SCHOOL LEADERS AND THE USE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE MANDATED CHANGE PROCESSES

by

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This journey has been made possible by some very special people in my life. The support has been undying, even in the moments when I thought it not possible.
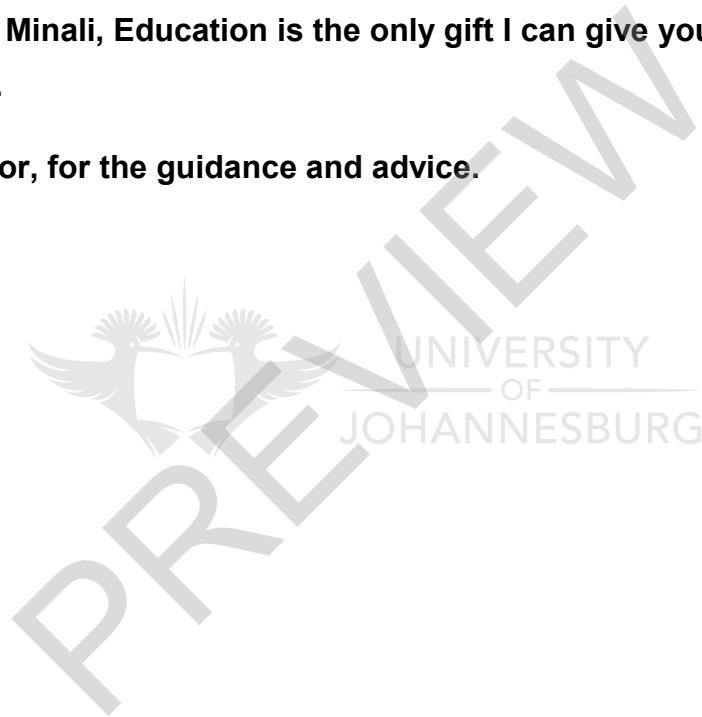
To my Parents for always encouraging me.

To my husband, Dipak, for always believing in me. You kept the candle burning for me.

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To Janisha and Minali, Education is the only gift I can give you. Always strive to do your best.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The South African school system has been in a state of flux since the first democratic election in 1994, with numerous changes that have included the introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) by the then Professor Kader Asmal, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) by his successor, Mrs. Naledi Pandor, and recently the introduction of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011). All the mandated changes were informed by international tests such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS), but a major challenge facing the policymakers is how to manage the implementation of the change process. Emotional intelligence is one of the tools that can be used to manage the change process as it provides school managers, at the micro- implementation level, with the knowledge and skills to manage possible resistance. It can be nurtured and is valuable for a leader to possess as a way of maximising positive behaviour (Gutstein, 2004:29-30).

Results from South Africa's participation in 2006 in TIMSS and PIRLS, conducted by the International Association for the Education of Education Achievement (IEA) for Grades 4 and 5 learners, ranked South Africa far below other African countries. The 2011, Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEC) report 3 reveals that South Africa had slipped further to seventh from the bottom. More recently, in the 2012PIRLS, South African learners achieved an score of 460 against an international average of 500 (Rademeyer, 2012), whilst in the TIMMS South African learners' came second last in Mathematics out of 45 countries that participated, with a score of 352 compared to the international midpoint of 500. In Science, South African learners came last with an average of 332 compared to a midpoint of 500 (Rademeyer, 2012).

Against the background of these studies, a review of the education system took place which led to the implementation of CAPS in 2012 for the Foundation Phase

and Grade 10. The change was mandated by policymakers but the responsibility for establishing standards, setting goals, leading, guiding and managing these mandated changes was to lie with the principal and the management team (Parumasur & Barkhuizen, 2009:482). According to Fullan (1993:22), it is not possible to mandate for such crucial factors because essential for achieving complex goals of change are skills, creative thinking and committed action. Furthermore, Fullan (2001:71) reports that the process of change is rife with anxiety, stress and ambiguity and school leaders cannot just use rational thinking and good planning to cope with these. In order to manage the stress, emotions and interpersonal relationships that accompany such changes, school leaders will need an additional skill, namely that of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to perceive and express emotions, to use emotions to facilitate thinking, to understand and reason with emotions and to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relationships with others (Northouse, 2010:23; McWilliam & Hatcher, 2007:235). According to Goleman and Cherniss (2001:5), to be effective in managing so many challenges the principal should be able to manage his/her own emotional reactions as well as those of other people. Emotional intelligence is a valuable skill that can be nurtured to facilitate the implementation of mandated change processes (Gutstein, 2004:29). Goleman (1998:28) suggests that managers should make use of an emotional intelligence framework, which has four domains, namely, self awareness, social awareness, self management and relationship management. These domains work in unison and according to Malgas (2005:135), effective principals should be competent in them all.

1.2   THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

School principals, as the implementers of the mandated change processes, stand between demoralised teachers at school level and the macro-level designers of education policy. The policymakers, through their district officials, enforce the mandatory changes, and it is here where Emotional Intelligence can be a useful management tool as it can synergise the system and help in maintaining a balance between that what teachers already know and that what is new to them.

Against this background, the research question for this study is:

How can school leaders use emotional intelligence to facilitate, lead and manage the mandated change processes at schools?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is to investigate the principal's use of emotional intelligence in leading and managing mandated school change. This research has a twofold purpose, firstly to discover how emotional intelligence influences various change situations at school, and secondly to create awareness for principals that emotional intelligence can be of value to them in the way schools are managed and led. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002:230) assert that a leadership style that uses emotional intelligence requires the creation of new mindsets and new behaviours, and that in order to manage the change, schools require courageous leadership, stamina and unswerving commitment.

In order to achieve the main aim the following research objectives are also set:

- Investigate how the four domains (dimensions) of Emotional Intelligence can be used by school leaders to manage processes of change.

- Explore the perceptions of teachers as to the extent that leaders in schools make use of emotional intelligence to manage the processes of mandated change.

- Provide school leaders with guidelines on the use of emotional intelligence in the effective management of change.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research was used to achieve the research goals. The research study focused on principals, developing a portrait of their emotional intelligence and how they reacted to change. In developing this portrait the perception of the teachers will form a major part of the study.

Quantitative research is a type of research design in which the researcher decides what to study and asks specific questions, collects quantifiable data from

respondents, analyses these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased objective manner (Creswell, 2008:54). A structured questionnaire with closed ended questions was designed based on the dimensions reported by Goleman (1998). The data was analysed using PASW 18 (SPSS18), and the dependent variables were the dimensions of emotional intelligence and mandated changes. The various biographic and demographic variables served as independent variables.

Random sampling stratified along the post levels of teachers was used. It is a procedure used to divide and sample teachers so that those selected are proportional to their representation in the total teacher population (Creswell, 2007:154).

Questionnaires were distributed to all the Foundation Phase teachers at the 94 primary schools and to Grade 10 teachers at the 47 secondary schools in the Johannesburg North District. 400 respondents responded. The reason for the sample was that the above teachers were involved in the implementation of CAPS.

1.5   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The goal of this research was to have measures and observations that were reliable and valid. A questionnaire was designed which had scores that were internally consistent. According to Creswell (2007:171) the coefficient Alpha can be used to test internal consistency. The content validity was authenticated by the possible questions which considered the content relevant to the use of emotional intelligence when mandated change processes are involved. Construct validity was established by using the process of factor analysis in order to determine which groups of variables correlate well with one another (Creswell, 2007:172).

1.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When the research is being conducted it is important to take the ethical considerations into account. The researcher should have a code of ethics. The aim of the research, its design and purpose should be outlined in advance. The respondent should not be harmed, be at risk of being in danger or be coerced.

Respondents should be comfortable and give consent to participate in the research. The respondent should be given the opportunity to peruse the findings. At all times the research should be open and transparent. The respondent may at anytime withdraw from the research project. The pseudo name should be used at all times. The data collected should be done so in confidence. The researcher should show respect.

According to the American Statistical Association (1998), states that quantitative researchers and statisticians should:

- present their findings and interpretations honestly and objectively
- avoid untrue, deceptive, or undocumented statements
- collect only the data needed for the purpose of their inquiry
- be prepared to document data sources used in an inquiry; known inaccuracies in the data; and steps taken to correct or to refine the data, statistical procedures applied to the data, and the assumptions required for their application.

In the investigation permission was requested from the District Director, Principals and teachers. The schools were handed a letter outlining the purpose of the research. (See Appendix). The teachers and management were requested to complete the questionnaire anonymously.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Emotional intelligence is defined as when the principal at the school understands the emotions that accompany change which is the ability determined by ones' emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to manage oneself and one's relationships with others (Goleman, 2004:80).

Mandates are rules governing the actions of individuals and agencies and are intended to produce compliance (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005:64), designed by the policymakers.

Change has been defined as "movement from one state to another" (Hargreaves 2004:287), with the meaning of 'state' in this context referring to the change in the curriculum from NCS to CAPS.

1.8   SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the study. The possible relationship between the perceptions of the management of mandated curriculum change and perceptions of the utilisation of emotional intelligence was briefly discussed. The mandated changes to be implemented by the principals at schools can be facilitated by using Emotional Intelligence. The outline of the study to be pursued will be highlighted in the chapters as follows.

Chapter one provides a motivation of the research study, research methodology as well as the research problem.

In Chapter two a thorough literature review will be constructed to provide a link between mandated changes and emotional intelligence.

Chapter three deals with the research design and methodology used in this research project.

Chapter four will deal with the analysis of the research and findings.

Chapter five provides the summary of the findings and the recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Having provided a brief overview of the research study, this chapter reviews the literature on the issues at the heart of this research, namely mandated change and emotional intelligence. The study aims to show how the former can be implemented by the utilisation of the various components of the latter. Cooper and Sawaf (1997:xii) confirm that the multidimensional focus of emotional intelligence would be a powerful skill for principals to have in a change process, and the following discussion provides answers to questions such as: What are these mandates? How does the leadership of the school introduce the change to the teachers who are demoralised, angry and frustrated by continual mandated change to the school curriculum and what are the teachers' present perceptions of the principal's ability to utilise emotional intelligence as an aid to implementing these changes?

According to the Report of the Task Team (2009:5) in July 2009, the Minister of Basic Education, Minister Motshekga appointed a panel of experts to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and to develop a set of recommendations designed to improve it. The rationale behind the brief was that the Minister herself had received numerous comments and concerns both verbally and in writing about the education system. Another reason was that a large number of schools were underperforming and South Africa had not fared well in the 2006 international TIMSS and PIRLS tests, conducted by the IEA for Grades 4 and 5 learners. (Report of the Task Team, 2009).

With the above in mind, a review of the education system took place, the main findings of the Report of the Task Team (2009:7) being that there were a plethora of policies, guidelines and interpretations of policies at all levels of the education system, from the national Department of Education (DoE) down to provincial, district and subject advisor level, and this was causing large-scale confusion. The major challenges raised were that there was no clear, widely communicated plan

for the implementation or support of the NCS, teacher planning, transition of learners from phase to phase or the complicated assessment processes.

Amongst the recommendations outlined for each of the areas mentioned above, one was to develop a policy document for every learning area and subject (by phase), as the definitive support for all teachers. The resulting Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was published (Department of Basic Education, 2011) in Gazette 34600, which reported that they would be implemented in January 2012 for the Foundation Phase and Grade 10. This was mandated by the policymakers at the macro-level of the education system.

The education system is a bureaucratic and hierarchical system, with the macro-planners in the DoE, where the mandated changes are developed for the implementers at the micro-level, namely the principal and the school. Provided the principals are privy to these mandated changes, systems thinking allow them to view the entire system and better understand it, while the different levels interact with and affect each other (Moloi, 2005:71). Mandates are rules governing the actions of individuals and agencies and are intended to produce compliance (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005:64), designed by the policymakers. The legislative mandates were designed by the Department of Basic Education and had to be implemented at the micro-level of the school under the supervision of the principal and the subject advisors.

School leaders are required to drive the emotions which are part of any mandated change process in the correct direction. It is the leader who is ultimately responsible for managing stress, emotions and anxiety accompanied by the mandated changes. It takes a certain kind of leader who knows his or her people to effectively manage the changes taking place in school. Fullan (2001:3) identifies facets of change as the change process, managing change, creating coherence, and organisational behaviour. However, Fullan does not refer to mandated change directly and hence the role of the principal in implementing such changes is not sufficiently catered for.

2.2   THE CHANGE PROCESS

Change has been defined as "movement from one state to another" (Hargreaves 2004:287), with the meaning of 'state' in this context referring to the change in the curriculum from NCS to CAPS. The latter has been developed as a single document that encompasses both the curriculum statements and assessment procedures. The change process requires planning, preparing the mindset of the teachers and managing the change process. The planned curriculum change has been mandated by the policymakers but it is possible that the various facets involved with change have not been adequately dealt with. Thus, this researcher will use the model of Bullock and Batten (in Burnes, 2004:277) to discuss the various facets more comprehensively.

2.2.1   Exploration phase

In this phase an organisation has to explore and decide whether it wants to make the specific changes in its operation and, if so, commit resources to planning the change. With respect to the CAPS document the consultation and investigation phase was completed by the Education Task Committee at the macro level and as such it was a political process. In order to interact with such an exploration stage the school management team (SMT) should also be privy to the findings of the investigation or to have been involved in its design. As such, mandated curriculum changes are part of a political process occurring at the macro level of the system. As principals at the micro level do not have the requisite information to perform such exploratory planning the gap between curriculum design and its implementation becomes larger.

2.2.2   Planning phase

The change process involved collecting information in order to establish the correct diagnosis of the problem, establish goals, design the appropriate actions to achieve the goals and persuade key decision-makers to approve and support the proposed. However, during the curriculum change of CAPS the Investigating Committee compiled the report and made it available to the Minister. The Task Committee set about designing or repackaging the curriculum and once this process was completed the provincial and district office conducted "road shows" to

advocate CAPS. Awareness was also created by the DoE, the mandate to schools being that they now needed to set goals for how to implement the mandated curriculum process.

This particular phase is fragmented as the persons involved with implementing the curriculum change, as the key decision-makers, should not be seen as an isolated entity that merely have to implement the mandate. They also have to be involved in its design and in this way their commitment to the change is more likely to be obtained. By involving school leaders at an early stage of the planning phase one could prevent top-down miscommunication resulting from the involvement of too many diverse entities.

2.2.3 Action phase

The action phase involves the subject advisors being trained by the DoE, in turn cascading the revised curriculum down to school level where the change derived from the planning phase are implemented. This phase requires the involvement of the principals and it is a waste of person power to train the subject advisors who then train them. This makes the communication chain unnecessarily long and complicated and increases the chances of miscommunication. Early involvement of school principals in this phase of the change process can minimise communication error and result in better understanding between the subject advisors and the school principals regarding the implementation phase of the curriculum statement. Also, the principals are aware of the mandated changes and consequently are better able to support the teachers.

2.2.4 Integration phase

The teachers will start to implement the changes, whilst the principal, management and subject advisors will provide the necessary support for the teachers do so.

2.3 ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

The present curriculum change process was a top down approach, which is typical of all politically mandated large-scale transformation changes. However, Kotter

(2002:3-8) suggests that when one is concerned with such large-scale transformational changes the following steps could prove advantageous.

2.3.1 Establish a sense of urgency

As the administrative arm of the government, the DoE is concerned with policy implementation at the macro level, having started its advocacy for the present curriculum change in CAPS. This filtered down to stakeholders through discussions, training sessions and meetings, leaving the principal, as a public servant, no choice but to implement the changes at the micro level of the system. However, the filtering of this information is not a physical process but is based on the decisions and communication between persons. Important information goes missing and consultation to reconcile differences of opinion between the various stakeholders is not allocated sufficient time. Such problems could possibly be overcome by also involving principals, who could also make use of how their emotions can be used to influence their thinking, behaviour and performance, as well as utilising their emotional competence to influence their interpersonal competence in order to establish a sense of urgency.

2.3.2 Build a guiding team

At the micro level of implementation a group or team should be formed so that the curriculum change can be discussed and guidance and development occur. The school principal needs to make use of his/her interpersonal emotional competence in order to obtain the necessary involvement in the change process. It is here that principals require social and emotional skills such as persuasion, open communication, leading by example, modelling the change expected of others, bringing disagreements into the open, nurturing opportunities for collaboration and modelling team qualities such as respect, helpfulness and cooperation.

2.3.3 Get the vision right

In support of the macro-level initiatives the SMT should develop a creative but simple vision which is aligned to the vision of the school, developing appropriate strategies to fulfil the curriculum implementation vision. In this process it should

act as a catalyst by championing the curriculum change and enlisting the support of the teachers.

2.3.4 Communicate for buy in

When seeking supportive involvement, the SMT should be able to induce understanding and set a clear, concise and positive message. It must be skilful in registering emotional cues, listening well, seeking mutual understanding and welcoming a sharing of information. Social communication skills are vital if the SMT is to obtain the support of all stakeholders involved with the curriculum change at school level.

2.3.5 Empower action

When people feel part of the process they are encouraged to action and implement the change. The principal must work to remove obstacles, give constructive feedback and provide support. As large scale change is an intentionally emotional process school principals who understand their own emotions are more likely also to understand those of others.

2.3.6 Create short-term wins

There will always be people who resist change, and who are made uncomfortable by it. Setting and managing short-term goals and celebrating their successful achievement makes it easier to achieve the long-term goal of effective curriculum implementation. The SMT should operate with a hope of success rather than fear of failure by setting manageable goals and being prepared to take calculated risks.

2.3.7 Do not let up

The SMT should continue to foster and encourage determination and persistence, whilst encouraging progress, and reporting and highlighting any achievements. Persistence in seeking goals, despite obstacles and setbacks, can be self-motivating and serve as a source of motivation to others that perseverance can conquer any challenge.

2.3.8 Make change stick

Kotter (2002:8) suggests that new and winning behaviour will continue despite the pull of tradition and the turnover of change leaders. The school leader should thus make every effort to ensure that the curriculum change is experienced as a positive emotional change among his/her followers. If the management of the school has sufficiently prepared the teachers for the change process, implementation becomes easier. The mandated change process is complicated, however managing the change is important, and as Parumasur and Barkhuizen (2009:483, in Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt) suggest, it has two goals, one for the SMT of the school to adapt to change and the other to seek change in employee (teacher) behaviour.

2.4   MANAGING CHANGE

In a mandated change process at school the principal, SMT and teachers are key role-players in managing it. According to Slater (2003:323), a principal will now be considered as one of the many creative, caring, collaborative individuals in the school. The following are also important for managing the change process.

2.4.1   Creating collaborative cultures

Collaborative cultures are created through positive interpersonal working relationships, though mutual support, mutual understanding and shared purpose (Moloi, 2005:88). Principals will lead by setting the tone and communicating exactly what the expectations are of the teachers during the mandated change process. Research by Kouzes and Posner (in Slater, 2003:326) indicated that leaders in the organisation set the tone through their actions, in turn sending signals about who one is and what one expects of others. They also posit that in order to foster collaboration leaders have to be skilled in two essentials, firstly creating a climate of trust and, secondly, facilitating relationships. These will be discussed in detail in the section on emotional intelligence.

Collaborative cultures are created by the principal, so that the teachers feel part of the process. They enhance a sense of sharing and collaboration through communication.

2.4.2 Communication

The SMT will create a platform for conversations to take place about the impending mandated changes, with communication channels opened between all interested parties, notably parents, district office, teachers and management of the school. According to Kelly (in Werner, 2007:163), organisation communication is a process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more people, usually with the intention of motivating or influencing behaviour. During the mandated change process the SMT will do the following:

- Communicate consistently, frequently, and through multiple channels, including speaking, writing, training, focus groups, notice boards, intranets, and more about the change.

- Communicate all that is known about the changes, as quickly as the information is available.

- Provide significant amounts of time for people to ask questions, request clarification, and provide input.

Senge (2006:224-230) suggests that dialogue will encourage people (principals) to become observers of their own thinking, and dialogues are diverging as they do not seek agreement but rather a richer grasp of complex issues.

Collaboration and communication will allay the fears of the teachers experiencing these emotions during the implementation of the change process and the SMT will facilitate these two facets. The change in behaviour of all the people in the school directly impacts on the school as an organisation, hence the following facet is considered.

Although the above aspects of the communication process refer to the SMT it would also be applicable to the designers of the mandated change process and the Department of Education should also follow such communication procedures during curriculum changes.

2.5   ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Odendaal (2009:7) indicates that a school is an organisation and the teachers and their behaviour constitute organisational behaviour namely, what people do in an organisation and how this affects its performance. The following will be considered as factors within this group.

2.5.1 Interpersonal skills

Knowledge of relevant interpersonal skills is essential for the principal, some of which, in addition to communication, are the ability to think on one's feet, create teamwork and create a positive work environment. Odendaal and Roodt (in Robbins, et al., 2009:4) found in an independent analysis of top-ranked companies in Southern Africa that the culture of the best companies included a commitment to quality work, trust between managers and employees, teamwork, positive relationships, job satisfaction and willingness to make an extra effort.

Singh, Manser and Mestry (2007:546) write that a principal will implement the following four responsibilities at all levels of an organisation. The first is to transfer of ownership of work to the people who carry it out, with teachers given the responsibility to adapt the CAPS at school level. The second is to create an environment in which the transfer of ownership takes place, with each person wanting to be responsible for his or her own performance. The principal will allow the teachers to take responsibility for being creative and sharing ideas on implementing CAPS. The third is to develop individual capability and competence, with in-house development taking place. The responsibility will lie not only with the principal but also with the subject advisor or a service provider. Again, the SMT will have to take the time to familiarise themselves with the policy. The fourth is to create conditions in the organisation that challenge every person to learn continually. However, despite these responsibilities there is a certain amount of anxiety which may sometimes lead to conflict.

2.5.2 Conflict management

When there is change there is uncertainty and people feel certain emotions, such as fear, anger, anxiety and frustration. It is these emotions that are the source of