants"*) (Bredeson, 2003; Crowther et al. 2009). Instead, the principals should be friendly, radiate positive energy and be conscientious (Ryckman, 2007). For example, in a qualitative research study carried out in Lejweleputswa district in Free State, to investigate the nature and extent of the educators' knowledge about psychological, physical and social difficulties that AIDS orphaned learners experience, Mayimele (2009) found that schools which comprised educators in intervention programme to support affected learners, had a positive communication with principals, who are also involved in the programme. An explanation for the collaboration and selflessness of the staff-members could stem from Bandura's social learning theory because modelling has powerful and long-lasting effect (Ryckman, 2007; Schultz & Schultz, 2013).

Engagement with parents and community

In the “*Tirisano*” document released by the late former Minister of Education, Prof. K. Asmal, a call for mobilization of parents, NGOs and community leaders was made to ensure that schools are better equipped for the realisation of better academic performance of learners (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). The community- based approach draws on the principles and values of building social capital, which includes building communication, norms and trust among parents and the school (Gruber, 2006). From public administration discourse, this approach is viewed as true public participation because parents and the school collaboratively embark on decisions which promote unity and harmony (Gruber, 2006). From Epstein’s model of parental involvement, Mncube (2009) asserts that co-equal partnership between families and schools increases achievements in reading, participation in extra-curricular and lowers dropout rates. To show that effective communication from the side of the school management could have an impact on educators and learners, in a study carried out in South African villages, Ngcobo and Tikly (2010) found that principals who adopted innovative strategies by visiting villagers than to wait for parents meetings which are held once or twice in a year, encouraged parents to provide basic nutrition at home for learners and be involved in the education of their children.

In managing diversity at school, Mayimele (2009) found that principals who are unprejudiced, unbiased and non-stereotypic nurture a culture of communication and participation because it is the fundamental block of transparency and building consensus. In contrast, Botha (2012) found that principals who exercised their authority over SGB members since majority of parents in such committees are illiterate, in such schools educators were embroiled in conflicts. For example, Botha (2012) in a study conducted in Gauteng among SGB members from four secondary schools, because principals are arrogant and bossy in their approach, the findings revealed that the relevant information which affects the well-being of educators and learners was not being disseminated to the school and that left the educators clueless of what was going on. Against this background this research attempted to answer the question:

- What are the educators ‘views regarding effective communication in their school?
- How has the principal’s leadership style contributed towards effective communication?
- Which strategies could be used by the principal/ SMT to overcome the barriers to effective communication?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The method of research employed in this study was qualitative because it is interpretive (Creswell, 2009). By utilizing open-ended questionnaires, qualitative research allows flexibility and the attainment of a deeper and trustworthy understanding of the research subject since it is holistic in nature and participants express their own lived experiences and beliefs. In addition, qualitative research seeks a better understanding of complex situations. Because participants are in natural setting, they can express their opinions at length, in detail and in a way that may be personal and unique.

Sample and Population

The target population of this research study will consist of both male and female educators from a primary school in the Free-State Province. Participants were purposively selected. According to Creswell (2005) the population is composed of participants selected by the researcher based on the needs of the study and it refers to a group of subjects from which a sample will be drawn (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This means that it can be people, events or social actions which form a designated set of criteria (Blaikie, 2001; Miller, 2007). The researcher targeted 6 educators (3 females and 3 males) representing the population from one primary school who were eligible to answer the questionnaires in English.

Ethical consideration

Ethical measures were necessary to be adhered to in this research because they create a trusting relationship between the researcher and the participants. According to Creswell (2009) any research that involves human participation, should be governed by ethics to ensure that the participants are not subjected to undue discomfort, exploitation and physical harm. Ethics are principles by which the researchers should abide to protect the integrity of the participants during the study. In other words, ethics are concerned about the issues such as personal disclosure, authenticity and the credibility of the research report. In this research study, the permission for the participation of educators was granted by the school principal. In order to facilitate the participants to give their full informed consent, both the advantages and disadvantages of the research were explained before the research took place as well as the procedure to alert the participants should they wish to cease participation in the study at any time without penalty. According to Creswell (2009) informed consent should first be signing of the informed consent form to agree that the participation is voluntary. In this regard, the purposively selected educators understood the purpose of the study and never withdrew from voluntary participation. The research participants' rights to privacy were respected and under no circumstances were participants' names were identified or revealed as

suggested by Creswell (2009). During data collection, the researcher preferred to conduct the qualitative study in one classroom after school hours because it was quiet and participants felt relaxed as there no variables to distract them from completing the open-ended questionnaires. Furthermore, as suggested by Creswell (2009) the research participants were not exposed to undue physical or psychological harm. Of importance, the research findings were reported in a complete and honest fashion without fabricated data to support a particular conclusion as full acknowledgement of all material belonging to other authors was considered to avoid plagiarism and documentary theft as commended by Leedy and Ormrod (2005).

Data collection

According to Neuman (2002) since the qualitative research is inductive, the researcher gathered the information to build the theory by means of open ended questionnaires because they afforded the participants an opportunity to express themselves in details although it was time consuming as compared to filling of closed- ended questionnaires. The participants wrote their experiences using their own words without being interrupted as there were no wrong answers

Data analysis and interpretation

In analyzing data of this study, the researcher used the interpretive analysis. The key to doing good interpretive analysis was to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of understanding as it provided thick descriptions of characteristics, processes and context that constituted the phenomenon being studied as suggested by Durrheim, Painter and Terre Blanche (2006). The following steps were applied;

- **Organization of details about the case:** the specific facts about the case were arranged in a logical order.
- **Categorization of data:** categories were identified to help cluster the data into meaningful groups.
- **Interpretation of single instance:** specific occurrences and other bits of data were examined for the specific meanings.
- **Identification of patterns:** the data was categorized into themes after being interpreted.

Research Neutrality

In ensuring researcher neutrality to avoid bias, the researcher interpreted the whole discussion based on the accounts provided by the participants. Neutrality refers to the degree to which

the findings are a function solely of the participants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivation and perspectives (Krefting, 1991).

Trustworthiness

In ensuring the rigor of this research study, transferability was followed as a guideline as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1995), in addition to neutrality which is aforementioned. Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be relevant to other situations (Shenton, 2004). Creswell (2005) postulates that transferability is achieved when the findings of the study fit into contexts outside the study situation and when its audience views its findings as meaningful and applicable in terms of their own experiences.

RESULTS

The analysis resulted in the development of seven key themes, namely; *lack of delegation, authoritarian leadership style, interpersonal conflicts, low teacher morale, stress and depression, intervention of teacher union, consulting the media and redeployment of the principal.*

Lack of delegation

Most of the participants expressed that their principal lack in delegating responsibilities to the educators when asked what could be the reason for ineffective communication. Some of the participants' responses are as follows:

“ Our principal does not assign certain professional duties such as being represented at the meetings which address even human relations among staff- members ”

“He is always busy and does not feel comfortable in appointing us to act as senior educators in a foundation phase to ease his burden. The bad thing about it is that we are left clueless when the district officials come to evaluate us ”

“Ineffective communication is caused by lack of involvement. We are excluded in many activities whose aims are to improve culture of learning and teaching because our principal undermines our capabilities”

“Where on earth have you ever seen a school principal who does not want to delegate duties such sharing staff- meetings and expect growth and development?”

Authoritarian leadership style

To work in a hostile environment with leaders who disregard other people's views is what the six participants expressed. Female participants, in particular, indicated that even when there are learners who reported to have been sexually abused or victimized, they do not feel the need to raise that to the principal because he is aloof and inconsiderate. Regarding the

question: How has the principal's leadership style contributed towards effective communication? Their responses were as follows:

"Our principal is not friendly, approachable and warm. His personality is of someone who is self-centered. Because there is no positive communication, we don't even approach him regarding the cases of learners who are being sexually abused and this is totally wrong as it is against the constitution of the country "

"He turns down and shouts at us when we bring suggestions to help learners who reach puberty. In my opinion it is like we will take his post "

One male participant indicated that because the principal is anti-social, he sees no point of reporting to him the developments as far as extra-mural activities are concerned. He responded as follows;

"When our boys have played soccer and won, we do not even bother to inform the staff during staff- meetings because our principal does not see the good in us that we do for the school"

Another male participant in his response perceived the principal as putting unrealistic demands on them without considering that the school lacks resources. For example, he said:

"Our principal still operates the traditional way. Every time we request him to ask the chairperson of SGB to employ two temporary teachers to fill the gap of those who resigned since the posts have not been advertised and we are overloaded, the principal passes unpleasant remarks that he will report us to the district because we seem to be knowing much "

Interpersonal conflicts

This group of participants raised that because the principal threatens them every time when he is being approached for being ineffective communicator that created conflicts between the SGB and educators. For example, they responded as follows to the question: How effective is the SGB in promoting human relations between the principal, educators and parents?

"SGB members who represent parents are not assertive. They are afraid of him as most of them are old and not learned."

"There is no way there could be peace and a friendly environment in our school because parents believe everything that comes from the principal "

"The last time when the principal disclosed that one of our female colleague was going through divorce, our SGB saw nothing wrong when we expressed our dissatisfaction to it"

“Our SGB has not united us at all because our principal manipulates it. There are groups amongst us and it is disappointing to learn that even parents gossip about us to other colleagues.”

“As the new educator in the school, my expectations were that, the SGB members would be true leaders in the community, people who have knowledge about school governance. But, there is no such since they create tension and unable to be neutral and fair in dealing with matters affecting teaching and learning of their children ”

Low teacher morale

Both male and female educators indicated that it is depressing to go to school that negatively affects their personalities. They expressed that they lack in zeal and motivation to teach with excitement because the environment operates like a closed-system. With regard to the question to investigate how educators feel to work in an environment which lacked effective communication, this is what the participants wrote:

“My attitude towards teaching has grossly changed since the environment I work in is toxic. Even when I am absent or I have arrived late to school, I do not care. ”

“For the fact that our principal perceives himself as the boss, with the right to hire and fire, to some degree, he has contributed to my low self-esteem, low morale and lack of motivation to follow the Batho-Pele principles. You will never see him happy and as a leader, father and church-going person, I was expecting to work with a leader from whom I would get extrinsic motivation and advice.”

“ Even when learners perform better and parents come to school to appreciate the roles that we play to guide their children, still our coach (I.e. principal), is not impressed.”

“I try to remain motivated and ignore the derogatory remarks that our principal utter during staff-meetings and about girls who fall pregnant, but I sometimes wish if had not got employed at this school ”

“I once had a confrontation with the principal and after that I lost the motivation to give my all to the learners. Whether I present or absent, I do not lose anything, my children attend school in town. What I hate most is that his SGB members believe in him”.

Stress and depression

This theme emerged from the question which investigated how educators feel to work in an environment which lacked effective communication. Participants expressed lack of sleep and concentration when they think of their school. Furthermore, some indicated that even at home they are unable to interact positively with their family members. Their responses are as follows:

“ I become stressed when there is a circular that we must meet urgently in the staffroom because the principal would be telling us that Mrs X and Mr. Y, you must attend the workshop. ”

“ Four months ago, my medical doctor diagnosed me as having depression. Upon asking me about my relationship with colleagues, he picked up quickly that at my school, there is no joy. He booked me off for a whole week and advised me to see a counseling psychologist if my condition did not improve.”

“I can’t tolerate children who make noise in my class. I become easily irritable. I happen to suffer from headaches and struggle to sleep at night. ”

“ To avoid stress and the principal who is aggressive, I drink alcohol. I feel that I am not adding any value to the teaching profession because our principal is a stressor”

Teacher union representative

To dealing with a principal who is not democratic, these group of educators felt that the intervention of teachers’ union could be the solution in bringing harmony and respect for human dignity of the educators. In responding to the question: ***What strategies can be employed to promote effective communication between the principal and educators?*** The participants mentioned the following uncompromisingly:

“ We belong to SADTU and our rights cannot be abused. We have reported him as we speak and expect the organization to deal with him accordingly. We live in a country where the rights of educators are protected by the constitution and SACE ”

“Because our SGB is afraid of him and not interested in building unity, the only solution will be a teachers’ union ”

“The intervention of SADTU in a school where the principal treats us like animals or puppets, would be ideal because there is no open door policy in place, which the principal must have endorsed and we feel free to approach him on how to share the vision of the school”

Consulting the media

The participants also revealed that consulting the media such as newspapers’ reporters or television could be the solution as they participants highlighted the following:

“The television would expose him so much though we may be charged with insubordination by the district”.

“Because the district does not offer courses on conflict management for the principals to become instrumental in ensuring that the school operates towards maintain stability; to invite

Daily Sun newspaper reporters can be good in the sense that the Minister of Education would know the type of principals we work with.”

Redeployment of the principal

The participants revealed that the principal should be redeployed to another school because though the educators are not vocal about the harsh treatment they receive from the principal. Their responses to the question: ***What strategies can be employed to promote effective communication between the principal and educators?*** The participants expressed the following:

“We are tired of a principal who does not care about our emotions and feelings. With the help of our union, he must be redeployed to another school and be given a principal who has morals and who would be able to communicate with us ”

“Effective communication is the by-product of effective leaders. So in case of principals who frustrates educators, the best solution is that the district places him elsewhere because if not the morale of the educators become low”

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this research reveal that the staff- members experience conflicts, low teacher morale and depression as a result of authoritarian leadership style of the principals and lack of effective communication. Research on the whole school renewal indicates that educators need emotionally safe environment for teaching and personal growth (Lee & Yin, 2011). However, when authoritarian principals display anger and defiance, tension and aggressive behaviour is likely among the subordinates (Kalat, 2011; Louw & Louw, 2007). Because female educators in particular, lack assertiveness, they may be victims of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and remain submissive despite being overloaded with lot paperwork and classes (Comer, 2013). Depression is one of the emotional problems which, when not properly managed, it could lead to a state of hopelessness, increased level of aggression, loss of sex drive and hypersomnia (prolonged sleep) (Coon & Mitterer, 2010). More specifically, findings indicate that educators experienced deprivation of some degree. Collective action for promoting common purposes is very limited. Also, when they continue to work in an environment that is toxic, the chances of learners being left unattended or not guided by caring and prepared educators are minimal since the educators would be stressed. Consistent with these findings, Peasron and Moomaw (2005) found that American educators

who were deprived autonomy by their principals reported job dissatisfaction which had led to stress, physical exhaustion, anxiety, frustration and sense of powerlessness.

Teacher empowerment has been linked to collaborative decision making pertaining to curriculum, instructions and leading (Peasron & Moomaw, 2005). This study found that when the principals do not acknowledge that educators can bring innovation, counsel learners who come from dysfunctional families and act as advisors among themselves. Consequently, educators may feel demotivated and uncooperative.

It also emerged from this study that the need of highly effective principals and the support of other senior and middle managers is required as education landscape has dramatically changed over the past twenty years of democracy in South Africa. The principal does not collaborate with the teachers and SGB. During meetings, the principal does not delegate duties nor plan with the educators. Furthermore, educators expressed that the principal delays to provide immediate feedback when he had attended principals' meetings. Very often, the principal displays aggressive behavior and treats them with contempt. An expression of unhappiness and frustration was evident when educators wished it would be better should the principal be redeployed because his authoritarian leadership style had affected the culture of learning and teaching. In this regard, principals ought to be actively involved in bonding their staff to avoid being exposed to media and from being protested against. Supporting this is Domitrovich, Bradshaw, Greenberg, Embry, Poduska and Ialongo (2010) who found that at the schools where principals are democratic, educators become innovative, agreeable and respect the code of ethics because their principals' attitudes make them feel wanted and regarded as valuable. Heystek (2004) posits that lack of collegueship may create hatred and lead to poor performance of learners since educators experience conflicts. From this implication, district officials should intervene and ensure that *Batho-Pele* principles are practised. Bush (2007) argues that it is constitutional right of educators to belong to teachers' union for protection against anti-social and disrespectful principals. Finally, since policies change rapidly, principals must be lifelong learners in order to gain confidence in dealing with various issues affecting the school and accommodate the existence of teacher's union without feeling insecure (Msila, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Despite the fact the goal of the study has been achieved by ensuring the use of research ethics, however the sample size in the study was smaller. Furthermore, the demographics such as the type of the school and race of educators are the factors that should not be overlooked. Although this study can be transferable into contexts outside the study situation

but it cannot be generalized due to small number of participants that have been used in the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: the principal should respect and give attention to the diverse and individual perspective of all staff-members drawing from post-modern model (Bush, 2007). Relations of respect must be mutual and reciprocal as harsh environment disempowers educators. Since communication may be distorted by differences in cultural values, languages and viewpoints which may prevail during meetings, it is imperative that the principal accommodates every staff member by acknowledging their beliefs and opinions so that educators may not develop negative attitude towards teaching and learning. To improve effective communication, the principal ought to prepare and disseminate the informationsuch as memorandum and circulars issued by the district on timeto avoid unnecessary conflicts. Finally, adequate in-service training for principals in acquisition of skills and positive attitudes should be periodically available for better management of diversified school environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the educators who participated in the study and financial support from the Govan Mbeki Research and Development Centre (UFH).

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