Exploring the predominantly used educational management and leadership models in selected secondary schools in Lesotho

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Abstract— Lesotho secondary school principals are expected to perform a range of activities on a daily basis to ensure that the schools achieve the goals and objectives set. In order to achieve these objectives, individual school principals may use one or more educational management and leadership model(s). This study is anchored in the Rational Choice Theory (RCT) and it seeks to explore the educational management and management model(s) that are predominantly used by the principals in selected Lesotho secondary schools. The data was generated through telephonic semi structured interviews from 10 conveniently selected schools principals. The data was analysed using the Critical Discourse Analysis. The study shows that the, principals are predominantly using formal/ managerial, collegial/participative and ambiguity/contingency models of educational management and leadership. This implies that there is no single model that works for all the principals. Principals predominantly prefer educational management and leadership model(s) that permit them to effectively perform duties assigned.

Keywords—**education management, leadership, management and leadership models, rational theory of choice, secondary schools principals.**

INTRODUCTION AND STUDY FOCUS

In Lesotho, the secondary school principals are appointed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) through the Teaching Service Commission (TSC). They are expected to manage the schools effectively so that the wider educational goals and objectives may be achieved. Given the different tasks that principals have to execute on daily basis and the ever mounting pressure from the parents, the learners, the teachers and the MOET, the school principals often find themselves under immense pressure to perform as expected. It is believed that there is a direct correlation between the principals' competencies and the desired performance of both the learners and the teachers (Bush, 2007; Konsolas&Anastasiou, 2014; Cruickshank, 2017; Wahyuddin, 2017; Saleem, Aslamm, Yin &Rao 2020; Sukmaswati, Lian&Wardiah; 2020). While carrying out different tasks, the principals often either consciously or sub-conscious employ certain managerial and leadership model(s) in their endeavour to be as effective as possible. The diverse approaches to school management clearly reflect the diverse ways through which the school principals understand their roles as the heads of schools (Bush 2007).

RESEARCH INTEREST AND THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The concepts educational management and leadership were initially popularised by Tony Bush (2006, 2007, 2008). Although it may be argued that there seems to be insufficient research on the application of educational management and leadership models in the school context, there is a study that was conducted in one Southeast Asian country. It sought to explore whether and how educational management models are operationalised (Skyes 2015). The current study is inspired by above the mentioned study for the following grounds: Firstly, unlike Skyes, who focused only on educational management models, the current study makes reference to both educational management and leadership models which, in my opinion, are vastly related. Secondly, Skyes explored the operationalisation of management models in a higher education institution but the present paper is based on a study which took place in Lesotho secondary schools. In addition, there is a gap on the aspects of school governance research in general and on the operationalisation of educational management and leadership models research in particular in the Lesotho context. The present researcher sought to explore the predominantly used educational management and leadership models in 10 Lesotho secondary schools

RESEARCH QUESTION

This study sought to address the following overarching research question:

•   Which educational management and leadership model (s) are predominately used by the Lesotho secondary school principals?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives were:

• To identify the educational management and leadership model(s) predominantly used by the secondary school principals in their tasks.

• To identify the reasons why the secondary school principals use one model over the others.

LITERATURE REVIEW: EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP MODELS

According to van der Westhuizen (2002), educational management means the performance of detailed tasks by a school principal or a group of individuals with the aim of ensuring that effective teaching and learning take place. Educational management is concerned with the triumph of educational goals and objectives (Bush 2003). It encompasses the issues surrounding the delegation of authority to the teachers by the school principal (Connolly, James, Fertig 2017). It is often associated with the school hierarchy, with the school principal on top and having executive powers vested in him or her. It can, therefore, be deduced that educational management is the act through which the principal uses the powers and authority vested in him or her to work with and through the teachers with the aim of achieving the school goals and objectives. It is done at the highest level of the school hierarchy and is mainly concerned with the development of policies, procedures and planning of the activities. Educational management further refers to the development and implementation of the policies that inform the daily school activities (Ali &Abdalla's 2017).

Educational Leadership is defined as the act by the principal to induces, enthuses, unites and directs the teachers and the learners to appreciate and achieve the common milestones (van der Westhuizen 2002). It is further conceptualised as the activities that the school principal does that are aimed at stimulating the teachers and the learners to behave in a desired manner that is intended to enable easy attainment of the school goals and objectives (Connolly, James, Fertig 2017, Ali&Abdalla 2017). The school principals use their authority and power to influence both the teachers and the learners to behave in a desired manner. (Connolly, James, Fertig 2017). As the principals play a prominent role in seeing to it that the school goals and objectives are achieved; leadership is concerned with stimulating the teachers and the learners on a daily basis to behave in a certain way that will ensure effective teaching and learning.

Educational Management and Leadership Models

There are six educational management and leadership models that principals may apply. They are as shown in Table 1 (Bush 2003).

Educational management models	Educational Leadership Models
Formal	Managerial
Collegial	Participative
Political	Transactional
Subjective	Post-modern
Ambiguity	Contingency
Cultural	Moral

The formal managerial model argues that Lesotho secondary schools are organised in a formal (hierarchical) way and the principal should concentrate on performing tasks as dictated by pre-existence of structures (Bush 2003). It assumes that, the principal is at the helm of the school structure and has the sole authority to make decisions and disseminate such decisions to the subordinate teachers (Bush 2003, Muraru&Pătraşcu 2017). This model follows a rigid approach to school governance; teachers are normally not afforded a chance to contribute in the planning or decisions making processes. This model of is consistent with managerial model of leadership. The school principal who uses the managerial leadership model focuses only on performing book already established tasks as outlined in Part V of the Lesotho Education Act of 2010, Section 21, without being creative. Such principal teachers follow orders without introducing any new ideas to the school governance (Bush 2007, Bush 2008).

The Collegial the managerial model is consistent with the participative leadership models. These models emphasises that, whenever the secondary school principal is performs his or her roles, there is a great deal of consultations. The school principal does not on his or her own plans and makes decisions alone, but involves those are likely to be affected by the decision. Discussions are central and decisions are based on a consensus, as a result, all that stakeholders will perform as expected because they share the same values and interests with the principals (Bush 2003, Bush 2007, Sykes 2015). In these models, there is a two way communication and continuous feedback (Bush 2006 and Bush 2008).

Another managerial model is the political model. It is consistent with the transactional leadership model where the principal runs the school activities with the convenience alliances. The principal uses these alliances with the aim of being backed up while making decisions and disseminating

them, (Bush 2003, 2007, 2008). However, these alliances are dismantled as soon as the objective(s) is/are achieved. The alliances are no longer engaged by the school principal after the intended action has been completed. The principals use the powers and authority vested in him/her to use the teachers in pursuit of his or her own interests (Bush 2006, Muraru&Pătraşcu 2017). In these models, the principal mainly divides the teachers into groups. One group works against the other group(s) in pursuit of the principal's particular goal.

Another managerial model is the subjective model which is conceptually consistent with the post-modern leadership model. According to these models, the principal is not reliant on the status quo, because the both the internal and external environments of the school change. These models give all the reins to the principals to steer the school in any direction that he/she considers appropriate for the attainment of the school goals and objectives (Bush 2006, Bush 2007, Muraru&Pătraşcu 2017). These models give the school principals the liberty to use their own judgment rather than the prescribed structures; they emancipate the school principals from the rigid way of governing the schools.

Ambiguity is another managerial model. It proposes that the school environment is volatile. It is full of uncertainties and largely unpredictable as various issues emerge daily. It further proposes that the school principal needs to deal with the various issues as they happen (Bush, 2003, 2006, Sykes 2015, Muraru&Pătraşcu, 2017). This model suggests that, the school principals should be ready to vary the crisis handling mechanisms as some of them maybe urgent and that the discussions may waste time and evade the imminent disaster. This model is consistent with the contingency model which suggests that when the principal performs his or her daily tasks of stimulating the teachers and students, there is no single best method that he or she could use. As a result, he/she needs to be informed by the prevailing situation and choose the most fitting method, given the scenario at hand (Bush 2006, 2007).

The last educational management and leadership models are the cultural and the moral models. According to Bush (2007), Sykes (2015) and Muraru&Pătraşcu (2017), these models suggest that the school principals should not rely on the organisational structure but need to cultivate an environment full of a culture that emphasises the morals, performance, values, respect, confidence as well as self-social awareness. The school principals, as the school administrators, need to be active in cultivating the ideal culture in the school and to communicate such culture effectively to all the relevant stakeholders.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by the Rational Choice Theory (RCT). RCT is a theory that states that the individuals do not make decisions blindly but, they always make calculations about the benefits and the costs of their choices. Normally when the principals make choices about the most appropriate management and leadership model, they are informed by what they want to achieve (Ogu 2013). RCT argues that any choices that the principals make begin with the individual's interests and goals. These choices are often subjective and driven by the individuals' personal gain. The school principals choose the management and leadership models that may help them to achieve their own interests before those of other stakeholders (the teachers, learners and parents) (Burns &Roszkowska 2016). The principal chooses the model(s) which offers the most personal benefits and satisfaction (Burns &Roszkowska 2016). RCT is therefore ideal for this study because, it helps the study in understanding the choices the principals are confronted with and the motive that informs their choices.

METHODS

The study is qualitative in nature. It seeks to explore the educational management and leadership model(s) predominately used by the Lesotho secondary school principals while performing the duties entrusted to them by the MOET (Coy 2019). This approach allows the unravelling of the principal's hidden experiences and perceptions pertaining to their personal preferences in terms of the best suited educational management and leadership model(s) (Coy 2019, Haven and Van Grootel, 2019). Due to the current covid-19 pandemic, telephonic interviews were used to generate data. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they do not follow a strict form of questioning (Gani, Rathakrishnan&Krishnasamy 2020). As a result the participants can freely share their experiences. The 10 participants that took part in this study were conveniently selected from the secondary schools in Lesotho based on their geographical location. Five schools from the lowlands and five from the mountainous areas were selected. The purpose was to capture the principals' experiences in all the geographical areas of Lesotho. The consent forms were issued, clearly indicating the objectives of the study and the participants rights. The following codes were assigned to the participants: P1 (Female), P2 (Male), P3 (Male), P4 (Female), P5 (Male), P6 (Male), P7 (Female), P8 (Female), P9 (Female) and P10 (Male).

Fairclough's Three Dimensional Model, the conversational Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used to analyse the data. CDA is a field of study which is concerned with critically unpacking either the spoken or written text from

the principal about their most favoured educational management and leadership model(s) (Kareem al-Utibi 2019 &Rogti 2019). CDA primarily focuses on understanding critically the text produced by the principals. It aims at unearthing any ideologies, beliefs and/or perceptions that the principals may have regarding their role as educational managers and leaders (Agbeleoba, Owusu&Adede-Yeboah, 2020).

Fairclough's model consists of the text analysis, process analysis and social analysis frameworks. Text analysis aims mainly at exploring how text is produced by meticulously unpacking aspects of language such as lexicon, grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, genres, style etc (Dabir-Moghadam&Raeesi, 2019, Hassan, Rehman, Zafar, Akbar &Masood 2019).The second dimension is process analysis (discursive practices) whose aims was to explore and to interpret how the school principals' produce text (Hassan et al. 2019). The last framework is the socio-cultural analysis. According to Tartory (2020), socio-cultural analysis is concerned with analysing the extent to which the ideologies identified reflect those of the wider society.

FINDINGS

This section presents data generated through the semi-structured interviews and analysed using Fairclough's Three Dimensional Model.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is the first level of Fairclough's three dimensional model and is mainly about an un depth investigation of the language forms that the participants used (Hassan 2018). This analysis investigated the type of lexicon, grammar, cohesion, genres, style/s, vocabulary etc. that the participants used with the aim of identifying any inequalities, power in balances and discrimination.

The study finds that, the lexical choices of participants, P1, P2, P5, P7 show a huge rate of mistrust between the principals and the teachers. For example, P1 said,

"…But it is often difficult to do so while teachers are dragging you down. Teachers have a tendency of sabotaging the principal, and a result principals need to be strong and stand by his or her decisions".

P1 used words such as "dragging", "sabotaging". These words carry a heavy message demonstrating how shocking the situation is in that school. P1 actually sees teachers not as colleagues but as individuals who have the ability to sabotage her. The same sentiments are shared by P2 who claimed,

"I do not trust the teachers. If they are given too much freedom to make decisions, they are likely to make decisions that one day you will regret".

P7 further revealed that she does not only see teachers as people who cannot be trusted but labels them "rivals". She said,

"I am the school principal and as a result I plan and make decisions on my own. I was contesting this position with some of the teachers and I was chosen over them. So I have to proof that I was rightfully chosen and as a I result they take orders from me. I can't seek advice from the rivals, because they cannot in any way give the objective advice. This is my school and everyone in these premises is responsible to me."

The use of the word "rival" actually expresses the dreadful relationship between the concerned principal and teachers. The relationship is toxic to the extent that good working relationships do not matter. In her words, she takes full ownership of the school. Since she claims that the school is hers, she runs it as her personal property.

Another important controversy that emerged from the text produced, is that of the power struggle. For example P5 argued that,

"I don't need anyone to help me execute my duties because I am not incompetent. I make decisions and both the teachers and learners should follow them. I am not doing this in a bad way, but I have seen over time that once you put your trust in teachers, you are likely to fail."

P5 used words such as "not incompetent" and "should". These words are used intentionally because P5 he wanted to emphasise that he is the authority and therefore has all the power to make decisions and expects them to be followed. This is the approach also adopted by P2 for he argues;

"I am the principal of this school and as result I make decisions which I expect them to be followed."

Like P5, P2, sees himself as the only person in the school structure who should be listened to.

However, text analysis is not only limited to linguistic analysis but it goes further to deduce meaning from the produced text. The research was intended to investigate the most dominant educational management and leadership model(s) that the principals in the two districts use while executing their entrusted duties. Given the data, it can be argued that, some principals use the formal and or managerial models which include structural, systems,

bureaucratic, rational and hierarchical theories (Bush, 2003) while performing different tasks. These principals dictate how daily school activities should be executed. For example, P1 said that,

"...These teachers know that I make decisions because I am the principal and principals make decisions on behalf of the teachers, disseminate such decisions to them and expect them to be executed."

P2, commented that,

"I am the principal of this school and as result I make decisions which I expect to be followed..."

Lastly P7 argued,

"I am the school principal and as a result I plan and make decisions on my own..."

They choose these models which help them to steer the school in the direction that they think is correct without little or no objections. These models advocate for a rigid way of doing things in the schools and it is characterised by less delegation and huge control of the school principals.

Apart from this model, some school principals use the collegial and or participative models. For example, P3 argued,

"I understand that there may be teachers who are willing to contribute positively towards good school governance. As a result, I often engage teachers and mainly, the heads of departments while making important decisions."

P6 further argued,

"Although I am the principal, I understand that cooperation is important for the success of any school. As a result I engage all the teachers in planning and making crucial decisions."

Finally P8 articulated that

"There is a Sesotho idiom that says; hoshoa ha nohakehotsamaea e le ngoe, (no man is an island) and though I know that I am the principal with powers and authority to make decisions, I understand that there may be those individual teachers who could have brilliant ideas that can move the school forward and as a result, to get hold of those ideas, I engage everyone while planning, drawing the budget, dealing with any crisis."

They argued that they use these models because they believe that teachers can contribute positively towards good

governance and that could lead towards the ease attainment of school goals and objectives.

Lastly, data revealed that P4, P9 and P10 are using the contingency and or ambiguity models. Thus; P4 argued that

"For me there is no single best strategy, it really depends on the situation prevailing. Yes sometimes one has to make rushed decisions because of crisis but sometimes I engage teachers in the decision making process."

While P9 argued that,

"...As a result, I really act given the situation, if a situation calls for an aggressive approach, I do so and make decisions alone but if all the factors are on my side, I engage everyone and we plan together."

And lastly P10 argued that,

"It really depends on the prevailing situation. There are situations that need a quick reaction and those that allow discussions to unfold"

The school principal predominantly preferred these models because they argue that, the school environment keeps on changing and the only way to lead it is to adopt the given the prevailing circumstances.

Process Analysis

This is the second level of Fairclough's three dimensions model. It is concerned with how text is produced, communicated and actually used in the school context (Hassan et al. 2019). With the above in context, the manner in which the participants conveyed their text showed that they speak from the point of view of the principal whom is at the helm of the school hierarchy. They see themselves as being in authority and vested with all the powers as stated in the Education Act of 2010. For example, P2 argued,

"I am the principal of this school and as result I make decisions which I expect to be followed. I do not trust the teachers".

In addition P5 commented,

"According to the Education act of 2010, the principal is the chief accounting officer, and that means I am the one who is solely responsible to manage the school."

Furthermore P7 argued,

"I am the school principal and as a result I plan and make decisions on my own. I was contesting this position with some of the teachers and I was chosen over them."

Social Analysis

The third and final level is social analysis. It is concerned with explaining how the text produced has wider implications in the social practice. The study argues that the principals would not behave in an authoritarian manner and search for the respect if that is not what the society wants and dictates. vanDijk (1993) articulates that the dominant group may limit the autonomy of those in subordination, and persuade them with the intent of changing their minds in pursuit of their own interests. In this study it has been found that the principals use their power over teachers with the intention of gaining control and, according to van Dijk, (1993), this behaviour often leads to teachers being mere spectators in the school governance. It is therefore argued that the power that the principals have is bestowed onto them by the society. It is contended that the authority and the supremacy that the secondary school principals display is generally prearranged and institutionalised by society (van Dijk1993).

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was intended to investigate the most dominant educational management and leadership model(s) that are used by the principals while managing and leading the schools. With the guidelines of the RCT that underpinned this study, it became unmistakable that the secondary school principals have, at their disposal a collection of the models that they can choose from while performing their tasks. In this study, the secondary school principals prefer the formal/ managerial, collegial/participative and ambiguity /contingency models. These findings are consistent with the ones reported in a study undertaken by Skyes (2015) which showed that the principals displayed an assorted and diverse mix of models, depending on what each of them wants to achieve or believes in. The school principals cannot be trained or channelled to use one model over the other; they use their discretion in determining the most suitable educational management and leadership model.

Participants conformed to the formal/managerial model because they see themselves as the only persons who can contribute towards the acceptable school governance. Formal/ managerial models follow a centralised approach to the running of the schools. It is argued that, the school principal that prefer this approach to school governance are efficient while implementing the externally developed policies, especially from the higher authority such as

MoET(Bush, 2008) because their strength lies in managing the existing structures rather than being innovative.

The study further shows that some secondary school principals' prefer the collegial/participative model. This study argues that the school principals that prefer the collegial/participative models acknowledge that there is a lot that the subordinates' teachers can contribute towards the effective governing of the school if they are given a chance to participate. These models, according to Gori (2019), have been proven fruitful in several institutions because they emphasise the principle of dialogue and consensus (Basson&Mestry 2019).

Finally, some secondary school principal resorted to the ambiguity/contingency models. Those of them who prefer these models converge on the idea that there is no single best model that can suit every given scenario. As a result, they depend highly on the prevailing situation (Abba, Yahaya& Suleiman 2018, Gougas&Malinova 2021). These models are highly adaptive as the course of action is pre-empted by the prevailing state of affairs.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The criticism concerning this study could stem from the fact that this study is qualitative. This approach probably influenced the number of the participants who took part in the study and its findings may not be re representative. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted with a different approach. The present study may further be criticised because it used a single data generation method. To counteract this limitation, a similar study may be undertaken, with multiple data generation methods in order to eliminate participants' biasness.

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