

Educators' Perceptions of School Effectiveness and Dysfunctional Schools in South Africa

Stephanus Gert Pretorius

***Department: Educational Leadership and Management, University of South Africa,
P. O. Box 392, Pretoria 0003, South Africa***

Telephone: 27 82 444 52 44 or 27 12 4600969, Fax: 0866287938

E-mail: pretosg@unisa.ac.za

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ABSTRACT Based on international comparisons and annual national assessments of reading and mathematics achievement levels it could be stated that the South African education system is to a large extent ineffective. Large numbers of schools are considered to be dysfunctional. This study aimed at investigating practitioners' perceptions of effective schools and ineffective or dysfunctional schools within the specific context of South Africa. It is argued that the root causes of dysfunction must be discovered in order to develop a coordinated and structured strategy in turning dysfunctional schools around to become effective again. On the basis of an in-depth literature review and a qualitative investigation it was found that practitioners' perceptions show a great deal of similarity with school effectiveness models developed elsewhere. Various root causes for dysfunction came to the fore including ineffective management of the education system on various levels of management, an ineffective teacher corps and limited mother tongue instruction.