

Principals' Perceptions of the Influence of Mandates on the Work Performance of Teachers

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Abstract

The investigation on the perceptions of school principals regarding the influence of mandated change on the work performance of teachers is quantitative in nature and is contextualised in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo Province. At the time we conducted this research, most studies on mandates had involved the implementation of education policies and regulations, but the findings of these did not apply to the influence of these mandates on teacher work performance. After a search of studies on mandated change, we decided to approach our investigation from Giddens's (2003) structuration theory and Ritzer's (2008) model of micro-macro level mandates. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire that was distributed to 274 principals comprising the total population of secondary schools in the district and it was analysed using the SPSS 14.0 statistical programme to capture principals' perceptions on the influence of mandated change on the work performance of teachers. From the statistical analysis, one theoretical factor emerged and this was named "the influence of mandated change processes on the phenomena that comprise the indicators of teacher work performance". This factor formed the dependent variable and the various work performance indicators were used as independent variables. A constantly recurring finding was that there were two groups of school principals, one with a positive and the other with a less positive perception about mandated change processes. This article presents the results of this investigation.

Keywords: Mandated change processes; teacher work performance, integrated quality management, principals, perceptions

1. Introduction: Adaptable School Managers and Teacher Change

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions of secondary school principals on mandated change processes on the work performance of teachers in the Vhembe district of education in the Limpopo province. Hoyle & Wallace (2005:64) describe mandates as rules governing the actions of individuals within schools and are intended to produce compliance. Teacher work performance includes strong preparation in academic content knowledge and the instructional, assessment, and relational and management skills needed to translate that knowledge to students in a way that promotes understanding (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). However, policymakers and administrators seem to have two views of the work of teaching namely it is bureaucratic or professional (Hoy & Miskel, 1982). Sergioanni and Starratt (1988) develop this view further by stating that those who view it as professional work believe that teachers are trusted and responsible professionals. Others see teaching as bureaucratic work and teachers are best regulated and controlled by an elaborate work system which specifies what must be done and ensures that it is done.

In formulation of a theoretical framework for this research, Giddens's (2003) structure and agency (structuration theory) was found useful to provide a theoretical framework for the research because Giddens postulates that every research investigation in social sciences is involved in relating action to structure. In this study the teachers' work performance is viewed as agentic (teachers as actors have an agency) and mandated change as a structured, bureaucratic and prescriptive piece of legislation. The researchers argue that there is a dialectical relationship between

structure and agency and as Ritzer (2008) poignantly points out there is no sense in which structure 'determines' action or action 'determines' structure. Thus, all social action according to Giddens, involves structure, and all structure involves social action. The structuration theory is intended to illuminate the duality and dialectical interplay of structure and agency because agency and structure are inextricably interwoven in ongoing human activity or practice (teaching practice and leadership practice). Accordingly Giddens (1984) argues that the basic domain of the study of social sciences based on the structuration theory is neither the experience of the individual (teacher and principal) nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices (teaching and leadership) ordered across time and space. Thus structure and agency cannot be conceived apart from one another, they are two sides of the same coin. In the following paragraphs the researchers develop an argument about what they perceive as 'tensions' that result from the implementation of mandated change by the principals such as the integrated quality management system (IQMS) on the work performance of teachers in the rural secondary schools of the Vhembe district, in the Limpopo province of South Africa. The research question is thus: How do rural secondary school principals perceive mandated change? To be able to answer the research question the researchers present relevant literature below. Zeichner and Flessner (2009: 297) are of the view that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality that are influenced by one's location in the social order.

2. Theoretical Underpinnings: The Work Performance of Teachers and Mandated Change

In this section we discuss the theoretical underpinning of the work performance of teachers and mandated change. The regulatory environment is first discussed, followed by a discussion of the effects of the implementation of IQMS on Learner performance in Grade 12

2.1 The regulatory environment: Policy mandates

The management and governance of schools in South Africa is largely based on the South African Schools Act, SASA, (SA, 1996) and on its consolidation as implied by the proposed Education Laws Amendment Bill (SA, 2007) and other amendments to SASA. These are legislative mandates that act as rules governing the actions of teachers and school principals and they are intended to result in compliance and collaborative practices at the school and between the school and the district (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). This research takes the position that excessive use of legislative mandates (structured) tend lead to what is termed as managerialism which requires that a specific problem (such as poor examination results in an external national examination) be dealt with using some piece of legislation that has universal application, to the 'neglect' of the leadership function (agentic) within schools. Giddens's (2003) structuration theory is useful in explaining the relationship between mandated change through policy formulation and implementation and the agency of those individuals and groupings of teachers and principals who are subjected to such mandates.

Facilitating change, a big challenge facing schools today focuses not only on how to improve teacher work performance, but also on how to sustain the change through bureaucratic policy mandates that are cascaded from the state to the school level (Flanagan & Finger, 1998:154; Louw, 2006:1). According to Jansen (2004:2) the range of policy instruments from the State in South Africa are intended to regulate teacher behaviour in classrooms and that of principals in schools. Among these mandated policy regulations are the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which this research specifically focuses on. The IQMS consists of developmental appraisal (DA), performance measurement (PM) and whole school evaluation (WSE). The specific focus of IQMS is on (i) the quality of education (monitoring of institutional effectiveness, through whole school evaluate (on) and (ii) effective teaching and learning (monitoring personal growth opportunities) through developmental appraisal system, evaluation of educator's performance in the classroom and outside the classroom, provision of support and personal growth opportunities, in order to promote accountability at the classroom and school level. The IQMS instrument sets 12 performance standards which are a required level of performance that the educator, the head of department (HOD) and principal are expected to achieve, measured against specific performance indicators. Each performance standard is given a number of criteria, followed by level descriptors from 1 to 4 (progressive rating scale). What are the issues for you at the moment regarding the level descriptors? The IQMS is premised on the nine school improvement key areas, namely, basic functionality, infrastructure, governance, curriculum, parental involvement, learner achievement, teacher development, human relations, and leadership. The IQMS thus represents structure and the teachers' work performance, represents agency.

As far as teachers in South Africa are concerned, Work performance in the context of this research would mean the extent to which teachers carry out those activities that they are mandated to do including, amongst others, and these include the creation of a positive learning climate, knowledge of the curriculum and learning programmes, lesson

planning, preparation and presentation, learner assessment, professional development, human relations with learners, parents and the broader community as well as contribution to school development and extra-curricular participation as illuminated in the (Integrated Quality Management System Manual of 2005. A distinction is made between the activities (which are assessed by way of output) and the dispositions (which should be explained). Armstrong (2000), Meyer and Malan (2000), Bentley (1996), Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) indicate that work performance consists of seven stages that form part of the so-called performance management cycle. The seven stages are: Firstly, there is the awareness (need) stage, which implies that managers become aware that there is a need for work performance to be managed. The need arises when there is little or no improvement in work performance or when there is a drop in work performance. When managers have realized the need for performance management, then the planning (development) stage follows in which objectives are set for teachers and plans are developed on how the objectives would be achieved. The third stage (performance or action stage) involves implementation of all the plans aimed at improved work performance, followed by the performance review stage which involves an overall evaluation of the work performance of teachers. The fifth stage focuses on regular feedback and development activities that help to improve work performance, followed by the appraisal stage, which focuses on a systematic evaluation of educators work performance with a view to improve it. Then the last stage (the reflection or learning stage) allows educators to reflect on the whole appraisal process and improve where they have been lacking. It could be argued that the implementation phases: stages (iii – vi) are fraught with problems. This is probably due to the first two stages belonging to the design stages of performance management. These two stages in performance management are usually separated from the implementation stages and mostly imposed and designed by persons outside the school- by people who do not have firsthand contextual knowledge. Hoyle and Wallace (2005) indicate that this gives rise to the *implementation gap*, which is the inherent gap between the proclaimed goals embodied in mandated policy initiatives (structured bureaucracy), typically formulated at a central administrative level, and their achievement through implementation in schools by teaching and learning practices as well as leadership practices (agentic). The researchers contend that performance management is contextual and needs to be both designed and implemented at the school level by teachers themselves, in collaboration with school management. When teachers are involved in the design of their performance, intrinsic motivation, which is not driven by mandates, becomes the main driving force and the implementation of performance measurement becomes easier. In this regard Senge (1999) asserts that the key to improve work performance lies in harnessing commitment. It could also be argued that these dispositions are linked to intrinsic motivation, personal disposition and personality traits. Sergiovanni (2007) warns against the sole use of extrinsic factors such as money to motivate teachers and by implication the associated remuneration associated with the performance measurement of teachers. Although extrinsic factors do play an important role in obtaining and maintaining a 'fair days work, for a fair days pay" they are not good motivators of extra-ordinary commitment and performance because they are extrinsic. Teacher work performance and its measurement nevertheless remains a reality in the rural secondary schools of the Vhembe district and principals have no option but to implement that which is mandated. Possible indicators of teacher work performance thus become important variables in the measurement of teaching performance in these schools.

2.2 *The effects of the implementation of IQMS on Learner performance in Grade 12*

Mandates such as the SASA and the Education Laws Amendment Bill require public schools and the civil servants employed there to implement the educational policies of the Government of the day. It is argued that the legislation referred to and its mandates are one attempt to combat the dismal performance of Grade 12 learners in the 2006 Senior Certificate Examination (SCE). Of the 1 057 935 learners that were in Grade 10 in 2004, only (33%) passed the SCE. Of these only 8% qualified for further tertiary studies and only 2.3% succeeded in passing mathematics at the higher grade (Steenkamp, 2007). However, Jansen (2004:3) considers the SCE to be the most public and contested instrument for holding schools and teachers accountable for the performance of their learners. Elkins and Elliot (2004) argue that by using standardized examinations like the SCE the quality of education is assumed to reside in measurable outputs and the processes of teaching and learning plays a secondary role. It can also be argued that when undue emphasis is placed on learner achievements based on the external national assessment in Grade 12 then poor learner achievement is followed by further legislation attempting to again improve the dismal performance of learners. Furthermore, even if learner results improve in the short term, mandates are unlikely to improve the long term processes of teaching and learning and the improvement in learner results is not sustainable in the long term.

The notion of "work performance" is also complex and a change in work performance of teachers is not something that can be mandated as if it is an objectifiable phenomenon. As Senge (1999:58) says, improved work performance

relies on an increase in educators' capacity through the establishment of a culture conducive to work and commitment to the change process. With this background and argument this research set out to investigate how school managers perceived of themselves as adapters and implementers of change processes *by asking them to revisit their seen and lived experiences of the phenomena that embrace the indicators of teacher work performance.*

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions of secondary school principals on mandated change processes on the work performance of teachers in the Vhembe district of education in the Limpopo province

To achieve the purpose of the enquiry the following objectives were set:

- Discuss teacher work performance and some indicators used to measure it,
- Discuss the implementation and management of mandated change processes,
- Investigate the perceptions of principals regarding the influence of mandated change processes on indicators of teacher work performance.

3. Method of Research

A survey questionnaire was used to collect the data and consisted of two sections namely A and B. In Section A, 20 items served to collect bio-and demographic data from the respondents. Section B of the questionnaire explored perceptions on the influence of mandated change processes in terms of the phenomena that comprise indicators of teacher work performance. The questions in Section B of the questionnaire were grouped in threes where the first question always asked about the *current level* of the indicator, the second question probed the perception of how this indicator *has changed* during the past two years. The third question then asked how *the mandated change processes* such as the introduction of Outcomes Based education, introduction of Performance Measurement for teachers, process of Redeployment and Rationalisation, Training and development of educators, the introduction of the Integrated Quality Management System for educators and Continuous Assessment have contributed towards a possible change in the phenomena that encompass the work performance indicator provided. Furthermore the reliability of the various sub-scales relative to question three allows one to postulate that they all form one theoretical factor which will be referred to as *"the influence of mandated change processes on the phenomena that comprise the indicators of work performance"* and this will form the dependent variable in the analysis (see Table 5). The current and changed levels of the seven indicators of work performance served as the independent variables as did some of the bio- and demographic variables. Thus one is investigating how the factor mean score of the mandated processes vary when the conditions of the independent variables are changed (Heiman, 2001).

4. Population and Sample of the Research

The sample used to investigate the perceptions of principals on mandated change on the work performance of educators was drawn from the Vhembe district, one of the six districts in the Limpopo Province of education. This particular district is made up of 27 circuits comprising 274 public secondary schools and primary schools. The researchers were particularly interested in the opinions of the public secondary school principals which led to the selection of all 274 of them who make up all the secondary schools in the selected district.. For purposes of this investigation the population included all principals of secondary schools in the Limpopo Province. The province contains six districts each with numerous circuits. The principal from each of the public secondary school was requested to complete the research questionnaire, a total of 274 questionnaires which were distributed of which 215 were returned, with a return rate of 78.5%. The biographic and demographic data in Section A of the questionnaire was collected as nominal data.

The location of the various schools as well as the predominant socio-economic status is presented in Tables 1 and 2

Table 1: School location

Category	Frequency	Percentage
In or close to city centre	4	1,9
In a suburban area	2	0,9
In a developed township (previously a segregated living area)	16	7,5
In a rural area	186	87,3
On a farm	3	1,4
Other	2	0,9

From Table 1 it can be deduced that most of the schools sampled (87.3%) in the district are located in the rural areas. The average learner to educator ratio in Limpopo in 2005 was 34:1 which is the highest of the nine provinces in South Africa (D of E, 2005, p.15). Most rural schools in the Limpopo Province lack the basic infrastructure such as running water and telephone lines. Only 1.9% of the schools are in or close to a city centre. Thus the sample is representative of the location of schools in the Limpopo Province where most schools are found in the rural areas.

Table 2: Socio-economic status of learners

Socio-economic status	Frequency	Percent
Average-affluent	83	38.6
Below average to poor	128	59.6
Missing	4	1.8
Total	215	100.0

As observed from Table 1 most schools in the Limpopo Province can be classified as rural schools and hence the predominant socio-economic status of the learners should be below average to poor (59.6%). Table 2 above indicates that the sample is representative of the perception of the respondents regarding the socio-economic status of learners.

Table 3: Average pass rate for Grade 12 learners in 2004 and 2005

Average pass rate	Frequency in 2004	Frequency in 2005
70-100%	135(64.6%)	118(55.9%)
0-69%	74(35.4%)	93(44.1%)
Total	209	211

Table 3 provides information about the schools Grade 12 pass rate at the end of 2004 and 2005. From Table 3 it can be seen that the total number of learners who wrote the Senior Certificate Examination (SCE) remained more or less the same for 2004 and 2005. However, the pass rate in the 70 – 100% category decreased by 8.7% from 2004 to 2005, while the category 0-69% increased by 8.7%. These figures indicate a significant decrease in learner achievement in the matriculation examination during 2005. As the SCE plays such an important part in the South African education system this decrease needs to be further explored (see Table 5).

Section B of the questionnaire collected data using an equal interval scale and allows for inferential statistical tests to be used.

5. Inferential Analysis of the Data

Table 4 provides a summary of the reliability of the mandated processes of change on each indicator of work performance:

Table 4: Influence of mandated change processes on work performance indicators

Influence of mandated change processes on the indicator mentioned as an aspect of work performance	Mean scale score	Rank	Cronbach Alpha
Influence of mandated change processes on current level of absenteeism of educators	11.88	7	0.895
Influence of mandated change processes on current level of academic performance of learners	15.07	2	0.741
Influence of mandated change processes on current level of participation in extra-mural activities of educators	12.70	6	0.893
Influence of mandated change processes on current level of co-operation among educators	14.64	4	0.839
Influence of mandated change processes on current level of the quality of teaching of educators	15.46	1	0.774
Influence of mandated change processes on current attitude of educators towards authority	14.55	5	0.858
Influence of mandated change processes on current degree of autonomy of educators	14.98	3	0.857

The original four point scale used in Section B of the questionnaire, which asked to what extent the mandated change processes had influenced or contributed towards the *current level* of a work performance indicator, was reduced and

recoded into three categories, namely:

(1) No extent to a small extent (2) to a moderate extent (3) to a large extent.

This new three-point scale can be interpreted on the sub-scale of the change processes as they all had Cronbach Alpha coefficients large enough to be considered reliable ($\alpha > 0.70$). For the purposes of Table 4 the scale mean scores should thus be interpreted against the new scale as shown below:

1 2 3
(x 6) ↓
6 12 18

The data in Table 4 indicates that the perceptions of the respondents were that the greatest influence of the mandated change processes was on current levels of the quality of teaching ($\bar{x} = 15.46$) and current levels of academic performance of learners ($\bar{x} = 15.07$). These two indicators of work performance are the core aspects of what schools are all about and the respondents have the perception that the mandated change processes changed these two to a moderate tending to a large extent. However, these questions did not stipulate whether the changes were for the better or for the worse. Considering the *academic performance of learners* the data in Table 3 can be used to answer this question. The data indicates that the number of learners who wrote the Senior Certificate Examination in 2004 and 2005 remained more or less the same. However, the pass rate in the 70 – 100% category decreased by 8.7% from 2004 to 2005. The category 0-69% increased by 8.7%. These figures indicate a significant decrease in learner achievement in the matriculation examination during 2005 (see Table 3). Which of the work performance indicators are perceived to be associated with the SCE results? The sub-scales of the various mandated change processes on work performance indicators are sufficiently high (> 0.70) to enable inferential testing, such as t-tests to be done. As the decrease in the SCE results occurred at the end of 2005 only that data is provided in Table 5.

Table 5: The significance of differences between the 2005 SCE groups with respect to the influence of mandated change processes

Influence of mandated changes on work performance indicators	Pass rate Group	N	Mean score	Student t-test (p-value)
Current level of absenteeism of educators	70-100%	109	1.85	0.018*
	0-69%	84	2.13	
Current attitude of educators to authority	70-100%	109	2.30	0.045*
	0-69%	84	2.51	
Current degree of autonomy experienced	70-100%	109	2.41	0.046*
	0-69%	87	2.61	

* = Statistically significant at the 5% level ($p \geq 0.01$ but $p \leq 0.05$)

The data in Table 5 indicate a statistically significant association between *the current absenteeism level of educators, the current attitude towards authority and the current degree of autonomy and the two Grade 12 pass rate groups*. In each of the cases the group belonging to the 70-100% pass rate group, have statistically significantly lower mean scores than the 0-69% pass rate. Although both groups agree to a moderate extent with the influence of the mandated change processes on work performance indicators the groups with the lower percentage pass rate agree to a *greater extent* with the factor. The principals belonging to schools located in the lower percentage pass rate group thus attribute *teacher absenteeism, attitude towards authority and the level of autonomy* as having a greater influence on these weaker academic achievements than the principals belonging to the higher percentage pass rate group do. This indicates an inverse association between the three mandated change processes and their work performance indicators with the academic performance of learners.

Having investigated the current levels of learner performance via the SCE results the data in Table 4 can be analyzed further. The data also indicates that the current levels of absenteeism, participation in extra-mural activities, co-operation, attitude towards authority and degree of autonomy were all perceived to have been influenced to a moderate extent by the mandated processes of change. These indicators are all important aspects of work performance. One is, however, not able to infer from the data whether the mandated change processes have influenced work performance positively or negatively. To test this aspect the item asking about *current level* of the work performance indicators were compared to the extent that these work performance indicators had *changed during the past two years*.

5.1 Indicators of teacher work performance

The research found that the following were indicators of teacher work performance: teachers' absenteeism from work, students' levels of academic performance, teachers' level of participation in extra-mural activities, levels of cooperation among teachers, the quality of teaching, attitudes of teachers towards authority, the degree of autonomy experienced by teachers

5.2 Influence of mandated change processes on absentee levels of teachers as work performance indicator

The *current categories of absenteeism* among teachers in the questionnaire were collapsed from five to two categories namely: low and very low (2) and moderate to high and very high (1) levels of teacher absenteeism. The mean scores obtained on the mandated change factor for the two *current levels of absentee groups* are provided in table 6.

Table 6: Significance of differences between the current levels of absentee groups with respect to influence of mandated change processes

Factor	Groups	N	Factor mean	Student t-test (p-value)
Influence of mandated change processes	Moderate to very high current levels of absenteeism (1)	53	2.23	0.008**
	Very low to low current levels of absenteeism (2)	142	1.88	

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level ($p \leq 0.01$)

The mean scores should be interpreted against the collapsed factor scale of 1 meaning to no extent to a small extent, 2 meaning to a moderate extent and 3 meaning to a large extent. The data in Table 6 indicate that group1, with the perception that the current teacher absentee level is moderate to very high, have a statistically significantly higher factor mean score than group 2 with the perception that the current levels of teacher absenteeism is low to very low ($p=0.008$). The group of principals who perceive themselves as having teachers with moderate to very high current levels of absenteeism (1), thus believe to a *larger extent* that the mandated change processes influenced the current level of absenteeism among teachers than the low to very low absentee group (2) believe it. This could possibly be because the group with the more positive perception ($\bar{x}= 1.88$) have an internal locus of control and hence do not blame the influence of the mandated change processes to the extent that the other absentee group ($\bar{x}= 2.23$) do. It is, however, also possible that under constrained conditions, such as those experienced in centralized systems where autonomy for independent decision-making is curtailed (Klein & Wasserstein-Warnet, 2000) that the innate locus of control of the principals has been undermined. The more positive perception could also be attributed to a more obedient acceptance as modes of adaptation of the change mandates.

The practical significance was small (0.16). This low effect size should, however, be interpreted against the background of Vandenberg's (2006: 196) warning that statistical criteria such as effect size should only act as guidelines and not be accepted as facts. This finding thus possibly has the practical implication that principals should always be encouraged to acquire an internal locus of control as this leads to greater acceptance of responsibility for the levels of teacher performance. It should also be remembered that highly centralized procedures could affect the internal locus of control and that by altering the organizational context one could also influence the locus of control (Klein & Wasserstein-Warnet, 2000).

To probe whether the levels of absenteeism had *changed over the past two years* an item testing this was included in the questionnaire. There was no statistically significant difference between the factor mean scores of the two groups and hence the mandated change processes do not seem to have significantly influenced the perceptions about *changes in levels of absenteeism* over the past two years. The effect size was small.

In both the current and changed levels of absenteeism the group with the more positive perception of low to very low absentee levels among educators had a more positive perception about mandated change processes suggesting the importance of an internal locus of control. Also the respondents are school principals who may not wish to give an impression of poor management of educator attendance or who are possibly more adaptable to mandated change processes. At the same time one also has to contend with the opposing less positive perceptions as these principals are possibly less adaptable to mandated change processes. This could indicate that one group has positive perceptions of mandated change processes whilst the other group is less positively inclined to mandated change processes. It could

also be that the respondents have differing perceptions regarding self-regulation; namely a group with a promotion focus and another with prevention focus (Taylor-Bianco & Schermerhorn, 2006). Promotion-focused individuals normally display eagerness in achieving organizational goals while prevention-focused individuals have a more conservative approach and display vigilance for safety and hence are more concerned with self-preservation. School leaders need to attempt to ensure a “regulatory fit” of their management strategies with their regulatory orientation as this could have positive motivational consequences (Taylor-Bianco & Schermerhorn, 2006). However, it could be argued that it is also possible that the group with the more positive perceptions is using what Hoyle and Wallace (2005) term, mediation to a greater extent than the other group as a mode of adaptation. Such a response, they maintain is a positive attempt to transform prevailing goals and means in education within the constraints of policy imperatives. They further maintain that such principals should be classified as heroes and heroines, who are similar to the “pioneers of transformation” as suggested in the introduction to this investigation.

5.3 Influence of mandated change processes on extra-mural participation as work performance indicator

The two groups involved in current levels of participation were more to a great deal more participation and no change, to less and a great deal less participation in extra-mural activities. No statistically significant difference was present in the factor mean scores between the two groups involved. The effect size was small. The data for the item that tested whether participation in extra-mural activities among educators *had changed* over the past two years indicated that the mandated change processes have had a positive influence on extra-mural participation by teachers ($p=0.025$). This is possibly due to the provision that teachers are rated on their extra-mural participation in school activities. The strength of this association (effect size) is 0.27 which is small. The practical significance could be that greater emphasis needs to be placed on measuring the performance of educators regarding extra-mural activities in the IQMS as these activities contribute to the holistic development of learners.

5.4 Influence of mandated change processes on levels of co-operation as work performance indicator

Regarding the *current levels of co-operation and the change in these levels* over the past two years no statistically significant differences between the independent groups were present. The effect size in both instances was less than 0.1 and could be seen as very small.

5.5 Influence of mandated change processes on quality of teaching as work performance indicator

The *current quality of teaching* among educators is also an important indicator of work performance. No statistically significant differences between the two independent groups of high to very high and moderate to very low current quality of teaching could be found. Both groups agreed to a moderate tending to a large extent with the influence of the mandated change factor. The extent that the quality of teaching has *changed* over the past two years is given in Table 7. The two independent groups were labeled as improved (1) and stayed the same (2).

Table 7: Significance of differences between the changes in quality of teaching groups with respect to influence of mandated change processes

Factor	Groups	N	Factor mean	ANOVA (p-value)
Influence of mandated change processes	Improved quality of teaching	120	2.66	0.025*
	Quality of teaching stayed the same or declined	75	2.45	

* = Statistically significant at the 5% level ($p \geq 0.01$ but $p \leq 0.05$)

The data in Table 7 indicates that the group with the perception that the quality of teaching *has improved* over the past two years has a statistically significantly higher factor mean score than the group that perceives the quality of teaching to be the same or has declined. The mandated change processes thus appear to have had a greater influence on the group with the positive disposition regarding the change in the quality of teaching. The effect size of 0.19 was small. Nevertheless the practical significance could be that a larger group of principals have positive perceptions regarding the quality of teaching. It could also be that the principals were a mixture of individuals with a promotion focus and a prevention focus (Taylor-Bianco & Schermerhorn, 2006). The implication is that those responsible for designing and

advocating mandated change processes should be made aware of this. As any group of principals are likely to have a mix of promotion- and prevention focused individuals allowance need to be made for those with more negative perceptions. Such individuals should be motivated with greater vigilance of their need for safety and security as they probably need more time to allow for the cognitive, emotional and temperamental processes involved in adapting to mandated change processes (Taylor-Bianco & Schermerhorn, 2006). It is also possible that the larger group of principals is better at adapting to the mandated changes via the various modes of adaptation.

5.6 Influence of mandated change processes on attitudes towards authority as work performance indicator

No statistically significant differences could be found between the *current attitudes towards authority* with respect to the two independent groups namely the attitude is good to very good or moderate to poor and very poor. Both groups agreed to a moderate extent with the mandated change processes. The item testing whether the attitude towards authority had *changed* over the past two years had two independent groups namely, improved or improved to a large extent (1) and stayed the same, declined or declined to a large extent (2). The relevant data is provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Significance of differences between the changes in attitude towards authority groups with respect to influence of mandated change processes

Factor	Groups	N	Factor mean	ANOVA (p-value)
Influence of mandated change processes	Attitude towards authority Improved or improved to a large extent attitude towards authority (1)	112	2.54	0.008**
	Attitude towards authority stayed the same, declined or declined to a large extent (2)	84	2.27	

** = Statistically significant at the 1% level ($p \leq 0.01$)

The data in Table 8 shows that the group with the perception that the attitude towards authority had improved, or improved to a large extent had a statistically significantly higher factor mean score than the group with the perception that the attitude towards authority stayed the same or declined. The "improved attitude group" had a more positive perception of the extent that the mandated change processes had influenced attitudes towards authority. Seen in the light of the *current attitudes* towards authority not being significantly different it seems that the mandated change processes have had a positive influence on the changes in attitudes towards authority. The practical significance value was 0.19 which was small. Thus the mandated change processes either improved perceived teacher attitudes towards authority or improved the obedience levels towards authority. This finding should be seen in the context that the respondents were mainly from the rural areas of the Limpopo province and most of the teachers would probably see mandated changes in a positive light compared to the apartheid system where authority was to a large extent rejected by these educators. Mandates issued by a democratic system are much more likely to be accepted as the authority is regarded as legitimate

5.7 Influence of mandated change processes on degree of autonomy as work performance indicator

The *current degree of autonomy* of educators was tested by comparing the factor mean scores of the large to very large with moderate, to low and very low current degrees of autonomy groups. Both of these independent groups agreed to a moderate extent with the mandated change factor but no statistically significant differences were found between the two groupings. The extent that the *degree of autonomy has changed* during the past two years was tested by using the degree of autonomy has improved or improved to a large extent and the degree of autonomy has stayed the same, declined and declined to a large extent groupings. The data representing this item are provided in Table 9.

Table 9: Significance of differences between the changes in degree of educator autonomy groups with respect to influence of mandated change processes

Factor	Groups	N	Factor mean	ANOVA (p-value)
Influence of mandated change processes	Improved degree of educator autonomy	108	2.59	0.039*
	Degree of educator autonomy stayed the same or declined	92	2.38	

* = Statistically significant at the 5% level ($p \geq 0.01$ but $p \leq 0.05$)

From the data in Table 9 the group with the perception that educator autonomy had improved to improved to a large extent, have a statistically significantly higher factor mean score than the group with the perception that educator autonomy has not changed or that it has declined. Again the largely rural respondents in Limpopo probably do believe that the mandated change processes have improved their degree of autonomy as they probably perceive the mandated change processes as more democratic than it was relative to what it was in the previous dispensation. On the other hand they may see autonomy as the greater influence that their unions have in the political processes of designing mandates via the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). It can be argued that this group of principals probably belongs to the faction of teachers who perceive themselves as workers and hence autonomy to them is what their Unions advocate it to be. The mean score of the larger SADTU group was greater than the other teacher union group on the influence of mandated change processes regarding teacher autonomy.

6. Summary of Results

All the sub-scales of the various indicators of work performance of teachers namely, absenteeism, learner academic performance, extra-mural participation, co-operation, quality of teaching, attitude towards authority and degree of autonomy had sufficiently high reliabilities to allow them to form one theoretical factor which was named "*the influence of mandated change processes on the phenomena that comprise the indicators of work performance*".

The respondents agreed that the mandated processes of change had influenced current levels of academic performance of learners and the quality of teaching to a moderate, tending to a large extent. Teacher absenteeism, extra-mural participation, levels of cooperation, attitude towards authority, and degree of autonomy was all influenced to a moderate extent by the mandated processes of change. These phenomena, which also represent teacher work performance indicators, appear to have been touched in some way by policy changes.

A statistically significant association between the *mandated processes of change and current levels of teacher absenteeism* was present. Principals who indicated that teacher absentee levels were low to very low had a more positive perception of the influence of the mandated change processes in that they were less inclined to attribute teacher absentee levels to the mandated change processes than the group who indicated moderate to very high levels of teacher absenteeism. A possible explanation of this significant difference could be that the group with low teacher absenteeism levels had an internal locus of control, were promotion focused individuals who readily accepted organizational goals possibly making them more susceptible to obedience as a mode of adaptation and better able to adapt to mandated processes of change. It could also be that teachers who work in a supportive and co-operative, positive managerial environment develop a solid work ethic.

The *mandated change processes were associated with current levels of learner academic performance*. As the actual SCE results indicated that learner performance had *decreased* at the end of 2006, t-tests were used to indicate possible statistically significant differences between the two pass-rate groups. Current levels of learner academic performance were associated with current levels of teacher absenteeism, current attitudes of teachers towards authority, and current degree of teacher autonomy. In each case the principals belonging to the low learner achievement group (0-69% pass rate) had statistically significantly lower factor mean scores than those belonging to the high achievement group (70-100% pass rate). Hence principals belonging to the low learner achievement group, believed to a greater extent than those belonging to the high learner achievement group, that the mandated processes of change influenced current levels of teacher absenteeism, teacher attitude towards authority and teachers' degree of autonomy. Principals of schools where learners belonged to the high achievement group were less likely to attribute learner academic performance to the mandated processes of change. Good teacher attendance, positive attitudes towards authority and high degrees of teacher autonomy would seem to facilitate principals' perceptions of learner academic achievement.

Principals who had the perception that extra-mural participation by teachers during the past two years had changed and was more to a great deal more had more positive perceptions about the influence of the mandated processes of change than principals who perceived extra-mural participation to be the same, less or a great deal less. Excellent levels of teacher attendance (90% or more) also had a positive association with extra-mural participation by teachers. Principals in schools where teachers indicated excellent levels of attendance and high levels of participation in extra-mural activities were thus less likely to be influenced by the mandated processes of change. It is possible that these positive perceptions regarding the process of mandated change were the result of principals with an internal locus of control, or on the other hand, they could have the ability to use the various modes of adaptation to camouflage their real perceptions when implementing the change mandates.

No statistically significant association between current or changed levels of cooperation with the mandated

processes of change could be found.

The current quality of teaching was not associated with the mandated change processes. However, there was a positive association between the change in teaching quality over the past two years in that the principals with perceptions that the quality of teaching had improved to a large extent had a statistically significantly higher factor mean score on the mandated change processes than the principals with perceptions that the quality of teaching had stayed the same or declined. In addition, principals who believed that the quality of teaching, as measured by teaching performance as an aspect of IQMS, had improved during the past two years had a positive association with low levels of teacher absenteeism. Thus principals with positive perceptions about the quality of teaching and whose schools show good teacher attendance are probably more amenable to mandated processes of change.

No statistically significant association could be found between the current degree of autonomy of teachers and the mandated change processes. Principals with perceptions that the degree of teacher autonomy had improved over the past two years had more positive perceptions about the mandated change processes.

7. Implications for School Principals on Managing the Implementation of Mandated Processes of Change Relating to the Work Performance of Teachers

There can be little doubt that if school principals can successfully implement and manage the mandated change processes influencing teacher work performance that they could be perceived to be "pioneers of transformation". Failure to do this successfully leaves them in a position to become convenient scapegoats for the designers of the mandated change processes. Principals are placed under enormous pressure by all stakeholders and are held accountable for teacher and learner performance in all facets of school-life. To achieve to such high levels of performance in an ever-changing and turbulent environment requires a special type of person - one who can adapt to the contextual circumstances while still maintaining high performance levels. As school principals in South Africa must implement all mandates received from their Head of Department (a political appointment) this places them in the position of accepting the mandates, adapting to them or leaving the employment of the Department of Education. It could be argued that acceptance of mandates with positive attitudes to change and the ability to use the various modes of adaptation is the path that many principals are likely to follow. Such a path does not necessarily lead to improvement in the work performance of teachers and could encourage new forms of camouflage to legislative mandates among teachers and principals alike.

It could also be argued for the development of an internal locus of control where responsibility involves the internalization of values that inspire principals and teachers to meet their commitments to each other and to the school (Sergiovanni, 2007). This is a leadership competence that is worthwhile striving for. Sergiovanni further indicates that such leadership is based in the authority that encourages teachers to respond from within, to become self-managing. The authority does not come from mandated scripts that require carbon-copy conformity but is based on ideas that provide a framework that offers teachers a heightened sense of understanding, meaning and significance in their work. Again one could agree with Sergiovanni, as teacher performance mandates are based on the assumption that good learner achievement in standardized examinations is the result of good teaching. Such performance mandates can lead to principals either using compliance or mediation as modes of adapting to mandates or taking early retirement as an escape route. Furthermore, mandates can curb the autonomy for independent decision-making and could thus also limit the development of an internal locus of control. Principals should also be encouraged to identify their own regulatory focus as it could be argued that a prevention focus, which is guided by vigilance and safety and security needs, could be encouraged by mandates. Such principals need to be managed with attention to their desire to prevent negative outcomes as they may be more likely to employ the various modes of adaptation when implementing performance mandates.

A recurring theme in this investigation is the distinctive of two groups of principals. One group had positive and the other had less positive perceptions about the influence of the mandated change processes on the phenomena that comprise the indicators of teacher work performance. In order to improve the work performance of teachers it appears that excellent teacher attendance, high academic achievement by learners, high teacher involvement in extra-mural activities, high levels of teacher cooperation, high teaching quality, good teacher attitudes towards authority and a large degree of teacher autonomy facilitates the implementation of mandated processes of change without relinquishing the locus of control of the principal and the school itself. This enquiry thus suggests that principals should strive for high levels of these work performance indicators among teachers.

8. Conclusion: Toward living Graciously with Mandated Change

Mandates introduced as a direct response to weak examination results are based on an assumed and debatable direct causable relationship between teacher performance and learner achievement. The education system in South Africa seems to be characterized by using legislation in an effort to repair and renew schools and learner performance. Weak examination results are almost predictably followed by legislation to 'enforce' improved learner performance. This research has argued that teacher performance measures should be designed and implemented by teachers *in* their schools so that the various contextual complications can be addressed, such as the contextual issues in the rural schools in this research. Furthermore it could be argued that performance management mandates are unlikely to improve teaching in the long term, especially if they are designed as "one size fits all" regulations. In the short term, one could argue, it serves only as a recipe to be followed by teachers so that their teaching behaviour is technically congruent with that which is prescribed by the manual for implementing performance measurement.

Furthermore, it seems that performance mandates that are externally designed and imposed in an effort to transform schools tend to augment compliance or mediation as modes of adaptation. It could also be argued that many principals, together with their school communities, have sufficient expertise to design and implement teacher performance measurements and that with the necessary care and the acceptance of responsibility and self-regulation, this can serve to induce the commitment and internal motivation that is essential to attain higher levels of student outcome.

The fact that this research has identified weaknesses in the mandating system as it has been deployed in South Africa does not mean that it does not support the performance measurement of teachers. What is suggested is an approach to the measurement of teacher work performance that involves principals and teachers in both design and implementation of such a system. In this regard this research asserts that principals and their communities can do more for high levels of teacher attendance, excellent learner achievements, greater extra-mural participation, authentic collaboration among teachers, positive teacher attitudes towards authority and greater degrees of teacher autonomy than performance management mandates can.

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