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Editorial:**Educational Leadership and Organisational Development and Change in a Developing Country**

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There are some strong indications that leadership is fundamental to the improvement of the quality of education (Bush, 2009, 2012; Hallinger, 2011; Huber, 2004), although there does not appear to be conclusive empirical evidence of a direct link between leadership and education improvement over the longer term (five years and more) (Bush, 2012; Hallinger, 2011).

This issue must be contextualised in an emerging economy, and a society still transforming into a fully-fledged democracy, where social justice and equity are key issues to be addressed by school leaders. The socio-economic status of emerging economies – and specifically the diversity in their socio-economic composition – proves to be a further challenge to ensuring quality education for all learners.

Schools in historically disadvantaged areas may experience different challenges from those in advantaged areas, but the learner composition in the latter has since changed, bringing about additional challenges. Leaders are challenged not to succumb under the pressure of challenges like service delivery and lack of support from parents and provincial departments of education, or new policies, which demands development and change for teachers.

New curricula or new policies are part of the normal changes in education, where leaders are responsible for the implementation and change. It must be kept in mind that a new policy or curriculum does not in itself achieve new academic standards simply by virtue of being issued. Leaders need people to implement policy, and therefore, leadership implies followership and relationships, motivation, trust and respect, vision, and a willingness to challenge the status quo. Leadership is contextual, and seeks solutions, rather than excuses.

There are already some exceptional examples of schools performing against all odds, and from these successes we can learn and theorise about educational change on a larger systemic scale. A deeper understanding of leadership practice and theorising about these practices are required in order to support sustainable development and change. Current issues in leadership that require attention include the need to lead towards diversity, social justice, and leadership for the sake of quality education, and not only for the examination system.

Among the greatest challenges to leaders in all organisations is the continuous nature of change and the speed of change (Dennis, 2014), which requires intrinsic, longer-term motivation, rather than short-term, spur-of-the-moment motivational activities. The critical question is as to whether leaders understand the change and resistance process, and are truly prepared to lead in and through change. Dennis (2014) emphasises that it is more important to, among other things, develop educational leaders' decision-making skills and emotional competencies, rather than just their skill in the legal process, be it in drafting a budget or in the technicalities involved in appointing a staff member. This development, according to Schaap, Baartman and De Bruijn (2012), needs the internalisation of new knowledge, skills and values, where, without such internalisation there may be less change and development. The implication for leadership development is that leaders can provide the context, opportunity and motivation for people to develop, but cannot effect development in people.

The articles accepted for this special edition makes an important contribution to knowledge in the broader field of educational leadership and change. Some of the important contributions are the use of action research as the methodology, as well as Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, which are not commonly used in leadership research in schools specifically in South Africa. There is also a good combination of different fields of knowledge ranging from educational leadership to education law, as well as education psychology, which all contribute towards a better understanding of leadership practices. Curriculum leadership receives special attention, with three articles linked to this focus, which emphasise the importance of this specific focus for leaders. It is important – and may be disturbing – that three of the articles also refer to disciplinary problems at schools, and specifically the use of corporal punishment, which remains a significant challenge for educational leaders at all levels of the education system. Two new issues for the South African educational leadership context are the emphasis on leadership intelligence, as well as the loneliness of principals, and in this case, specifically from a Turkish perspective. These articles emphasise the human face of leadership in the performance and measurable context.

Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn's article uses Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) to explain the challenges and the support needed by principals in developing countries. The contextual challenges are different from the mainstream literature written from a Western perspective, where it is important to acknowledge that context has a defining influence on the practices of principals. They emphasise that principals in developing countries have to compete with principals in developed countries and that the potential contextual restraints make this an unequal challenge for these principals.

Coetzee and Venter in their article bring legal and psychological perspectives together, which provides an important and interesting perspective on an important problem in schools, namely learner absenteeism. They use an ecosystemic lens to provide a unique perspective on the management of learner absenteeism. They emphasise the punitive approach in the current legislation and recommend an ecosystemic approach, which considers the context and the person within it, providing an alternative to the current legislated approach. This article also emphasises the close link between different fields in education, and in this case, the fields of education management, education law and education psychology.

Smit and Scherman also address an important social and human rights issue, namely bullying, which has significant influence on children's personal, as well as academic life. Value-driven leadership is important to create an ethics of care and to provide a climate in which social justice can flourish. The article provides an important aspect of school leadership, namely that everything cannot simply focus on academic results, but that the people are important, and cannot only be instruments in the process of improving academic results. Social justice is an important issue, which needs more attention in educational leadership research in South Africa.

Makhasane and Chikoko used a qualitative approach to investigate the use of corporal punishment in schools. Although corporal punishment is prohibited by legislation, they found that there are still schools practising corporal punishment. This phenomenon has been investigated using social learning and distributed leadership lenses, to explain why it is happening, as well as the role of the leadership in this practice. It is evident from this small case study that the lack of leadership to change the practices is an important factor, and it is a concern in a human rights culture, where violence is still prevalent.

Bhengu and Myende used a qualitative approach to investigate the coping mechanisms of principals in deprived school contexts. They emphasise that leadership cannot be rule-bound, since most policies and rules are developed for the broad church of schools, while these principals in deprived areas have to be open-minded and positive to be able to implement and adopt to policies which may not be made for the context of these schools. This contextual boundedness is expressed in the local context, where corporal punishment is totally accepted, despite being legislated against. Principals must therefore navigate between the contextual and the policy.

Naicker, Grant and Pillay focused on the similar context as Bengu and Myende, as well as Makhasane and Chikoko, namely schools in deprived areas and their challenges in difficult circumstances. Naicker et al. contested that an expansive teacher leadership based on teacher professionalism as well as teacher's social agency may provide the energy to transform schools towards school improvement. Strong leadership from the principal is important by means of which to enable the teachers to become leaders in and beyond the classroom. The relations between these roleplayers provides the foundations for their agency in overcoming potential restraints to improving quality education in their school.

Seobi and Wood used participatory action research (PAR) to work with heads of department to improve the quality and standards of the learner's performance. They used curriculum leadership as the lens to support and activate these heads to improve their own, as well as the learner's performance. The participatory action research approach is a fairly new approach for research in school leadership and therefore makes an important methodological contribution. This approach emphasises the involvement of the participants in their own development, hence it deviates from the traditional development approach. In this case the participants are more in control of their own development and destination.

Khoza used critical action research and also focused on curriculum management for the improvement of quality education. As with Seobi and Wood, Khoza also used members of the school management team, in this case the deputy principals, to reflect on curriculum management. Khoza investigated the use of electronic support and processes in the form of Moodle software, to enhance the curriculum management at school. The research methods relied upon reflective actions as an important data gathering method. This article emphasised the use of technology in managing the curriculum in a modern technological driven world. This study indicated that managers are not aware of the curriculum or learning theory linked to the technology hence the recommendation that more in depth studies must be conducted.

Geduld and Sathorar's focus is also curriculum leadership, but in this case at a university. This adds an important focus on another level of curriculum leadership from the traditional school focus. This article concerns the curriculum change of the full undergraduate teacher training programme, which is in itself a challenge, and demanding change process. Against the background of the analysis at universities linked to finances, but specifically the request for decolonisation of curriculum, this article provides important insights in the curriculum change process. The authors use the lens of transformational leadership to explain the role of the leaders in this complex change process. This project also used transformative methodologies, which included "World Café Conversations" and the Courageous Conversation strategies, which is not commonly used in leadership research. Reflective practices supported the curriculum leaders in the transformational process to work with the diverse group of stakeholders, to ensure positive collaboration, and a compromise for the final product.

Van der Voort and Wood address another aspect of curriculum leadership. The important role of the circuit to support school management teams is challenging, with problems such as personal leadership styles and interpersonal conflict between circuit members, which has a potential negative influence on the support given to schools. The relationship and collaboration between the circuit officials and the school management team needs improvement so as to improve the overall quality of education. The action learning process used in this project provides important insights in the potential processes to develop staff members at schools and circuit offices. The interaction between the role players makes it a potentially valuable process.

Moorosi and Bantwini also focus on the organisational level, just above the school in the hierarchical education system. The districts are expected to provide support to schools to assist in school improvement. The authors found that authoritative leadership has a potential negative influence on school improvement, since principals are not actively involved in decision making with their districts. This has an influence on principals' autonomy, since the districts creates the impression that principals are only important when it comes to implementation, and do not require the autonomy to use their own initiative in improving their respective schools. The research from Moorosi and Bantwini as well as Van der Voort and Wood emphasise the apparent problem that circuits and districts are not able to provide the necessary support, which is potentially an important challenge in the chain of support to provide quality education in all schools.

Naicker and Mestry focus on the development of educational leaders. Their intervention development programme included leaders from the school, as well as district leaders, who all participate in the development programme. These authors used quantitative and qualitative methods for the data gathering, which is also an important methodological approach, since most research relies only on either quantitative or qualitative methodologies. They used systems theory as the theoretical framework to understand and also to develop the leaders at the different levels in the system in a given district. This approach to leadership development emphasises the importance of working with more role players, which may lead to a greater systematic and larger scale improvement.

Gage and Smith provide a conceptual analysis of leadership and intelligence, since they argue that a leader needs different kinds of intelligence to be successful. The complexity with which school principals must lead requires that they do not only have rationale intelligence, but also emotional and spiritual intelligence, which culminates in leadership intelligence. Leadership intelligence specifically in education is a new phenomenon, but has the potential, where leaders are able to combine the different intelligences, to enable schools' leaders to perform at a higher level in the challenging and complex environment of South African schools.

Korumaz emphasised an under-researched theme in leadership studies, focusing on the emotional aspects of leadership, and specifically the loneliness of leaders. Leaders are expected to lead and to be strong, and everybody looks to the leader for support, but it is rarely acknowledged that these leaders may be lonely, since their position may isolate them from a personal and emotional interaction with the staff members. The qualitative study in Turkish schools provides an important insight into leadership in a non-Western society, as well as in a developing country context. The principals experience the loneliness as a psychological phenomenon, and this is strongly linked to the organisational climate in these Turkish schools.

Most of the authors emphasise the influence of the context in a developing country in which the socio-economic factors have a specific influence on the performance of the principals, as well as the academic achievements in these schools. Although most of the lenses and theories used by authors are Western in their origin, there is an attempt to properly contextualise these theories. The challenge for the South African and broader African context is to garner a more in-depth and larger scale of research to contribute to a more African contextual leadership theory.

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