

**THE ROLE OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE
SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN THE SOUTPANSBERG AREA OF VHEMBE
DISTRICT IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

BY

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A Thesis

Submitted to

University of Venda

In fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN

Curriculum Studies

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30 March 2010

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN THE SOUTPANSBERG AREA OF VHEMBE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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This dissertation examines the role of the high school principals in the management of curriculum implementation in the Soutpansberg area of the Vhembe district. There was a wide gap between curriculum implementation expectations and the level of management abilities by school principals in creating a positive and conducive atmosphere for curriculum delivery. The gap was demonstrated by ineffectiveness of principals in managing curriculum tasks as prescribed by the department, which result in poor scholastic achievement of learners. It was therefore the nature and reason for the ineffectiveness of the principals in the management of curriculum that the researcher examined in order to advance recommendations that might help in bridging this gap.

It is envisaged that through this study, principals would become aware of the new techniques of managing school curriculum, sharing curriculum responsibilities and building the necessary support base for successful implementation of curriculum. Hopefully, principals would understand, promote, and implement their mandate in terms of SASA, and be able to manage scarce resources to maximize the performance of schools. The researcher further anticipated that principals together with the department would examine the kind of training and support system required in managing school curriculum. Other stakeholders in education would be more informed on matters related to the role of the principals in managing school curriculum.

The population of this study was comprised of high school principals, curriculum advisors and circuit managers in the Soutpansberg circuit cluster of the Vhembe district. The researcher decided to take all 65 principals to constitute the first target group. The second target group was from 5 circuit managers and 40 curriculum advisors. These stakeholders manage the curriculum implementation at school level: identify and analyze curriculum problems, plan strategies for solving them and liaise with internal and external curriculum decision-makers to solve problems as they arise.

(III)

Two instruments of collecting data were used in this study: Questionnaires in Appendix 3 was handed out to school principals to deduce responses on personal data, responsibilities and challenges principals faced in the management of curriculum; and interview schedule for officials: circuit managers and curriculum advisors to get more feedback and clarification on the effectiveness of principals in executing curriculum tasks. The data from both instruments were subjected to manual analysis where frequency counts were established and ranked. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis consisted of ordering, establishing and reducing data into a condensed form followed by descriptive interpretation and discussion.

The main findings and conclusion of the study were:

- The majority of principals experienced difficulties in managing curriculum implementation tasks such as educator appraisal; staff development; curriculum change, decision-making, evaluation, guidance and counseling; teaching and learning and communication. Specifically, principals had little knowledge or misunderstanding in managing these tasks.
- Most principals did not established structures or teams (involvement of stakeholders) to support them in the management of curriculum. Principals could not apply participatory managerial principles and delegate more leadership responsibilities to the teams. Without teams, it was also found that principals had no management plans for coordinating various curriculum tasks.
- Principals in the area under study had low academic and professional qualifications with no specialization in curriculum studies. In addition, they did not receive training in the management of curriculum implementation especially after the transformation. It was therefore assumed that with the lack of training, principals could not handle changing and challenging circumstances in the management of curriculum tasks.

From the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

- The establishment of teams in every tasks to be performed. Teamwork has become a priority for the principal and forms part of the shift away from an autocratic leadership style to a more democratic and participatory management style. Where management is shared in this way, teamwork is valued and school can flourish and become more effective than those dominated by a single individual.

- On- the-job training of principals to understand and interpret advanced management principles expected in managing curriculum implementation. The department should ensure that all principals are periodically selected for training and that supervision is carried out. Overseas training should also be allowed with a carefully planned program, so that it can be justified in terms of relevancy and efficiency.