

RESEARCH TITLE

A strategic management model for transforming selected Swaziland's teacher training colleges into learning organisations

Name: Dr Amos M Mahlalela
Supervisor: Professor R.J. (Nico) Botha
Institution: University of South Africa, South Africa
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ABSTRACT

Teacher training is a significant and integral component of a sound education system. The need for quality programmes and relevantly qualified personnel cannot be overemphasised. Effective learning organisations result from good governance and strategic management.

The purpose of this study was to determine how teacher training colleges (TTCs) in Swaziland could be transformed into effective Learning Organisations (LOs). The following research questions guided the study. These were formulated as follows: What were the characteristics of effective learning organisations?; which factors had the potential for developing TTCs as learning organisations?; which factors restricted the TTCs in Swaziland from functioning as effective learning organisations? And how were TTCs in Swaziland governed and strategically managed?

The study emanated from concerns raised for a number of years on the quality and relevancy of TTCs in Swaziland. Such concerns were noted by both the print and electronic media as well as members of the general public. The training programmes in TTCs have been widely criticized, particularly with regard to standards, quality and relevance of the training process in relation to meeting the nation's and global requirements. The study was qualitative and was underpinned by the interpretism research paradigm employing an ethnographic approach. The study was conducted in three selected teacher training colleges in Swaziland namely; the Nazarene College of Education and the William Pitcher Teacher Training College both based in the Manzini Region, and Ngwane Teachers' College based in the Shiselweni Region. This study employed the purposive sampling procedure. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used for the data analysis process.

The findings of the study revealed that participants felt that characteristics of effective LOs included the availability of both well-qualified academic and specialized non-academic staff, adequate and relevant infrastructure, dynamic, innovative and responsive curriculum, quality assurance checks and balances

mechanisms, good libraries and IT facilities, sufficient funding and innovative leadership. Regarding the factors that have the potential for developing TTCs to LOs, participants felt that institutional support from TTC leaders, adherence to professional and institutional values, using of mistakes as learning curve rather than criticism, and serious engagement in learning by all members were of paramount significance.

On the factors that restricted TTCs in Swaziland from functioning as effective LOs, the study revealed that these included cumbersome bureaucracy, lack of rewards and incentives for staff members, poor mobility structures, poor promotion formula as well as lack of recognition for professional development or academic achievements. Regarding the manner in which TTCs are governed and strategically managed, the study revealed that this was characterized by a centralized, top down, weak unresponsive governance system seriously lacking autonomy, long and confusing bureaucracy, unresponsive and cumbersome procurement procedures.

The conclusion was that the Government needs to restructure the governance and management systems of TTCs. The country should consider granting autonomy especially in the procurement processes. The promotion of staff in TTCs must be based on academic achievements and the government needs to recognize the significance of giving rewards and incentive to their employees. For transformation to occur in TTCs there is need for college lecturers to adapt to change and for leaders to disseminate vital information to staff members all the time.

The study concluded by developing a strategic management model to guide the development governance, management and operations of TTCs in Swaziland and their subsequent transformation to effective LOs.

Keywords: teacher training, teacher training colleges, learning organisation, strategic management, governance, transformation

The full thesis can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/23119>