

**AN ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION IN A RURAL SCHOOL
IN THE OMUSATI REGION OF NAMIBIA**

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ABSTRACT

Organizations globally are challenged with a very volatile, fast changing environment. It is only those organizations that develop the capacity to change timeously that will survive in this millennium. (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p.23)

Organizational development (OD) is a planned change approach aimed at changing behaviour and enhancing organizational effectiveness. Central to such an approach is continuous business process improvement. OD rests on the foundation of values and assumptions about people and organizations, and it is imperative that organizations adopt systematic methodologies in introducing business improvement interventions.

The study introduced an OD approach to one of the rural primary schools in the Omusati region of Namibia, with the purpose of examining if it would bring change in the school. My goal was to explore participants' experience and perception of the OD process and to investigate the possible short term outcome of such an intervention.

The case study involved 16 staff members made up of a principal, one head of department and 14 teachers. Data was gathered through formal interviews with the principal, head of department and three teachers, through a focus group interview with teachers, and through observation and observation note entries.

The study found that OD was a new concept approach to the participants which differs completely from the way that change processes are introduced in the schools.

Participants felt that introducing change in an organization using an OD approach can bring effective change, but it can also place huge demands on participants' commitment. This is particularly so if they do not adopt it as an internal process of business improvement. The OD approach is a long-term change process and not a quick fix.

Finally, the outcome of the intervention indicated enthusiasm for the school to continue addressing the prevailing challenges despite various obstacles that they do not have control over.

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ACRONYMS

ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
FS	Future Search
FSC	Future Search Conference
HOD	Head Of Department
MBEC	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
OD	Organization Development
SDF	Survey Data Feedback
T1, T2, T3, T4, T5	Teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
WCEFA	World Conference on Education For All

Pencil, ink marks and highlighting ruin books for other readers.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

1.1 Historical context

At its independence on March 1990, Namibia adopted the policy of *Education for All*, based on the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), which was held in Jomtien, Thailand, in the same year and month as Namibia's independence.

Following Namibia's independence the constitution required that schools be transformed and democratized to provide equal education access to its entire citizenship. As a result the new Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) developed programmes for "education improvement, renewal and reform" (MBEC, 1993, p. 22). The programmes include: "The setting of National Standards and guidelines to ensure quality of education and the restructuring of the inspectorate and advisory services in order to improve the quality of supervision, teaching and learning and support to teachers" (Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), 2006, p. 20).

Ten years after independence the government of the Republic of Namibia analyzed its education system, focusing on the shortcomings of the system and enabling the Ministry to design an improvement programme. The Education, Training, School Improvement Programme (ETSIP) was developed in 2005 to respond to the call of Vision 2030. Vision 2030 is Namibia's ambitious initiative "to join the ranks of high income countries and afford all its citizens a quality of life that is comparable to that of the developed world" (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 2).

1.2 Personal context

As a school principal, it worried me that most of these programmes embedded in ETSIP have not materialized. In probing for reasons several ideas occurred to me: is it because the initiative comes from the education offices and not from the school itself? Binney and Williams, cited in

Maselana (2007, p. 3), cautioned that “top down change programmes often do not work, and they do not produce the intended results”. Or is it the fact that workshops to introduce the programmes are presented to representatives from each school who are expected to go back to their school and implement change without being given time to prepare the staff effectively? Smith (2003, p. 1) points out that “Timing or readiness and conditions conducive to change are key factors in successful change”. These thoughts led me to question the nature of change and how it occurs in schools.

One of my subjects in the M.Ed. course in Education Leadership and Management attracted my attention because it made me reflect on the way change is introduced to schools. Organization development (OD) differs in many ways from other change strategies in the sense that it is a planned change strategy that focuses on organizational culture and change.

Chin and Benne, cited in Smith (2003, p. 3), describe three types of planned change strategies, namely empirical/rational, normative/re-educative, and power/coercive. OD is largely based on the normative/re-educative or cultural change strategy which assumes that behaviour is based on group norms and that change occurs when groups realize that existing norms are dysfunctional and replace them with new norms. French, Bell and Zawacki (1994, p. 119) argue that “people affected by change must participate in their own re-education if they are to be re-educated”. OD is, however, also based on a rational/empirical strategy. According to French and Bell (1995, p. 102) “This assumes that people will only change if they realize that change is beneficial to them, the envisaged situation is desirable and in line with their rational self-interest.”

It is against this background that I intended to do research on the impact of an OD intervention in a rural school in Namibia. I wanted to establish to what extent OD would help a rural school to implement change. Studies done in the USA (Schmuck and Runkel, 1994), in South Africa (Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus, 1995; Mitchell, 2004; Maselana, 2007), and in Namibia (Neshila, 2004), have shown that OD can be an effective change strategy in schools and can make a difference in the life and learning of educators and learners.

I believe the results of this research have a potential to determine whether OD as a change process is viable in this rural school. Results may encourage officials in the Ministry of

Education to be trained and to conduct their training using an OD approach. This study may also encourage more OD research in different education regions in Namibia.

1.3 Goals of the research

The purpose of my research was to explore participants' experience and perception of the OD process, and to investigate the possible short term outcomes of the intervention in a rural primary school in the Oshana Region of Namibia. To achieve this, I conducted an OD intervention project in which I:

- Introduced OD as an approach to organizational change, and
- Carried out an OD intervention with school participants.

1.4 Research approach

Qualitative research involving interpretive and critical paradigms was conducted in a case study of an OD intervention because this study is concerned with change. My interest was in gaining insight into participants' perceptions and experiences of the OD intervention as a part of the change process, thus it was based on the interpretive paradigm.

It was also based on the critical paradigm because it was concerned with raising awareness of organization dysfunctionalities and bringing about change toward a more satisfying and democratic situation in the organization for the research participants. I used a case study method. Yin (2003) describes a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context" (p. 13) – in my case, an OD intervention in a rural school.

1.4.1 OD intervention/Action research

OD is a process of diagnosis, taking action, rediagnosis and taking new action (French & Bell, 1999, p. 5), thus interactive and cyclical. It actively involves members of the organization in all phases of the process, from introduction, through data gathering and analysis, to action planning, implementation and review. I adopted a participatory approach (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 314) where all participants were actively involved in the process.

The action research phases of OD intervention are explained in section 3.3.2.

1.4.2 Data gathering and analysis

I used observation, observation notes and interviews to collect data. I conducted interviews with the participants before and after the OD intervention to find out their perception and experience of the OD process.

I used interpretational analysis, which is defined by Gall as “a process data in order to find constructs, themes and patterns” (Gall, as cited in Winegardner, 2001, p. 7) to analyze my data.

1.5 The structure of the research

The thesis is organized as follows:

Chapter 1:

This chapter starts by describing the context of the study, my personal motivation as well as the rationale for undertaking the study. It then explains the research goals and approach.

Chapter 2:

In this chapter, I present an overview of the literature on organizational change. The central theme of the research is an Organization Development (OD) intervention, thus Chapter 2 also briefly describes the history, goals and key theories and concepts that inform OD.

Chapter 3:

In this chapter, I describe the research methodology in terms of research paradigms (interpretive and critical) within which my research falls. I describe the research methodology which is an action research case study; I also present a detailed description of the phases of action research which I applied to the OD process, and provide information about collected data and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4:

In this chapter I present my data analysis and discussion in a narrative form, and present the respondents' experience and perceptions of the OD process and the outcome of the intervention.

Chapter 5:

The final chapter draws the study together, presents the main findings and reflects on the potential value of the research. I also describe limitations of my research and conclude with personal reflections.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to look at what various authors have to say about change in an organization. The second section of this chapter discusses organizational change, while the third section outlines types of strategies to bring about effective change in organizational setup. The fourth section focuses on Organization Development (OD) as an approach for managing change, more specifically, it covers some of the OD interventions that help to deal with specific problems effectively and efficiently, and the theories that inform OD.

2.2 Organization change

According to McMillan (2004) many writers point out that the ancient Chinese saw change and transformation as a never-ending and vital feature of our universe: everything was viewed as being in the process of changing and becoming something else. They considered that the natural world was created by a cyclical pattern of comings and goings, of growth and decay e.g., summer and winter, moisture and dryness, coolness and warmth (p. 59), thus, change is nothing new and this applies to organizational change as well.

The twenty-first century is being experienced by many as a period of immense change and confusion brought about by increasing and parallel advances in technology, science and global communications (McMillan, 2004, p. 58). Demands for change in organizations have never been greater: innovate, change or die is particularly the reality facing organizations today, and thus, change is high on most organizational agendas. For this reason, organizational change is imperative to any organization.

This takes us to the theory of evolution by Dr. Darwin which indicates that the species that has the greatest ability to adapt to change or that changes with its environment has the highest rate of survival. Therefore, like species in the wild, people have to change to adapt or survive in a changing environment (Darwin, 1872). The question is what causes this change and how organizations should change to survive.

However, according to Lewis (1994), it is hard to find any coherent model or a foundation structure to explain why the pressures for organizational change have increased, or to identify a framework to give practical guidelines for helping organizational survival and growth (p. 16). Kelly (as cited in A.C.T. Smith, 2005) also argues that we need new ideas, paradigms and practices to make sense of the turbulent changes that have come about (p. 23) during the last twenty decades or so.

Nevertheless, in physical science, scientists found a way of understanding these processes which are drawn from the new science of complexity. The next section presents the complexity theory as a model that may be equipped with knowledge to help organizations understand and cope with the increasing pace of change.

2.2.1 Complexity theory

Complexity theory, like its partner in crime, chaos theory, has accumulated a voluminous presence in scientific and, more recently, organizational literature, where it is proclaimed as everything from a helpful metaphor to a profound rebellion in conceptualizing the working of system (A.C.T. Smith, 2005, p. 23).

According to McMillan (2004), complexity science or theory is “concerned with the study of the dynamics of complex adaptive systems which are non-linear and have self-organizing attributes and emergent properties” (p. 25).

A complex system is a system that has within itself a capacity to respond to its environment in more than one way. Marion and Bacon (as cited in A.C.T. Smith, 2005, p. 24) lay down three essentials of complexity theory:

Firstly, non-additive behaviour emerges from interactive networks – the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

An organization as a whole works differently from the parts alone. For example individuals in the organization cannot do without a team, thus individuals in effective organizations have networks and they communicate with others. However, this does not mean that individual contribution in an organization is not necessary. It is, but the point is that when individuals in organizations are working together, the organization becomes more effective and successful. In instances where individuals do not work in a concerted manner it leads to a lack of synergy and hence, the performance of such a team cannot be maximized.

Moreover, organizations do not exist in isolation; they are in dynamic interaction with the environment and they are indeed part of the process that creates and shapes the environment in which it operates. Thus, we should accept that organizations are participants in the creative process of our environment.

According to Keene (2000), if organizations accept that they are participants in the creative process of the environment, they must largely flow with the stream rather than trying to swim against the current by trying to control the flow (p. 16). Otherwise, by trying to control the environment organizations would experience frustration when the environment behaves in a way that is incongruent and in conflict with the organization's operations. This component of complex theory suggests that organizations have to deal with or accept exogenous factors and will not necessarily always or at all times shape the organization entirely or dictate the best practices. In other words, for organizations to survive at times they must adhere to the norms and circumstances of their environment. As discussed in the following paragraph, this statement does not however not imply that innovation should be absent from an organization operating within a certain environment.

Secondly, the developing behaviour exhibited in the complex system is unpredictably related to underpinning causes.

Complex systems are incapable of being forecasted. In most cases a slight change would make no difference at all, but when the system is unpredictable, the future may unfold differently,

depending upon what changes occurred. For example, in an organization, two different groups can appear to address a matter in a different way, as complexity increases. This is often recommended as a source of creativity and innovation. Every organization is influenced by a set of values that causes the behaviour of the organization to change over time, depending upon which social, economical or other factors lead to change and how they interact.

In the view of Keene (2000), organizations limit themselves to the endless possibilities available to them by not realizing the importance of vision, values and guiding principles of the organization as the steering mechanism for the organization (p. 16). He also said that all decisions and actions that occur in an organization are influenced by values, beliefs and vision of the organization.

In fact it is the opinion of the author that innovation and creativity not only increases the chances of organizations to survive the changing environment, but would indeed give them a superior opportunity to excel relative to others.

Thirdly, complex behaviour occurs in the vague area between predictability and unpredictability, the edge of chaos.

Behaviour of organizations is unpredictable in the same way as the inability to predict hurricanes. Although outcomes are impossible to predict, dealing effectively with change and challenges on daily basis will ultimately result in success. Therefore, participants must learn how to manage the anxiety that accompanies being on the edge of chaos by being creative. Complexity, according to Keene (2000), is also a state in which maximum creativity and possibility exist for the system to realize and explore (p. 16). In a complexity zone “systems adapt, learn and grow” (Lewis, 1994, p. 16).

To sum up the above discussion, all organizations are systems. Due to the influence of rapid change (both internally and externally) and globalization, they also have to change. Thus organizations must be flexible, open to change, creative and innovative, they must be willing to learn new things, they must be willing to question their assumptions at all times and, most importantly, they must realize that they are blinded by their own prejudices and biases, such as believing that it is hard for an organization to change. Organizations must remember that things

that worked in the past may not necessarily work in the future, thus learning and experimenting are key. However, if the organization refuses to change or to try out new ideas while other organizations are busy changing, the environment around the organization is changing so much that the organization will be forced to react or die.

Consequently, leaders (such as school principals, managers and executives of companies) in the environment of complexity will have to be able to facilitate and create an environment which makes it possible for the participants within the system to interact and create reality, guided by the overarching vision and rules. Central to the latter is the critical role leadership should play in enabling the organization to have an appetite for change and thus to adjust to the environment. Leadership must set the benchmarks and enable the organization to reach for the goals on an incremental and daily basis, thus setting the organizational framework for performance. This performance must be embedded in the notion that individuals must interact with other individuals, while individuals in groups form teams that interact with other teams, and subsequently teams work in units that will escalate to the level of an enterprise or an organization. The quality of interaction from both individual and team level determines the ultimate output and attainment of organizational goals and overall vision over time.

In the next section, the complexity of change in education and the importance of change in education are discussed.

2.2.2 Change in education

According to Fullan, (1991, p. 15), the purpose of educational change is presumably to help schools accomplish their goals more effectively by replacing some structures, programs and or practices with better ones.

How is change in education complex? Fullan (1993) in his book *Change forces* gave examples of what makes change complex in education, such as government policy changing or being constantly redefined, key leaders with a lot of experience and skills leaving the education system, important contact people shifting from one role to another, and new technology being invented. He indicated that “each new variable that enters the equation – those unpredictable but inevitable

noise factors – produce ten other ramifications which in turn produce tens of other reactions and on and on” (p. 19). Thus it is impossible to predict what will happen as postulated by the complexity theory. In most cases, the slight change would make no difference at all, but when the system is unpredictable, the future may unfold differently, depending upon what little difference(s) occurred.

In the widely acclaimed book *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*, by Peter Senge, a well-known author of several books, one of the research participants (cited in Fullan, 1993, p. 19) exclaimed after being engaged in an exercise to map out all the complexities of a particular problem:

All my life I assumed that somebody somewhere knew the answer to this problem, I thought politicians knew what had to be done, but refused to do it out of politics and greed. But now I realize that nobody knows the answer. Not us, not them, not anybody.

Change is inevitable, it can't be prevented or avoided, thus it is essential to the needs of education. As in all organizations, change in education systems and institutions is nothing new, what is new is “the rate and frequency with which the changes are being introduced and imposed through governmental and state legislations” (Sikes, quoted in Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. 36). In the education sector, these changes or improvements impact mostly on the people at the school level (principals, teachers) who have to implement them without being involved in formulation of the change programmes, because the people who are to implement the changes are not involved in the decision-making process. Consequently, in the view of Fullan (1991), the purpose of educational change presumably is to help schools accomplish their goals more effectively by replacing some structures, programmes and practices. A lot of new programmes are being introduced to schools with the aim of bringing about change, these new programmes either make no difference, or they may improve the situation or make it worse. Therefore, change for the sake of change will not help (Fullan, 1991, p. 15), but should add value to the organization.

However, regardless of the cause and importance of change in organizations, change is complex, because it is inextricably linked to our emotions (James & Connolly, 2000, p. 16), it is always received with mixed feelings by participants. In the next section, I discuss participants' response to change.

2.2.3 Response to change

Fullan (2001) notes that “if you ask people to brainstorm words to describe change, they come up with a mixture of negative and positive terms...On one side, *fear, anxiety, loss, danger, panic*; on the other, *exhilaration, risk-taking, excitement, improvements, energizing*.” For better or for worse, change arouses emotions. Consequently, the feelings aroused by and concerning any proposed changes need to be carefully considered. (p. 1). Therefore, if insufficient attention is paid to the emotional responses to change this may result in the change being undermined or deliberately blocked (Harris, 2002, p. 37).

However, according to Marris (cited in Fullan, 1991), “whether the change is sought or resisted, and happens by chance or design; whether we look at it from the standpoint of reformers or those they manipulate, of individuals or institutions, the response is characteristically ambivalent” (p. 31). To begin with, new experiences are always responded to in the context of some “familiar, reliable, construction of reality” in which people attach personal meaning regardless of how meaningful it is to others. Schon (cited in Fullan, 1991) said that all real change involves “Passing through the zones of uncertainty ... the situation of being at sea, lost, of confrontation more information than you can handle” (pp. 31-32). Thus, faced with change, participants are ambivalent about the impending change, recognizing on one hand that a change may be the right thing to do, but on the other hand concerned about what they may be called on to do, or lose as the change is implemented – all waiting for the indications as to what the results will truly mean (Self, 2007, p. 13).

How do we lead to adoption rather than resistance behaviours of change by participants?

In the next section, this thesis focuses on change readiness and the important elements needed to create and manage readiness which may lead to the adoption of the change that may produce success.

2.2.4 Change readiness

An organization is made up of people, who are the vehicle for organization change, thus, if organization change is to happen and succeed then organizations and organization members should be prepared or must be readied for such change. Change readiness embraces/includes a number of features. In this section I discuss a selection of what the literature considers to be key components of change readiness.

First, readiness to participate in an organization change refers essentially to desire or willingness as a form of readiness, capability as a form of readiness, belief that “we can make a difference” as a form of readiness, and confidence as a form of readiness (Smith, 2003).

As mentioned earlier change raises different emotions in people, such as feelings of loss, incompetence, confusion, and conflict, if participants are not prepared for the proposed change. For example, participants may be fearful that they are too old to learn new skills, or if the organization has gone through a lot of changes participants may feel burned out from all the changes, or they may not like being asked to make yet another change. Thus, creating change readiness before trying to change the organization helps to avoid change resistance by participants.

Readiness, according to Weisbord (as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 18), “is the building block for all constructive change”. In schools, readiness involves the school’s practical and conceptual capacity to initiate, develop, or adopt a given innovation. Readiness may be approached in terms of “individual” and “organizational” factors. For the individuals, it is essential to address issues such as the individuals’ perceived need, whether the change is reasonable for individuals, whether individuals possess the necessary knowledge and skills to carry through the change, and whether the participants have enough time to participate in the change process. For the organization, it is necessary to know whether the change is compatible with the culture of the school and whether the resources needed are available. The greater the number of “no’s”, the more reason to take another look at readiness (Crandall et al. cited in Fullan, 1991, p. 64).

I. Smith (2005) asserts that by creating change readiness before attempts at renewal begin, the need for later action to cope with resistance may be avoided (p. 408). Now, how does one create

and manage readiness leading to the implementation of the change that produces accomplishment and durability?

In the next section, the thesis discusses the elements necessary for creating readiness.

2.2.4.1 Creating a need for change

Many change innovations are attempted without examining whether or not they are perceived to be the priority need for the participants involved in the change process. The Rand change agent study (Fullan, 1991, p. 69) revealed that the identification of a need is strongly related to successful implementation of change.

The need for change is the identification of a gap between a desired state and the current state. Kurt Lewin (as cited in I. Smith, 2005, p. 409), a pioneer in the analysis and understanding of organizational change, described the “unfreezing” of an organizational renewal as a critical first step towards achieving change. Unfreezing is the state where people are taken from a state of being unready for change to being ready and willing to make the first step. The participants must give good reason for the need for change, by providing information showing what the organization’s need for change is, as Lewin put it, bringing about a deliberate “emotional stir up, in order to break open the shell of complacency and self righteousness” in organizations (Lewin as cited in I. Smith, 2005, p. 409). Consequently, motivation and readiness for change in an organization can be generated by creating dissatisfaction with the present state of things and a related desire for, and shared vision of, where and how the organization needs to change, and this is an important part of sowing of the seeds of change.

2.2.4.2 Communicating the purpose and process of change

The social energy in an organization – either positive or negative in relation to change – is a most important factor in the success or failure of many organizational renewal initiatives (I. Smith,

2005, p. 410). The participants, who are the targets of change, are central to the success of the change effort, because it is their attitudes, skills, motivations and base knowledge that form a significant component of the organizational environment in which change is to be attempted. Badaracco & Ellsworth (as cited in Evans, 1996), argues that “goals cannot be shared unless they are understood. None of us can invest in the vision we don’t grasp and a consistent, clear formulation of goals and their rationale over time creates clarity throughout and organization about its broad purposes and immediate objectives” (p. 213).

Consequently, Fullan (1991) argues that unclear and unspecified changes can cause huge anxiety and frustration to those who are honestly trying to implement the change (p. 71). Fullan points out that: “clarity, of course, cannot be delivered on a platter. It is accomplished or not depending on the *process*. Nor is greater clarity an end in itself: very simple and insignificant changes can be amenable to easy clarification” (p. 71), and for this reason, communicating a vision of the future as a result of the proposed change and showing confidence in the change process is important to the participants.

Conversely, communication with the participants about the proposed change must occur early in the change process, with clear messages which are realistic, honest and genuine: this can help develop the participants’ confidence, commitment and their willingness to participate in the change process.

2.2.4.3 Boosting the confidence of organizational members

The third element focuses on bolstering the confidence of the organization’s members, reinforcing that they can successfully make the change. Leaders in the organization need to highlight, encourage and assure the participants that they have the right knowledge, skills and abilities to implement the change and, if they don’t, then the participants need to be aware that they will be given the opportunities to develop the necessary skills needed for the proposed change (Self, 2007, p. 12). Helping participants to clearly see their role in the new ways of doing things can build confidence in, and commitment to, the changes both before they begin and once they are under way (I. Smith, 2005, p. 410).

2.2.4.4 What's in it for me / us? Human need satisfaction

The fourth element is designed to answer the question, "what's in it for me / us?"

Organizational members are not only interested in understanding what the nature of the results of change implementation will be, but also seek to understand whether these results will be positive or negative and what the meaning of these end results is in terms of the values (Self, 2007, p. 12).

Lewin (as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 19) saw motivation – human need satisfaction – as the interaction of a specific person in a specific situation that includes other people.

Involving participants in considering options and making decisions is an important element in establishing a foundation of trust. It is important to create balance in an organization in which participants are allowed to openly express rebelling views, for their views to be listened to and considered, and for changes and compromises to be made without any of the parties feeling that they have lost ground (I. Smith, 2005, p. 410). According to human need motivation theory people are ready to act in ways that will meet these needs for belonging, recognition and achievement and influence (Smith, 2003, p. 19): we all need to feel that we can influence our situation.

2.2.4.5 Building a base for change

In the view of Smith, 2003, p. 4), organizations might realize that they need to change or might want to change but do not know how to change. In fact most organizations have no experience in change, particularly in self-directed change, and as a result, staff training and development, team building and capacity building in the change process and basic organization processes such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making and conflict management are powerful tools in the process of achieving a shift to a change-ready organizational culture.

Change needs key people to be supportive of it, and needs members of the organization who are fully capable of successfully changing and recognizing that each member will be concerned about the outcomes for them as individuals.

In the following section, I will discuss Chin and Benne's planned change strategies.

2.3 Planned change strategies

Bringing about effective change in an organization depends entirely on a plan or strategy that one develops to go about bringing effective change. The best known typology is that of Chin and Benne (as cited in French & Bell, 1999, pp. 95-96; Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003, pp. 40-1; Dalin, 1998, p. 99) in which they portray three types of planned change approaches, namely, normative re-educative strategy, empirical rational strategy, and power-coercive strategy. Next, this thesis elaborates on these three strategies with an emphasis on the normative re-educative strategy in which OD mostly falls.

2.3.1 Power-coercive strategies

According to Dalin (1998), the power-coercive strategy is "based on a fundamentally different view of humanity, because it is assumed that changes primarily take place by means of power" (p. 99). Change is generally implemented from the top down, and it is taken for granted that the presence of power and the threat of sanctions are necessary in order to assure the desired behaviour. With these strategies, people with less power comply with the demands of those with more power. It is the way in which power is used that distinguishes this strategy from the other two strategies – empirical-rational and normative re-educative.

2.3.2 Empirical-rational strategies

According to Caluwé and Vermaak (2003, p. 41), change is based on the assumption that employees are rational human beings and are guided by rational considerations and insights, thus change is often based on expert analysis, rational planning and factual communication. This strategy is based on the assumption that people will change only when they come to realize that change is beneficial to them (French & Bell, 1999, p. 95).

2.3.3 Normative re-educative strategies

According to Chin and Benne (as cited in French & Bell, 1999, p. 95), normative re-educative strategies are based on the assumption that norms form the basis for behaviour and change comes through a re-education process in which old norms are abandoned and replaced by new ones. The normative re-educative approach, which is a more bottom-up approach, aims at supporting and stimulating people to engender change themselves. Chin and Benne indicate the nature of the normative re-educative strategy as follows:

The rationality and intelligence of men are not denied. Patterns of action and practice are supported by sociocultural norms and by commitments on the part of the individuals to these norms. Sociocultural norms are supported by the attitude and values systems of individuals – normative outlooks which undergrid their commitments. Change in a pattern of practice or action, according to this view, will occur only as the persons involved are brought to change their normative orientations to old patterns and develop commitments to new ones. And changes in normative orientations involve changes in attitudes, values, skills, and significant relationships, not just changes in knowledge, information, or intellectual rationales for action and practice (French & Bell, 1999, p. 95).

OD as a strategy clearly falls within the normative re-educative category, although it often represents a combination of the normative re-educative and the empirical-rational strategies.

In the next section, I present OD as a normative re-educative strategy.

2.4 Organization Development (OD)

Organization Development (OD) is a powerful approach for applying behavioural science to improving organizational effectiveness and human fulfillment at work (French & Bell, 1999, p. 1). Basically it is a process for teaching people how to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities, and learn how to do that better and better over time. OD is an organizational improvement strategy (French & Bell, 1999).

2.4.1 Origin of OD

OD is applied in all types of organizations, including schools, but has its roots in business world. The goal of OD is to improve both the quality of work life of individuals and the effectiveness of organizations.

The psychological studies at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company, done in the 1920s and 1930s, serve to set the stage for the development of OD. In the view of Schmuck and Runkel (1994), it was a response against the leading theory of organization – “scientific management”, which advocates that the work of humans should be made as machine-like as possible (p. 9). The experiments showed that “workers would respond favourably with higher production, to interested and sympathetic attention from supervisors and managers”. Followers of Lewin found out that “members of groups could examine explicitly the social processes that made their groups effective”, and they also discovered that “members cared a good deal about their relationships with one another” (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 10).

The ideas of OD were first inspired by Kurt Lewin in collaboration with Douglas McGregor in the late 1940s (French & Bell, 1999, p. 32). Lewin and McGregor were responsible for the founding of the Research Centre for Group Dynamics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which sponsored an Intergroup Relations workshop, later known as the T-groups, which focus on communication between individuals in the work place. Lewin’s field theory and his conceptualizing about group dynamics (the way groups and individuals act and react to changing circumstances), change processes, and action research (a reflective process of ongoing problem solving led by individuals working with others to improve the way they deal with and solve

problems) deeply influenced the people associated with the various stems of OD (French & Bell, 1999, p. 33). According to Smither, Houston and McIntire (1996), most researchers attribute the birth of organization development to the development of the T-group in the 1940s (p. 9).

French and Bell define organization development as

a long-term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organization's visioning, empowerment, learning, and problem-solving processes, through an ongoing, collaborative management of organization culture – with special emphasis on the culture of intact work teams and other team configurations – using the consultant-facilitator role and the theory and technology of applied behaviour science, including action research (French & Bell, 1999, p. 26).

Organization development is made up of a set of important values, assumptions and beliefs that shapes the goals and methods of the field and that distinguish OD from other improvement strategies. In the next section, I elaborate on these as pointed out in French and Bell (1999, p. 62) and Smither et al. (1996, pp. 17-20).

2.4.2 Values, assumptions and beliefs in OD

1. OD values tend to be humanistic, optimistic and democratic. Humanistic values proclaim the importance of the individual, respect the whole person, treat people with respect and dignity, assume that everyone has intrinsic worth, and view all people as having the potential for growth and development (French & Bell 1996, p. 62). Consequently, the basic belief of OD is that people are the cornerstone of organizational success (Smither et al., 1996, p. 17).
2. Optimistic values posit that people are basically inherently good, that progress is possible and desirable in human affairs, and that rationality, reason, and goodwill are the tools for making progress.
3. The belief in personal growth is another basic value of organization development. OD specialists believe that situations in organizations can be improved by educating employees and introducing planned change (Smither et al., 1996, p. 17). People in organizations are open to change, they want to develop their potential and, most of all, they are looking for challenges and want growth in their jobs.

4. Another value, according to Smither et al. (1996), is OD's recognition that emotions, personal values and interpersonal relationships are a significant part of an organization's success. OD consultants believe that organizational function is improved when people feel comfortable expressing both their opinions and their feelings (p. 19).

5. Organizations must be considered as systems with interdependent parts: changes in one area of an organization are likely to affect other areas, and changing the behaviour of certain individuals in an organization may result in changing others. In many cases these resulting changes are not obvious immediately, thus the influence of the interventions may not be visible for some time after the intervention occurred, and this delay makes the evaluation of the success of change effort hard (Smither et al., 1996, p. 20).

In the next part, I elaborate on some of the key theories and concepts that inform OD.

2.4.3 Key theories and concepts that inform OD

OD is informed by many concepts and theories, which facilitate the development of OD. In this section, I discuss some of the theories and concepts of OD.

2.4.3.1 Participation and empowerment

Participation and empowerment are two of the foundations of OD, in which all members of the organization are involved. In French and Bell's view, "participation is an effective form of empowerment. Participation enhances empowerment and empowerment enhances performance and individual well-being" (p. 88). According to Smith (2003), "all people who are likely to be directly affected by the outcome of a change process, and who are likely to be involved in the implementation of any decision, should actively participate in the process of change from the beginning" (p. 4). As Weisbord (1987) remarks: "People will commit to plans they have helped to develop" (p. 285).

Quinn and Spreitzer (cited in French & Bell, 1999) state that:

Empowerment, then, is not something that management does to employees, but rather a mind-set that employees have about their roles in the organization. While management can create a context that is more empowering, employees must choose to be empowered. They must see themselves as having freedom and discretion, they must feel personally connected to the organization, confident about their abilities and capable of having an impact on the system in which they are embedded. (p. 88)

OD interventions are intentionally designed to increase involvement and participation by organization leaders and members. In Smith's (2003) view, involving people is a belief, a value to be applied uniquely in each situation (p. 5), where all "gatekeepers", "those who directly control a situation" (Weisbord, 1987, pp. 89, 91), role players and stakeholders, actively and directly participate from the beginning until the end of the process (Smith, p. 5).

2.4.3.2 Systems theory

System theory is an important foundation for OD theory and practice. The principle of systems theory was first articulated by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1950, and it was first applied by Katz and Kahn to organizations in 1966, with the idea of developing a general theory that would be applicable to the person, the organization and society as a whole.

According to French and Bell (1999), the term system indicates "interdependency, interconnectedness and interrelatedness among elements in a set that constitutes an identifiable whole or gestalt" (p. 82). Thus when taking a systems approach it is necessary to begin identifying the individual parts of the organization and how these different parts function together to form a system.

System theory views organizations as open systems in active exchange with their environments (French & Bell, 1999, p. 82). Each of the three functions (input – throughput – output) must work well together, otherwise the system will not survive, because "any organization that disregards its environment will likely be strangled and die" (Smith, 2003, p. 9).

According to Katz, Kahn and Hanna (as cited in French & Bell, 1999), open systems have permeable boundaries which delineate the system (p. 82). De Jong (as cited in Neshila, 2004),

points out that a challenge for schools is to determine the nature of the boundary and the degree to which the boundary is explicit and implicit (p. 17).

Katz et al. state that systems can have subsystems. Subsystems are part of a larger system which work parallel to each other or in a series with each other. In a school, the different subject departments are examples of subsystems within a system.

In addition, open systems have purposes and goals: in many organizations these are in the form of a mission statement, which is the reason for their existence. The purposes or needs must align with the needs of the environment or else the organization will cease to exist. Feedback, which is the information from both within the system and from the environment about the system's performance, is very important, because it measures the extent to which the organization has achieved its goals and purposes, and to what extent are these goals and purposes are in alignment with the environmental needs.

Equifinality is another character of systems, its principle being that there are multiple ways to arrive at a particular outcome or state. It implies that objectives can be reached with varying inputs and in different ways. Systems have multiple ways to reach their goals, it all depends on the system or organization members, as Smith (2003) puts it "organization members together construct a system that best meets their aspirations, goals and needs" (p. 9).

2.4.3.3 Teams and teamwork

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) state that "a team includes a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p. 45).

As a result, teams are the building blocks – the bricks and pillars of a successful and satisfying organization life (Smith, 2003, p. 13).

Team-building activities are now a way of life for many organizations. Building effective teams require that team members possess fundamental group skills, such as paraphrasing and giving feedback about others' behaviour. These skills are not inborn, but must be practiced to get them

right (Smither et al., 1996, p. 310). OD provides team-building activities and interventions in effective communication skills, effective meeting procedures, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills and conflict management.

2.4.3.4 Parallel learning structures

Parallel learning structures, originally known as collateral structures, were introduced by Dale Zand in 1974. According to French and Bell (1999):

Parallel learning structures are a mechanism to facilitate innovation in larger bureaucratic organizations where the forces of inertia, hierarchical communication patterns, and standard ways of addressing problems inhibit learning, innovation, and change. In essence, parallel structures are a vehicle for *learning* how to change the system, and then *leading* the change process. (p. 94)

Parallel learning structures include a steering committee, which includes acknowledged leaders. In a school, for example, the committee will consist of Heads of Departments, some teachers, parents, and members of the learners' representative council: it should have members from all parts of the organization.

Parallel structures help people to let go of the usual constraints imposed by the organization, they connect in authentic enquiry and experimentation and initiate needed change. Parallel structures are often the best way to instigate change in large bureaucratic organizations, especially when the change involves a fundamental shift in the organization's methods of work and/or culture (French & Bell, 1999, p. 95).

2.4.3.5 Organizational culture

Organizational culture is simply the personality of the organization. Culture consists of the assumptions, values, norms and tangible signs of organization members and their behaviour. According to du Toit (as cited in Moerdyk & Van Aardt, 2003), organizational culture manifests itself in organizational jargon, symbols (such as logos), stories, myths, heroes, legends, ceremonies and celebrations typical of the organization (p. 198).

Culture is thus referred to as the glue that holds the organization together, it also represents what personality is to the individual, in other words, the culture of an organization represents “the way things are done around here” Deal and Kennedy (as cited in Lewis, 2002, p. 283).

According to French and Bell (1999, p. 3), every organization has a culture, and if one wants to bring about change in an organization, then the culture needs to be altered. Warner Burke (as cited in French & Bell 1999, p. 4) considers culture change to be the feature of OD, and stresses that “organization development is a process of fundamental change in the organization’s culture”. Thus, OD interventions can change individuals and the performance of an organization if the facilitator is able to diagnose, to understand well the culture of an organization.

Culture change is needed for true organizational improvement because it consists of the organization’s basic assumptions, values and norms of behaviour that are viewed as the correct way to perceive, think and feel. Thus it is very crucial for the OD facilitator to not make assumptions about the organization but to study and know the organization well. This, according to Neshila (2004), is done through open-ended interviews and intensive observations and through involving motivated members of the organization in intensive self-analysis (p. 22).

Organizational culture is also an important feature of being a learning organization. In the next section, I elaborate on learning organization.

2.4.3.6 Learning organization

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) perceive a learning organization as an organization which has learnt how to learn about itself and about the world within which it exists and operates (p. 49).

Learning organizations are needed for survival. Hitt (1995) warns that in a world of increasing global competition, for an organization to be allowed in the field of play, focusing on survival only is not enough, the organization should also achieve excellence, and by achieving excellence it will improve its chances of survival, and thus survival and excellence are two sides of the same coin (p. 17). Thus learning organizations are in touch with a fundamental part of our humanity which is to learn, to improve our environment, and to be active actors and not passive recipients.

Davidoff and Lazarus (as cited in Neshila, 2004, p. 18) assert that development of the school as an organization is not only a possible, but also a necessary aspect of integrated life. They go on to say that “we need to build a school environment that is supportive of change – for the individual teachers, as well as for the school as an organizational whole – namely a learning organization”.

According to Peter Senge (1990) learning organizations are:

organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. (p. 3)

The challenge for a learning organization is to overcome the resistance of leaders, who have fully embraced the traditional organizational way of leading, and whose leadership is based on assumptions of people’s powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change (Senge, as cited in infed, 2007, p. 6). According to Senge (as cited in infed, 2007), “Learning organizations need a new view of leadership, leaders that are designers, stewards and teachers”. He further said that leaders are “responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models” (p. 6).

A learning organization’s culture is one in which all members of the organisation agree on the organization’s processes, activities, functions and communications from the external environment.

2.4.3.7 The process – Lewin’s 3-stage model of change

One of the very important models of planned change was provided by Kurt Lewin. He suggested that change is a three stage process, and he viewed this change process as consisting of the following steps: unfreezing the old behaviour (or situation), moving to a new level of behaviour, and refreezing the behaviour at the new level (French & Bell, 1999, p. 74). Lewin saw human systems as almost but not quite static: unresolved issues build up in organizations and people

freeze in dysfunctional patterns, nobody listens, appreciates, celebrates or communicates (Weisbord, 1997, pp. 226-227). The facilitator's role is thus to get people to unfreeze, move forward and then refreeze in order to maintain change. Schein, as cited in French and Bell (1999), lays out these three stages

Stage 1. *Unfreezing*: becoming motivated to change

This phase of change is based on the speculation that human behaviour is established by past observational learning and cultural influences. Change requires adding new forces for change or removal of some of the existing factors that are responsible for the behaviour. The unfreezing process has sub-processes that relate to motivation to change.

- Disconfirmation or lack of confirmation – where present conditions lead to dissatisfaction, such as not meeting personal goals.
- Learning anxiety – activates defensiveness and resistance due to the pain of having to unlearn what had been previously accepted. Three stages occur in response to learning anxiety: denial; manoeuvring and bargaining etc.

Stage 2. *Unfreezing and moving to a new state*: Change what needs to be changed

Once there is sufficient dissatisfaction with current conditions and a real desire to make some changes, it is necessary to identify exactly what needs to be changed.

Stage 3. *Refreezing*: Making the change permanent

Refreezing is the final stage where new behaviour becomes habitual, which includes a new concept and identifying and establishing new interpersonal relationships. (p. 74)

2.4.3.8 Action research

According to Rothwell, Sullivan and McLean (1995) action research is the foundation for most OD interventions. They call it both a model and a process (p. 47). French and Bell describe action research as a process, that is, an ongoing series of events and actions, they also acknowledge its usefulness as a model, guide or paradigm (p. 130).

Kurt Lewin, who is recognized by many authors (French & Bell, 1999, p. 130; Weisbord, 1987, p. 88; Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 22) as the father of action research, proposed action research as a new method for behavioural science. Lewin believed that research on action

programmes, especially social change programmes, was imperative if progress were to be made in solving social problems (French & Bell, 1999, p. 130). French (as quoted in French & Bell, 1999) demonstrates how action research can be used as a generic process in organization development. The process is iterative and cyclical. He explained the model as follows:

The key aspects of the model are the diagnosis, data gathering, and feedback to the client group, data discussion and work by the client group, action planning and action. These sequences tend to be cyclical, with the focus on new or advanced problems as the client group learns to work more effectively together. (p. 131)

Action research operates within system thinking, where everyone and everything counts (Weisbord, as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 21).

Figure 1 shows the phases of action research, and a detailed account of each phase is given in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3).

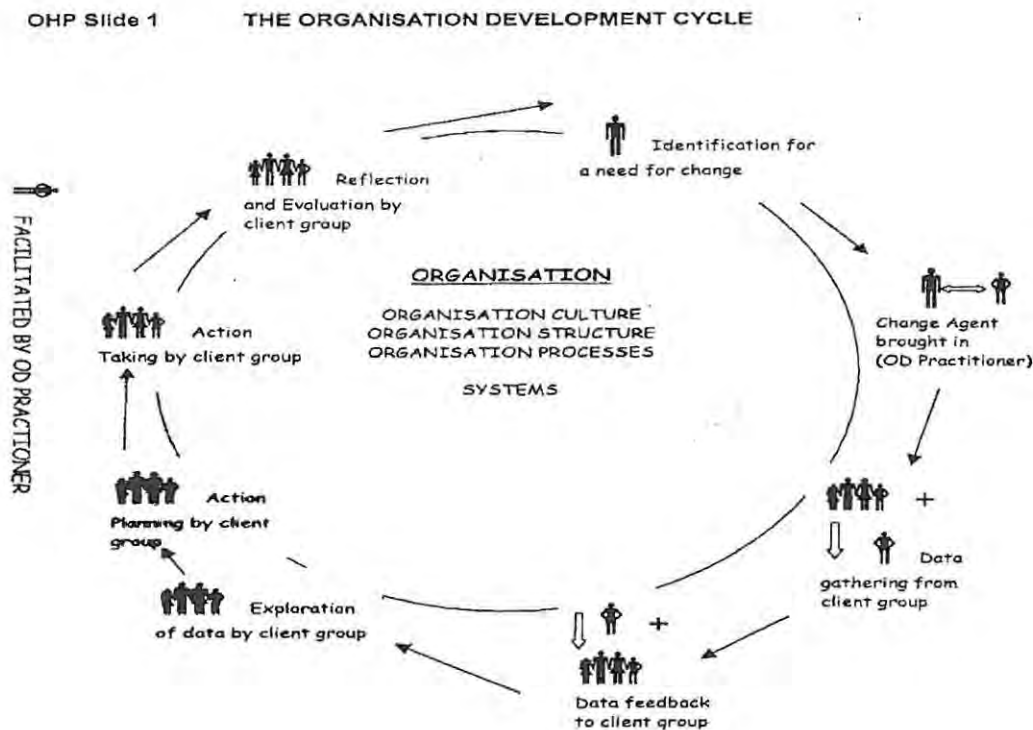


Figure 1: The OD cycle (Source unknown)

2.4.4 OD interventions

According to French and Bell (1999), OD interventions are sets of *structured activities* in which selected organizational units engage in a task or a sequence of tasks with the goals of organizational improvement and individual development (p. 145).

OD interventions may deal with diagnostic problems having to do with goals and plans, communications, culture or climate, leadership and authority, problem-solving, decision-making, conflict or co-operation, role definition or other matters.

Schmuck and Runkel (1994) distinguish four designs for organization development, each of which call for different interventions from the OD facilitator (p. 28). The reason behind this is that organizations consist of different problems and each intervention should take into account the desired goals and outcome.

2.4.4.1 Training

According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994) this is the type of OD design that is carried out most often in schools or organizations. The learning outcomes for a particular period of time should be determined by the facilitator and the facilitator should organize and direct the activities. However, the facilitator should have certain skills when conducting the training, such as communications skills, skills in conducting ice-breakers, and procedures that can be applied when the facilitator is involved in training (p. 28). On the other hand, the facilitator must put into consideration the following points when designing professional development activities or training for participants:

- Participants will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them.
- The training has to be related and relevant to their day-to-day activities, for example, a new teaching method for a certain subject, problem-solving, school development plan etc.

- Training should be structured in such a way that participants are able to support one another working in groups, this will reduce the fear of being judged during learning.
- Participants need to be given feedback on how they are doing and it is very important to keep in mind that participants are not empty vessels: they come with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, self-direction, interests and competencies, thus the facilitators must accommodate these by respecting and valuing their views.

2.4.4.2 Survey data feedback (SDF)

Survey data feedback provides a participative approach and enables all members of the organization to become actively engaged in managing the work environment.

When conducting a survey data feedback, information is collected through questionnaires, interviews and observation and is reported back to participants as a basis for diagnosis, problem-solving and planning (Schmuck and Runkel, 1994, p. 29).

The success of the SDF is determined by how well the facilitator or OD practitioner:

- Adapts to collecting data and feeding back the data in a way that is understandable and energizes participants.
- Strives to show essential significance in mundane data to capture participants' interests.
- Finds ways to incorporate data feedback into the natural ebb and flow of larger OD intervention (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 29).

Survey data feedback on its own does not lead to change; it needs collaborative involvement of participants and facilitators focusing on specific action steps.

2.4.4.3 Process observation and feedback

Schmuck and Runkel (1994) point out that the purpose of this design is to help group members to become more aware of how they are working together. They suggest that the practitioner sits with the work group during its work sessions, observes the ongoing group processes, and offers comments and questions to turn the participants' attention to their way of working and its effect on getting the job done. The aim is thus to involve participants in talking about their working relationships and in making group agreements to adapt their way of working together (p. 30).

2.4.4.4 Constructive confrontation

According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 29), constructive confrontation can clarify the social relationships between two or more work groups. They also say that constructive confrontation sharpens and clarifies problems that are causing conflict between groups and helps the groups communicate clearly the perceptions that each has of the other.

In Schmuck and Runkel's view (as cited in Neshila, 2004, p. 28) the facilitator's role is to help organize role-clarifying discussion, and to provide training in communication skills so that groups in conflict can reveal disagreements and arrange to work collaboratively on important problems.

2.4.4.5 Future search (FS)

Fred Emery and Eric Trist instigated the first future search conference of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in 1960.

The search conference is a participative planning method that enables people to create a plan for the desirable future of their system, issue, organization or community, a plan that they take responsibility for carrying out themselves (Cebula & Rehm, as cited in Large, 1997, p. 109). Emery, cited in Large (1997), writes that: "A search conference is a participative event that

enables a large group to collectively create a plan that its members themselves will implement” (p. 109).

Twenty (20) to 35 or even 50 members form temporary planning groups for about 2 to 3 days working on a series of planning questions and tasks. “Based on shared ideas, they formulate desired visions, achievable strategies, goals and action plans for these” (Large, 1999, p. 109), therefore, future search conferences can lead to learning, focused action, commitment, creative, involvement and ownership because people are working together on what matters to them.

According to Mitchell (2004), when carrying out a FS procedure there are five tasks to perform:

1. Examine the past to see where the organization has been.
2. Examine the present to discover the trends that are affecting the organization.
3. Look at the “prouds” and “sorries” of the organization.
4. Examine the future to see what the organization wants to do.
5. Find common ground for action planning (p. 23).

Findings of the research done by Layne (2004) and Haufiku (2004) of Namibia on Future Search Conferencing (FSC) participants reveals that although FSC was a new approach to meetings, they regarded FSC as an effective tool for organizational self renewal and adaptation.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented a summary of some of the existing literature on organization change with an emphasis on OD as a change approach.

In the next chapter, I portray the paradigms and methods that underpin my study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the literature review that gives a theoretical context for my research. In this chapter I explain the methodology followed in conducting this study. The methodology was selected to support the goal of my research which is:

To investigate to what extent an OD intervention can facilitate change in a rural primary school in the Omusati region of Namibia.

In order to achieve this goal I conducted an OD project with the school and:

- Introduced OD as an approach to organizational change,
- Carried out an OD intervention,
- Explored participants' experiences and perceptions of the OD process, and
- Investigated the short term outcome of the intervention.

I take a closer look at the research paradigms in which my work is located, that is, the interpretive and critical paradigms. This leads to the description of my method, which is a case study of an action research or Organization Development (OD) intervention. I go on to portray the data gathering tools which consisted of interviews (individual and focus group) and observations. I explore the validity of my research, the steps taken to ensure that ethical standards were retained, and give a brief description of the limitations of my research.

3.2 Research paradigms

When designing a study or planning to conduct research, one of the critical decisions to be made is to choose the paradigm within which you will situate your work.

The use of the term “paradigm” is derived from the historian of science Thomas Kuhn (Maxwell, 2005, p. 36).

According to Maxwell (2005) a paradigm is a “set of very general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we can understand it (epistemology), assumptions that tend to be shared by researchers working in a specific field or tradition” (p. 36).

This is in line with Bassey (1999) who defines a paradigm as:

A network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers which adhered to by a group of researchers conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions (p. 38).

One’s research is located in a particular paradigm. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006, p. 6) postulate three paradigms, namely positivist, interpretive and constructionist (also known as the critical paradigm). Of the three research paradigms, the interpretive and the critical are relevant to my study.

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

The key interest in the interpretive paradigm is understanding through interpretation (Jean-Louis, 2004, p. 34). According to Merriam (2001), the key philosophical assumption upon which all type of qualitative research are based in the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world (p. 6).

Interpretive research involves “taking people’s subjective experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to what they tell us” (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, cited in Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006, p. 273). According to Bassey (1999) interpretive researchers know that by asking questions or by observing they may change the situation which they are studying (p. 43). I was interested in gaining insight into participants’ perceptions and experiences

of the OD intervention as part of a change process. I made use of both interviews and observation.

3.2.2 Critical paradigm

According to Cantrell (1993) “reality in the critical paradigm is multiple and created in the human mind. Reality is viewed in a holistic and divergent sense. Of cardinal importance in this paradigm is the fact that social issues / relations or values as well as economic interests come to the fore” (p. 83).

Critical researchers conduct research to critique and transform social relations by revealing the underlying sources of social relations and empowering people, especially less powerful people (Neuman, 2006, p. 95).

This study is concerned with organisation change. There is a critical perspective because it seeks to raise awareness of values, perceptions and behaviours that inhibit the organization’s drive to perform to its best. Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2000) stated that the critical paradigm “seeks to emancipate the disempowered to redress inequality and to promote individual freedom within a democratic society” (p. 28) – in my case, an organisation. My research is concerned with raising awareness of organisation dysfunctionalities and bringing about change toward a more satisfying and democratic situation in the organisation for the research participants.

3.3 Method

The method that I use is an action research or an OD case study.

3.3.1 Case study

Yin (2003) describes a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (p. 13) – in my case, an OD intervention in a rural

school. Stake (1995, p. xi) defines the case study as the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. This ties in with Bassey (as cited in Mitchell, 2004, p. 35), who gave a very useful and clear definition of the case study as an empirical enquiry which is:

- conducted within a localized boundary of space and time
- into interesting aspects of an educational activity, or programme
- mainly in its natural context and within an ethic of respect for persons.
- Sufficient data must be collected for the researcher to be able to explore and interpret the data, present a valuable argument which is trustworthy and enables other researchers to add to or challenge it.

I undertook my research in one school only, a primary school in the Omusati region. The purpose of the study was to introduce OD as a change approach, and to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of the OD process as well as the short term outcome of the intervention in Pendje Primary School.

My research is descriptive and tells the story of a school in terms of participants' experience and perception of an OD intervention. A case study which is a "qualitative research strives for a deeper understanding as an end in itself, not to predict or to generalize to a universe" (Neshila, 2004, p. 33). From a case study perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the reader doing the generalizing; I therefore cannot claim generalizability from my study.

Stake (1994, p. 243) asserted that the "methods for casework actually used are to describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can vicariously experience the happenings, and draw their own conclusions."

Guba and Lincoln (1981) articulate a potential limitation of a single case study. They are concerned that it can "oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to distorted or erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs" (as cited in Winegardner, 2001, p. 10),

nevertheless, the variety of data gathering tools have helped to obviate this potential limitation. This is known as “multiple sources of data” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001, p. 282) or triangulation.

3.3.2 Action research

Kurt Lewin (1946), who researched into social issues, is often described as a major landmark in the development of action research as a methodology (Koshy, 2005, p. 2). Kemmis and McTaggart (2000), cited in Koshy (2005, p. 5), describe action research as a participatory research, which involves a series of self-reflective spirals of:

- planning a change,
- acting and observing the process and consequences of the change,
- reflecting on these processes and consequences and then replanning,
- acting and observing,
- Reflecting and so on.

Most Organization Development (OD) activities rely on action research as the primary approach to planned change (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 93). French and Bell (1995) also claim that “a sound organization development program rests on an action research model” (p. 151).

OD usually involves members of the organization participating actively in all the phases of the project from the onset, through data gathering and analysis to concluding. I adopted a participatory action research approach (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 58) in which all members of the school took part in the OD process. I applied the seven action research phases described by Nel in Meyer and Botha (2000, pp. 95-98) to my OD process, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Phase 1: Problem recognition

This involves the recognition of the need for change by the members of the organization. This is normally done either by initiation by a key person, or by members of an organization initiating the contact. In my case I contacted the principal to seek his approval for my intervention and for doing my research, thus I initiated the intervention. I called the school principal, “the gate keeper” (Lewin cited in Weisbord, 1987, p. 89), to discuss the possibility of an OD intervention at his school, and he offered his full support. I gave him a very short orientation to OD, its values and assumptions, how it works and the potential benefits it could offer the school.

Phase 2: Entry and contracting

After introducing OD to all members of the organization, they decided to continue with the intervention. A discussion and clarification of mutual expectations in the form of a memorandum of agreement was signed by the participants and by me. The agreement raised issues such as time management, confidentiality, anonymity, and the use of pseudonyms. I indicated the need for a steering committee that would work closely with me, and that would develop the competence and ability to carry out OD intervention on their own in the future. Four staff members volunteered to be on the steering committee.

Phase 3: Data collection and diagnosis

The participants diagnosed organizational issues and concerns of their choice. They identified the issue or problem they wished to focus on – this entails gathering data about the relevant issue.

Phase 4: Feedback

Data was fed back to participants for validation and they established an agenda for problem-solving.

Phase 5: Action planning

Once problems had been identified and prioritized, a problem-solving process began, the outcome of which was the action plans for change.

Phase 6: Action implementation

This phase involved undertaking the changes decided upon during action planning (phase 5).

Phase 7: Evaluation

The participants reviewed the outcome of the intervention, and this review could be used as a basis for further research, action planning and implementation.

3.4 Data gathering

The purpose of doing this study is to find out the participants' experiences and perceptions of the OD process. Data was collected after the main transition points, for example the introductory workshop, survey data feedback and at the end of the intervention.

3.4.1 Interview

Interviews are seen as the most important source of case study information (Yin, 2003, p. 89). I used semi-structured interviews (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006, p. 298) with open-ended questions. This gave me an opportunity to ask probing questions on issues that emerged from the participants' answers and allowed for the generation of new ideas. As Merriam (2001) stated: "the use of semi-structured interviews allowed for the collection of specific data from all the respondents and at the same time permitted the respondents to define their experiences in their own unique way" (p. 74).

I interviewed the principal, the head of department and two teachers. The reason I interviewed the principal was because of his position as a "gate keeper" (Weisbord, 1987, p. 89). The head of department and the two teachers were selected based on their active participation, their thoughtful views and for being very articulate during the OD process.

All interviews were tape-recorded following the granting of permission by interviewees. I gave copies of the interview transcripts to the interviewees to read and make corrections or additions before they were analyzed. All were read and no corrections were made.

3.4.2 Focus group

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), focus groups are commonly used in two ways. The first is by one of their colleagues, Ineke Meulensberg-Buskens' "get-ten-for-the-price-of-one", where the researcher ensures that everyone speaks and ends up with the "individual" responses. The second one, which I made use of, is where people get together and generate meaning among themselves, rather than individually (pp. 291-292).

Focus group interviews are efficient data gathering tools that can expose issues of consensus and diversity (Morgan, Krueger & Casey, as cited in Maselana, 2007, p. 45). I conducted a focus group interview with the social and cultural committee because of their active participation in all the activities taking place at the school. I also confirmed during observation that these members contributed a lot from the onset of the intervention during the introductory workshop, survey data feedback (SDF), action planning and in all the school activities taking place. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) suggest that a "group should be homogenous so that participants feel free to talk openly in front of each other" (p. 288).

Focus group interviews are in a way run like the basic individual interview (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 293). After explaining the purpose of the interview I asked for the participants' permission to use a tape recorder to record the interview. They agreed to be tape-recorded. I asked them to talk freely about their perception and experience of the OD intervention. I labelled the teachers in the focus group T1 to T5. The focus group interview was conducted after the whole OD process.

3.4.3 Observation

I also gathered data through the use of participant observation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 293). I observed participants as they interacted with each other during the intervention, their level of participation in activities, the atmosphere, body language and the relationship between participants. I took notes to record my observations.

3.5 Data analysis

I analyzed the data using interpretational analysis, which is defined by Gall as “a process for close examination of case study data in order to find constructs, themes and patterns” that address my research goal (Gall, as cited in Winegardner, 2001, p. 7). According to Stake (1995), data analysis is the process of unlocking information hidden in the data that the researcher transforms into meaningful and useful information (p. 71). I analyzed data from the notes I took while observing and interviews by reading and re-reading, coding the raw data into theoretical categories and creating my own themes.

After transcribing all my interviews, I wrote quotes that I thought were important from the transcripts on the flip charts according to the themes that I identified, which were: elements of change, change readiness, outcome of the OD intervention, participants’ positive experience of the intervention, challenges of OD, empowerment, team work, power distance and participants’ OD experience compared to other change experiences.

3.6 Ethical issues

Prior to starting with my research, I contacted the school principal to seek the school’s consent to carry out my research. I also requested permission in writing from the Regional Office by means of a letter to the Regional Director and a letter to the circuit inspector. Issues of confidentiality were explained and I explained to the participants that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time. This is what Bassey calls (1995) “respect for persons; respect for truth; and respect for democratic values” (p. 15).

Pseudonyms were used when referring to the school (Pendje Primary School) or to the interviewees (Mr. Angula, the principal; Mr. Ilonga, the head of department; Mrs. Shetu and Ms. Kambonde, T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5).

3.7 Research quality

I used multiple methods, in my case observation and interviews, which permit triangulation of data across inquiry techniques (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p. 408). In addition I made use of member checks by giving back transcripts to participants for verification before analyzing the data. I also did peer reviews where I requested the steering committee members to give feedback on my interpretations of the interviews. To reduce the risk of bias I retained all the raw data collected from the research for further inspection by my supervisor. This helped my supervisor to judge whether deductions based on the data were reasonable and valid.

3.8 Limitation

The main factor that limited my research was time. I had only two months, which is very restrictive for an OD intervention, because of the time that I had to complete my thesis. Nevertheless, I managed to observe the implementation process and I got positive feedback from the steering committees who were monitoring the progress.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the research paradigm, the case study method, and the process I used to gather and analyze data. Ethical issues were also discussed. Limitations of my study concluded the chapter. In the next chapter, I present my data analysis in narrative form.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the methodology used in conducting my research. This chapter presents a narrative account of the OD intervention in a rural school of the Omusati region, Namibia, and the learning derived from it. This chapter is divided into two parts:

Part 1: a narrative account of what happened (the OD process)

Part 2: a discussion of what was learned from the OD intervention which answered my research goal, which was to explore participants' experience and perception of the OD process and to investigate the short term outcome of the intervention. To achieve this I conducted an OD intervention project in which I:

- Introduced OD as an approach to organization change, and
- Carried out an OD intervention.

The data which I present in this chapter is obtained from individual interviews, focus group interviews and observations. For the individual interview, I interviewed the principal, Mr. Angula; one head of department, Mr. Ilonga; two teachers, Mrs. Shetu and Ms. Kambonde; and a focus group that consisted of four members of the social committee who will be referred to as T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 respectively. The name of the school and the respondents' names used in this research are all pseudonyms.

I presented the data mainly in the respondent's direct words (verbatim), but in some areas I clarified the data for the benefit of the reader having verified with the respondents that this did not distort their views. I present Part I using the OD phases identified by Meyer and Botha (2004, pp. 103-105).

4.2 OD PHASES

4.2.1 Phase 1: Problem recognition

This phase involves the recognition of the need for change by the members of the organization. Preferably, a key person or organization members will initiate the contact, but due to the nature of the circumstances – my need to conduct my masters' research – in this case I initiated the contact. In May 2007, I telephonically contacted the school principal – “the gatekeeper”, as Lewin calls it (as cited in Weisbord, 1987, p. 89), because I was in South Africa at Rhodes University at that time to discuss the possibility of an OD intervention at his school, and he offered his full support.

4.2.2 Phase 2: Entry and contracting

4.2.2.1 Initial contact

I secured an appointment with the school principal and the school management team on 25 June 2007 at 14h00. This was my first visit to the school, and I had a letter of authority (see Appendix 4) from my supervisor at Rhodes University asking for the school's cooperation in carrying out an OD intervention.

4.2.2.2 Meeting with Management

The school management consisted of 7 members (4 females and 3 males including the principal). The principal suggested that I introduce myself to the management team and he informed them about my intention at the school.

Before I started with the presentation, I asked the management team what they knew and what they could tell me about change and if they felt or thought that their school needed to address a particular issue that could enhance the school management. One of the members, Mr. Bewu,

replied that “whether we want change or not, it always comes, especially with all these new education related national policies and circulars that are being introduced, What we need to do is to find a way to successfully implement them” (Observation notes, 25 June 2007).

I conducted a PowerPoint presentation on what OD is, how it works, its value and assumptions.

After the presentation another male management member posed a question on the length of the OD intervention. I referred him to the phases of OD (which were part of the presentation) and clarified that an OD intervention can become a long-term process, lasting for “weeks and months, even years” (Smith, 2003, p. 8). Culture change, which is the hallmark of OD, might take years to manifest. His main concern, which seemed to be the concern of all members, was the time factor. He went on to explain that most afternoons are fully booked with different activities in their year plan, suggesting that they might not find time for the intervention.

I presented them with my tentative schedule explaining that I would need a few afternoons for

- Introductory workshop to the staff members, and
- Data feedback.

In addition I informed them of my need to be at school during classes for observation and interviews. After all the questions, they requested that I excuse them for a while, for them to decide whether they would let me introduce OD to staff members. They called me back after a while to inform me that they had agreed for me to meet the staff members and ask them whether they would like to participate in the OD project.

The HOD, Mr. Ilonga, commented “we are happy you chose our school, because doing research at our school will not only benefit you, but it will also benefit us as a school. So, if the staff agrees, we will try as much as we can to fit you in our plan” (Observation notes, 25 June 2007).

Having the support of the school management team, the “gatekeeper”, those who directly control a situation (Weisbord, 1987, pp 89, 91) is crucial to OD because without their involvement it is difficult to sustain any change.

4.2.2.3 OD introductory workshop

Out of sixteen staff members, nine were present for the OD introductory workshop. The other seven members had different reasons for not attending, ranging from attending other workshops, visiting hospitalized relatives and training learners for an upcoming soccer match.

The HOD, Mr. Ilonga, introduced me to the staff and gave me a chance to say more about my purpose at the school. After the introduction, I put up a poster of the following proposed agenda for the workshop:

1. INTRODUCTION TO OD which covered:
 - What OD is and how it works
 - Brief history of OD
 - OD values and assumptions
 - OD goals
 - The role of the facilitator
2. Group discussion
3. Comments and discussion on issues raised
4. Voting for steering committee members
5. Data gathering
6. Feedback date
7. Contracting

According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 65), OD is largely experiential. I took a few minutes to explain to explain what the OD process would look like. I introduced OD with the cartoon about fear and how change evokes fear in people (see Appendix 2). I handed out notes to the participants on what OD is, the goals of OD and the values and assumptions of OD. I explained in detail what OD entails (as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4), and lastly I displayed a cartoon of a frustrated teacher (see Appendix 5). This cartoon raised interest in most of the participants, they seemed to agree with the picture in the cartoon, some made comments that teachers are seen as machines, they are overworked, bombarded with so many changes and

at the end of the day blamed for the learners' failure and all the shortcomings in the education system. I must admit that it was not easy conducting a workshop in the afternoon to people who had been busy teaching throughout the day and, to make matters worse, the weather was not in our favour as it was very hot. Despite all that, teachers were so attentive and showed interest in what I had to say.

After the presentation, I gave a chance for questions. Only two staff members had questions to ask. The first question was

How sure are you that the intervention will bring change in our school?

My answer was that OD adopts a participative approach to change; because it is participant-led, if the participants want to bring about change they will do it. As a facilitator, I am just there to help them do what they want to do. I gave the example of Neshila who conducted an OD intervention in a school and change was observed because the participants wanted change and they worked hard to bring about that change. They were committed to the plans they developed. OD intervention on its own does not guarantee change, but change comes through the effort of the members.

What makes you think that our school needs changes?

To the second question my answer was that all organizations, schools included, need change because of the fast changing pace. I gave examples of the curriculum changes, policy changes, ETSIP, and national standard. OD helps members of an organization to be able to deal with change and to be part of bringing change themselves. However, I clarified that they were not forced to take part in the OD intervention, it was optional.

Like the management committee of the school, staff members were also concerned about time and the extramural activities that they had to carry out after classes. One staff member, Mr. Muhaa, commented that "even if the time issue is a factor, I think that the idea sounds good and it sounds as if it will benefit the school more than the person who is conducting the research, because there are lots of schools around that she can go to, but if we (the school) let this opportunity pass us by, I doubt if we will get such a chance again." All staff members agreed with him and they decide to give it a try.

I told them that if they decided to continue with the process of OD, it would equip them with skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, confrontation skills and team building skills, in which I would be able to give them training if necessary. I went on to explain the procedure of OD and the steps involved in any change process, which are: Problem Recognition, Entry, Diagnosis, Feedback, Action Planning, Implementation and Evaluation. I told them that the next step would be to enter into an agreement in order to clarify mutual expectations, commitments and a timeline.

OD requires the organization to have co-facilitators, known as the steering committee. The steering committee helps the facilitator to analyze the data collected during SDF and to learn so that in the future the school could conduct its own OD processes. Five members volunteered to be on the committee.

I stressed that I was not there to tell them what to do, to solve their problems or to help them to cope with changes that are happening in education, but to help them find their own strategies to bring about change in their organization. The role of an OD facilitator is to structure activities to help organization members learn to solve their own problems and to improve. According to French and Bell (1999, p. xiii), OD is a process for teaching people how to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities and learn how to do this better and better over time. I emphasized that OD is a process of planned change that involves all the stakeholders and is ongoing. If change is to come within the school, the members themselves are the ones to suggest what they want to do and what they think is needed to be done to bring about change in their organization.

After the decision to continue with the OD intervention, the participants agreed to meet the next day, 10 July 2007, to identify and diagnose issues of concern in their school. This was done because several of the staff members were not present during the introductory workshop. The principal requested the steering committee members to brief the other members the next day, before we went on, and to ask them if they wanted to be part of the project. We could not continue with anything before we met the other members.

4.2.2.4 Contracting

All participants were willing and signed the memorandum of agreement. This included those who were not present at the introductory workshop, though we did subsequently brief them. This does not mean that they were ready to take up the challenge of being involved in the change process, but perhaps they agreed to go ahead with an OD intervention to help me with my research or perhaps they were impressed with the theoretical knowledge they received about OD without realizing the extent to which they would be practically involved.

4.2.3 Phase 3: Data collection and diagnosis

According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994) the purpose of SDF (survey data feedback) is to collect information systematically to be used as a basis for diagnosis, problem solving and planning (p. 26). SDF is the most frequently used OD design, because it fits well into the OD.

We met the next day as planned with all the staff members to identify issues that they wanted to work on in their school. Prior to the meeting, together with the steering committee members, we interviewed all members of the organization (participants) during their free periods. The main aim of the interviews was to orientate myself with the organization and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. The steering committee agreed that we use some of the questions adapted from a handout by Dale Lake, Paul Buchanana and Mathew Miles (as cited in Schmuck and Runkel, 1994, pp. 70-74) (see Appendix 1).

The questions asked participants' views regarding the principal's leadership. The principal's leadership was based on the following points: how he assigned responsibilities to his staff members, whether he trusted them to do work on their own, their influence on activities in the school, how the budget was created, how meetings were run, how decisions were taken and who took them, and any aspects in the school they thought needed urgent attention. The response from the interviews gave a picture of the organization, and I learned that they worked together as a group and they participated in most of the decisions made at the school. They were all satisfied with the way meetings were handled but not with the level of participation. Some members

believed that it was not their place to give any suggestions or to contribute anything towards the development of the school; they were more passive participants.

I observed during the introductory workshop that some participants showed interest but did not want to say anything, it was only after the workshop that they came and gave their views on issues discussed.

At the next day's meeting data was also gathered from the participants following the procedures used in the future search conference, whereby participants were divided in groups, the co-facilitators distributed 2 flip charts to each group and each group was expected to think of at least three issues that they were proud of in their school and two issues that they were sorry about under the headings of "Prouds" and "Sorries" (strengths and weaknesses).

The participants felt uncomfortable working in groups, and suggested that each participant should get two pieces of paper and write down two issues that they were proud of and two issues that they were not happy about in the school.

After the steering committee collected the papers, the participants set a date for the data feedback, which was 12 July 2007, and the meeting was brought to a close. We grouped all the papers with the "prouds" and "sorries" separately, and one of the steering committee members wrote down all the "sorries" on and all the "prouds" on different flipcharts while other members read out loud to her. Table 1 below represents the "prouds" and "sorries".

<u>Prouds</u>	<u>Sorries</u>
Learners understand English	Poor English language usage
Less conflict amongst the teachers	Learners poor reading and writing skills
The school has basic facilities and support from the parents	Untidiness among learners
The flexibility of the administrators	Lack of discipline amongst learners

(Supervisor)	Absenteeism among teachers and learners
Learners willing to learn	Less attention given to learners with special needs
Organization climate (open)	Too little support from the Ministry with regard to infrastructure
Understanding and committed Management members	Latecoming of some teachers and learners
Good working relationship	Lack of information given to the school
Punctuality among learners and staff members	Lack of teaching and learning material
Good communication between staff members	Need to work on the school culture e.g. learners running around when teachers are absent
Cooperating among the staff	Unwillingness of teachers to take part in extramural activities
The school owns the photocopier machine	
Learners are good at sports	
All teachers are qualified	
Basic needs available at school	
Respect	
Teachers committed to their work	
School developing good infrastructure	
School fees paid on time	
Cooperation amongst teachers	
Lack of absenteeism	



Table 1: “Prouds” and “Sorries” of Pendje Primary School

The goal of feedback is to ensure that the participants receive and accept all the information as a valid and accurate picture of the current state and its problems (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 103). At the feedback meeting, the steering committee put up the posters with the “Prouds” and “Sorries” from the data submitted by participants. The participants were able to read their comments, to point out the connections and to identify problems and opportunities for change.

The emerging issues were prioritized in the following order of importance:

1. Curriculum and attainment (which includes poor reading and writing)
2. Teaching and learning process
3. The school as a social unit
4. Management and leadership

Most of the “sorries” were about the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers felt that a lot of effort needed to be made to help learners who cannot read, especially in upper primary (Grades 5-7). Poor reading and writing skills were identified by most participants as an issue that needed urgent attention.

One of the teachers commented as follows: “my fellow colleagues ... we all know that this is our biggest weakness, now what are we going to do to get rid of this problem”? (Observation notes, 10 July 2007).

In support of this another participant said: “ I think this is the right time to work on this issue and not leave it unattended because we have assistance from Mrs. Perestrelo, who will maybe guide us on what to do next. I’m confident, as a group we will get to the bottom of this.” (Observation notes, 10 July 2007).

My advice to the participants was that if they would like to go on with the intervention we would need to conduct another workshop/training covering problem solving, communication and decision-making. The participants decided to have training on problem solving, and all agreed that the issue identified was a problem that needed to be solved and worked on. The workshop was scheduled for 19 July 2007 at 14h00. In the view of Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 92),

problem solving is fundamental in all OD macro design. Problem solving is the description of the situation (S) now, specification of the target (T) that they want to reach, and proposal for the path (P) to the target, how to get to where they want to be.

Summary

During the evaluation conducted by the steering committee after the workshop, members revealed that they enjoyed writing down what disturbed them a lot in the school. One of the participants revealed that she felt more comfortable writing down what bothers her at the school, because this way she would never create enemies and at least she let go of her problem. Another participant added that each person was given a fair chance to say something and they had said it, as a school they would know what they could work on to improve their school because they had all said their “sorries”. These participants immediately felt empowered because of the data collection session, they liked the self-study that OD offers.

The OD workshop allowed the participants the opportunity to discuss matters that really concerned them. One of the teachers commented that with OD they are able to say what really bothers them and try to work on it themselves. What is done during the SDF is “unfreezing” (Lewin as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 19), melting the ice, whereby the participants could discuss issues, express their worries, resistances and fears, talk about the untalkable and, most importantly, they became aware of their own contribution to the situation.

Another contrasted the OD experience with their typical workshop experience: “These things of attending workshop at the resource centre and some times is about the least of your problem I do not like it” (Observation notes, 19 July 2007).

4.2.4 Phase 4: Feedback

The aim of this problem-solving workshop was both to run training on problem solving and to solve a problem identified. All 16 staff members were present at the workshop. The participants decided to use the main issue that concerned them which was “poor reading and writing skills”

as their topic during the experiential workshop session. I had a poster in which I outlined the following:

- The purpose of the workshop – to empower participants to analyze problems and implement appropriate solutions in their school using an OD approach.
- The learning outcome of the workshop – to distinguish different phases in problem solving.
- Use brainstorming as a tool to analyze problems in the school.
- Generate solutions and select the best solution.
- Design a plan of action to implement the solution to the existing problem.

I also had a poster with the agenda, which included the following points:

- Welcoming remarks by the school principal
- Housekeeping announcements
- Ice breaker (which was about communication)
- What is a problem (force field analysis) – this was the main topic of the day
- The problem-solving process
- Way forward
- Evaluation and closure

I started off by explaining to the participants what is meant by the term problem: a discrepancy (a gap between existing and preferred situation). I then introduced force field analysis, which is regarded by French and Bell (1999, p. 174) as the oldest intervention in the OD practitioner's kit bag. According to French and Bell (1999), force field analysis is a "device for understanding a problematic situation and planning corrective actions" (p. 174). Force field analysis technique rests on the assumption that the present state of things (the current condition) is an equilibrium between the forces for change and the forces resisting change, thus movement in the desired direction can most easily be achieved by reducing or removing restraining forces.

I put up another poster on the wall which illustrates the problem-solving process, which is shown in Figure 2.

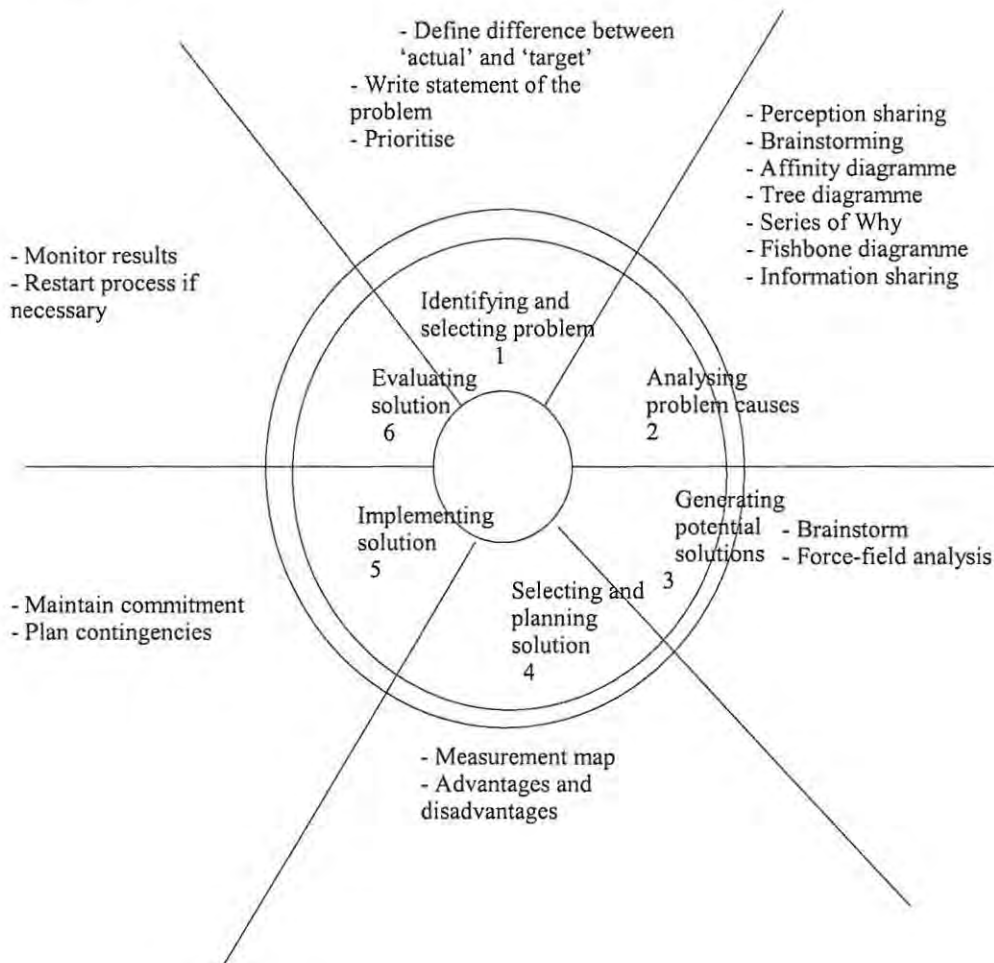


Figure 2: Problem Solving Process

In addition I put up a poster with seven steps involved in the force field analysis technique which we used in the workshop. Next I discussed what had happened in the workshop using these seven steps.

Step 1. Decide upon a problem situation that participants are interested in improving, and carefully and completely describe the current condition. What is the status quo? Why do you want it changed?

This was done during the data collection process whereby the participants wrote their “prouds” and “sorries” (see section 4.2.3). Among all issues identified participants agreed to work on the issue of reading and writing because, as one of the participants, Mr. Ngula, remarked, the reason they are at the school is to teach children how to read so that they will become competent human beings, if they are failing to do this then he doesn’t see the need to call themselves teachers, teaching is the reason that they are able to put bread on the table for their families, he thinks they must concentrate on developing the learners reading and writing skills (Observation notes, 19 July 2007). All participants agreed with him, they even gave him a round of applause!

The participants pointed out the current condition as:

Most of the children in their school, mostly in upper primary (grades 5 – 7) struggle to read simple English words, and their handwriting is poor and untidy. This causes the learners to perform poorly in their examinations or even to fail.

One of the upper primary teachers, Ms Nangolo, honestly commented that something should be done about the reading problem, according to her currently teachers at the school spend nearly the whole first term teaching the learners how to read before they can start with the main curriculum. This causes delays in completing the syllabus which causes another problem for the learners when they go to the next grade (notes, 19 July 2007).

Step 2. Carefully and completely describe the desired condition. Where do you want to be? What is the desired state of things?

After a session of brainstorming on their desired condition, the participants decided that they wanted the learners at their school to at least meet the basic competencies in reading that are set by the Ministry of Education in each grade before they are promoted to the next grade. This would increase most of the learner’s fluency in reading.

Some participants felt a little uncomfortable about the decisions during the brainstorming, they felt it is against the Ministry policy for learners to repeat grades. It was then carefully explained to them by the principal that if the learners do not meet the basic competencies they are not allowed to go to the next grade. Mr. Shali felt that “letting learners to repeat helps a lot; because sometime learners start school and they are not ready” (notes, 19 July 2007).

Step 3. Identify the forces and factors operating in the current force field. Identify the driving forces pushing in the direction of the desired condition.

The participants came up with the following points as their driving and restraining forces:

<u>Driving forces</u>	<u>Restraining forces</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is busy with the construction of a school library. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the parents are illiterate, thus they are not able to help children with their homework. Because they are illiterate, parents don't read stories to their children and most of them don't see the need for story telling either.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school can afford to buy teaching aids e.g. story books, CDs with stories to listen to, tape recorders, posters etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified teachers who need training in phonological, alphabetic, orthographic and comprehension strategies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers give homework to learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teaching materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volunteer teacher at school offers to help in the library, by letting the learners take out books, and will tell what they read to her afterwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding of learners in classes makes it impossible for the teacher to give extra attention to the learners who seriously need special /extra assistance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long distance that learners walk to school, absenteeism of learners and teachers, and hunger, can all be seen as factors hindering learning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers communicating with learners in the vernacular language during an English language lesson.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of grammar lesson activities e.g. spelling tests
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of professional development for teachers in teaching the important skills in reading skills

Table 2: Driving and Restraining Forces

Step 4. Examine the forces. Which ones are strong, which are weak? Which forces are susceptible to influence, which are not? Which forces are under your control, which ones are not?

After a careful examining of the identified forces, participants pointed out the following as forces that they would be able to control and influence.

- Strategies for moving the equilibrium from the current condition to the desired condition are the following: add more driving forces, remove restraining forces; or do both.
- Lack of teaching materials – the school will be able to buy these materials.
- The principal can write a letter to the teacher’s advisory services requesting training of the teachers in skills they lack.
- Lack of grammar lesson activities – the school decided to have a spelling test each Friday in all the subjects, except in mathematics.

Step 6. Implement the action plans that should cause the desired condition to be realized.

Step 6 will be discussed in sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.6.

4.2.5 Phase 5: Action planning

Once problems were identified and consensus reached on the need to resolve the problems, and forces identified, including those susceptible to influence, the next step was to develop plans for dealing with the identified problems.

Before the participants started with the plan of action, I stressed the need to decide on the appropriate actions to be undertaken. For instance, they needed to make sure that they were making practical and realistic plans that they would be able to commit themselves to, thus leading to the implementation of change.

I also suggested that they introduce a reward and recognition system for the accomplishments of participants in implementing changes. Their plans are presented in Table 3 below.

<u>Action Steps</u> (what will be done)	<u>Responsible person</u> (who will do it)	<u>Timeline</u> (by when)	<u>Review Date</u>
Contact the teacher advisory services in writing requesting training in teaching the second language, which is English.	Mr. Muhaa, teacher Grade 3 Ms Kambonde, teacher grade 7, responsible for writing an invitation letter to the teacher advisory services	15 August 2007	24 September 2007
Spelling tests each Friday	All teachers	Starting next term by Friday, 7 September 2007	All the classes will be visited by the HOD, a selected teacher and the principal to check

			the learners spelling test books.
Buying of teaching aids for all grades	Selected teachers from each class group, but Ms Ashipala will be responsible for taking care of the materials.	17 August 2007, ready to be used next term	7 September 2007

Table 3: Action Plan

4.2.6 Phase 6: Action implementation (short term outcome of the intervention)

This phase involves undertaking the changes decided upon during action planning. It is during the implementation phase that change actually occurs in the organization (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 104). All the action plans were implemented successfully. The spelling tests were done on Friday (I visited the school after my return from Rhodes University and I observed that all learners from each grade had spelling books which they had used from 7 September 2007, up to date (Observation notes, 23 November 2007). All the teaching aids that the school specified had been bought, and Ms Ashipala kept an inventory book to be signed by each teacher who borrowed any material. During my visits it was however evident from the inventory book that not many teachers made use of the teaching aids. The advisory services had been contacted and promised to visit the school but only in 2008 because of their very busy schedule. They advised the school to contact them as early as possible in January to set the date.

From the informal interview I held with the teachers, they revealed that they were excited to implement the changes, but they were getting discouraged by the learners. One of the teachers, Mr. Shikongo, expressed his disappointment. He said that they, as teachers, had done their part and no one should blame them as they had tried. He felt that learners were disappointing them,

they didn't want to study, they were given the words to study during the week, but come Friday, they wouldn't get even a single one right (Observation notes, 23 November, 2007). Another teacher, Ms Shivute, felt that maybe if they went on with their action plan it would work out later. She hoped that her colleagues were not already discouraged, as she thought they must understand that this was something new to the learners and they were also trying to adjust. She hoped that by next year, learners would have adjusted to the new system (Observation notes, 23 November, 2007).

4.2.7 Phase 7: Evaluation

The final phase in the OD process is the evaluation of the impact of the changes undertaken. Following the intervention and implementation of changes, additional data is collected on how the organization is functioning at present. The goal is to assess the extent to which problems identified in the initial diagnosis have been solved or improved on (Meyer & Botha, 2004, p. 105).

A month after the implementation phase, participants held a meeting to review the progress and see whether the expected outcome had been achieved – in this case, whether all the teachers had introduced the spelling tests every Friday to the learners, to find out the problems they were experiencing and to come up with solutions to these problems. Because the learners were not so eager to take part in the programme, which I assume was caused by the learners not being involved and readied for the change, teachers came up with the following ideas which they believed would help them to get through to the learners and to develop the learners' interest in the plan.

- During one of the school assembly periods, teachers would demonstrate a play that would help learners to understand the benefit of writing spelling tests.
- Learners who were doing well in spelling would be given an award at the end of every term.
- Parents would be informed about the new idea so that they could encourage the learners to prepare for their work.

- The school decided to invite the neighbouring school to have spelling competitions for learners.

4.3 Conclusion

In part one, I presented the OD process. In part two, I present data on participants' experiences and perceptions of the OD process

PART 2

4.4 Introduction

In part 1, I presented a narrative account of the OD process.

In this part, part 2, I present the data obtained from the individual interviews and focus groups, observations and journal notes. I interviewed the principal, the Head of Department (HOD) and two teachers. The focus group I interviewed consisted of five members (T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5).

A number of themes were identified and these are presented in terms of my research goals, namely to facilitate an OD intervention in a rural primary school in the Omusati region of Namibia in order to

- Explore participants' experience and perceptions of the OD process, and
- Investigate the short-term outcome of the intervention.

In this chapter I present the themes and categories that emerged from the data in order to communicate a holistic picture of the participants' experience and perceptions of an OD approach.

The first theme that emerged in the data is the element of change. Under this theme I identified the sub-theme of fear as a mirror of readiness, empowerment, and collaboration and teamwork. The second theme is power, the third theme is about the participants' experience of OD approach

comparing to other change approaches, the fourth theme is the participants' perception of the OD intervention, and lastly, the participants' experience of the OD process.

4.5 Elements of change

4.5.1 Readiness

Fullan (2001) notes that "if you ask people to brainstorm words to describe change, they come up with a mixture of negative and positive terms. On one side, fear, anxiety, loss, danger, panic, on the other exhilaration, risk taking, excitement, improvements, energizing, for better or for worse, change arouses emotion" (p. 1).

Participants at Pendje Primary School felt the same about change and this is revealed in a number of responses. T1 revealed the following about change:

"Let me say that every change has many resistances and this is basically because of fear. When people do not know why or do not know the meaning of change they tend to be frightened of change."

T3's response was: "If I hear that something will be changed what comes to my mind first is the question: why change now or why change at all? This brings fear or excitement depending on how change will affect me."

Similarly, Mr. Ilonga, the head of department, had the following to say about change:

"I get stressed, when I hear that something is about to change I always wonder if it is going to work out, is it going to be positive or negative?"

According to Marris (as cited in Fullan, 1991) whether change is sought or resisted and happens by chance or design, whether we look at it from the standpoint of reformers, or those they manipulated, of individual or institution, the response is characteristically ambivalent (p. 31). This happens because new experiences are always reacted to in the context of each individual, who attaches personal meaning regardless of how meaningful it is to others.

All the above responses suggest that participants felt that change brings mixed feelings. This happens when people don't know the reason for change, they feel that it is important to know the meaning of change and why they have to change in order to participate in an organization change process.

Readiness to participate in the change process refers essentially to desire or willingness as a form of readiness, capability as a form of readiness, belief that "we can make a difference" as a form of readiness and confidence as a form of readiness (Smith, 2003, p. 18).

Despite all the emotions that change might bring, some of the participants felt that due to the influence of rapid change and globalization, they needed to change if they want to stay in the race.

This was expressed by T2 as follows: "Change affects me in one way or another but, at the end change is a process. One has to be ready for any change. We are living in a developing country so we have to be ready for any kind of change".

From my observation notes, the principal commented after the OD introductory workshop that:

"I think they are ready for the change. They all embrace the idea, because this is the only way to develop and we all want development."

In the case of Pendje Primary School this refers to any change that is introduced in school, in education, in particular through government policy changing, new curriculum and policies being introduced and being constantly redefined. There were also referring to what I was about to introduce – OD: they had fears that it would be too much work for them, and most of all, they thought that they did not have the capability to change their own organization.

Because of lots of changes that participants went through or are still going through, I felt the only way they would try out something new was by creating readiness. Schmuck and Runkel (1994) pointed out that some degree of readiness is essential at the start of an OD effort in a school.

I tried to create readiness in the school with an introductory workshop on OD, where I introduced them to OD: what it is and how it works. The participants got the picture that OD is

different from other change efforts because in this case it is the organization itself that recognizes the need for change and they can come up with their own ideas.

Interview data indicated that the OD introductory workshop I presented to the participants prepared them to take the challenge of going through the OD process. T1 felt that the introductory workshop helped the teachers to understand my reasons for being at the school and to understand how OD will benefit them. He also felt that the OD introductory workshop created some level of readiness in the participants because they were willing to open up and to talk about issues of their concern, which they normally did not do.

The principal made the following remark about readiness: "I know that everybody at this school is ready to change, if they weren't then they wouldn't be participating. They are all showing interest ... we are not happy with the situation of our learners struggling with reading and writing and I think it is about time that we change things now."

Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 60) pointed out that some degree of readiness is essential at the start of any OD effort in a school. They further asserted that an organization is not ready if organizational members show signs such as staying apart from one another, being unhappy with life in the organization, but believing that they have no hope of making it any better themselves (p. 56).

Interview data from Ms Shetu revealed that most of the participants complained a lot about issues in the school that they were not happy with but did not have courage to come forward and point them out because they believed that their views were not counted. Seeing her colleagues talking freely about issues of their concern without being worried about others showed her that they were ready for change.

Mr. Iilonga revealed during the meeting with the management that they agreed to be involved in the OD intervention to help with my research and also to learn something from it, thus their support of the OD intervention was perhaps more to help me with my research than related to their actual state of readiness.

4.5.2 Empowerment – “OD brings the best out of people”

To empower someone is to give them power, which is done by giving individuals the authority to make decisions, to contribute their ideas, to exert influence and to be responsible (French & Bell 1999, p. 88) and OD is designed to do just that. Participation and empowerment are two of the central goals of OD, in which all those who are affected by change partake in decision making.

During the OD process, interviewed participants noticed a lot of change within their colleagues and themselves. They felt empowered, recognized, confident, etc. This is revealed in a number of responses, such as: “What I have realized in the problem solving workshop, people were so willing to give ideas, they felt really empowered, certain people were tasked to carry out some duties (e.g. contacting them advisory services, organize workshop until a school) this is normally done by the management.”

Mrs. Shoopala’s response was “It gave them that feeling that I’m also recognized, so I can make a difference, I can also make some input towards my organization.”

T1’s perception about OD was that “OD empowers us to do things our own way, OD is a nice process – it makes you feel confident and really makes you want to put in action what we have planned because it is our ideas and what we really want. Looking at the plan I feel so proud because I know I was part of creating this”.

In the view of French and Bell (1999, p. 88), participation enhances empowerment and empowerment in turn enhances performances and individual well-being.

Mr. Iilonga, the HOD, was surprised to see how active all members were, and commented: “When you told us in the introductory workshop that in OD approach there are no bosses, all people’s ideas are valued and so forth I thought and felt sorry for you that you will not get response from the staff members, to my surprise the quiet members were giving very constructive ideas, empowering people is the solution. Now I believe it that there are bosses in an OD approach, people are not only relying on management, they are pointing out what they think will work for them. OD approach brings the best out of people.”

According to my own observation, participants took ownership of the process; they all felt that it was in their hands to bring change in their school.

At the beginning of the OD intervention I invited participants to join me in facilitating the process through a joint steering committee, members felt empowered from the onset because they would be equipped with the skills to conduct their own OD processes in my absence.

4.5.3 Collaboration and teamwork

It was evident from the interview data that before the OD process, the school did not work together as a team, decisions were only taken and problems solved by some members of the organization while the rest had to go along with the decisions made. Even though the school has different committees that are responsible for leading the school in different areas, for example, social committee, sports committee and so on, they failed to do so.

According to French and Bell (1999, p. 29) participation and involvement in problem solving and decision-making by all levels of the organization are the hallmarks of OD.

From the interview data, it appeared that before the OD process, not all members of the organization participated or were not involved in decision-making in the school. According to Smith (2003, p. 14), people working together can achieve more than a group of individuals working alone.

Participants at Pendje Primary School did not feel the same way about teamwork. This was evident in a number of the responses from the interviews.

According to T4: "OD has brought us together as a school; we respect each other's views."

Mrs. Shetu revealed that "After the problem solving workshop, I realized that we (the school) have been making unrealistic school plans e.g. school development plan (SDP) was done by some members only, who do not even consult the whole staff, we came to realize that doing things together is so easy, fun, we are learning a lot from one another."

Similarly Mr. Ilonga commented that “I came to realize that it is easy to work as a team and initiate things rather than sitting there and thinking alone. When it is taken in a group there are many ideas contradicting and fighting each other but at the end of the day you come up with an idea that suits everybody and makes us all comfortable and the idea that we are all happy with.”

T4 observed that the “OD approach is something which came to open our minds wide to know how to do things together.”

Mr. Angula, the principal, commented “One of the good things about OD and what really hit me is the outcome of working together or the brainstorming, I was so surprised by some people who are so quiet on a daily basis, I just find out that they really have good ideas, if it was not for this OD intervention, we’ll never have found out”.

4.6 Power

During the focus group interview, participants commented strongly about the management being a driving force if change is to occur. They felt that if OD is to be sustained then the management must take the lead, for example T3 said: “Monitoring should be done by the people who are in the management – as an ordinary teacher, I cannot just stand and see if people are implementing the plan”. Another member, T5, added that: “It is not easy to kill old habits but if there is supervision, we are reminded all the time about our plans and actions and I know it is going to work so well if the management shows a lot of interest in this, no matter what we will always look at them.”

On the other hand, the management felt that the members are empowered to initiate change, influence and lead, that is why it was suggested that different responsibilities be given to different staff members.

4.7 OD approach experience compared to other change approaches

According to French and Bell (1999, p. 1) organization development is about how people and organizations function and how to get them to function better.

From the interview data, it was clear that most respondents felt that change could be implemented successfully in schools if change was introduced using the OD approach.

Ms. Shetu thought that if the national standard was introduced using an OD approach, people would really focus; she was not implying that they were not focused, but felt it could be much better because, according to her, OD gives people ownership of the situation.

T1 had the following to say about her experience of OD compared to other change approaches. "Sometimes changes are being introduced and we are not prepared for them, that is why with the OD approach, we have to come up with our strengths and weaknesses because we are the ones who know them and we know what we want."

According to Richard Beckhard, (cited in French & Bell, 1999, p. 66) people support what they help create, meaning that people affected by a change must be allowed active participation and a sense of ownership in the planning and conduct of the change.

In the view of Smith (2003, p. 5), involving all those who are part of the problem, and having decisions made by those closest to the problem or opportunity, is one of the rules of thumb.

The principal, who attended most of the workshop at the school on changes being introduced, felt that "The Ministry of Education is really trying, if there is a change to be introduced e.g. curriculum, new policies, and more recently the national standard, this is what happens, we get reading material on the proposed change and guidance is being given on how to implement the change, and we sit in groups, to discuss about these changes which is good but I think it was going to be much better if schools were asked to suggest what difficulties they are experiencing and deal with".

In support of this T3 commented: "It is true, like old principals, they just sleep in workshops and do not know what is going on. When they come back to give the feedback to the school, you are just surprised what the person has been doing for the whole week. Sometimes at the workshop,

they talked about how change is being introduced through 2-3 days work in which they do not have any say but to accept whatever they are being told.”

T5’s concern was: “I don’t know whoever to blame for the introduction of new programmes to be introduced in schools because it is not done appropriately. This is how it goes. The principal and sometimes HOD imagine the school with 16 staff members and only 2 go for a workshop to be introduced to new change, even that when they come, they are all not well equipped with information (it is either caused by the facilitator, maybe they did not get the information right) or by the people who go and attend, they always find it hard to give the information correctly at the end, one does not know what is expected from the school.”

According to one of the responses, OD encourages participation of all members of the organization in all aspects of the process: “everybody was involved from the beginning to the end, and no one is going to point fingers if it did not go well because we were all involved”.

All the interview data revealed that participants’ human need for participation is the key to organizational change. Being invited to a workshop and having nothing to contribute but to just sit and wait to be told what to do is not appropriate. T4 commented that “as teachers, we have so much knowledge to add to whatever change is being introduced, if we are not given the chance, we feel useless, we feel empty but with OD we feel valued”.

4.8 Participants’ Perception of the OD intervention

It was clear from the interview that respondents felt that OD is the best thing that had happened to their school regarding efforts to bring change in the school.

Mr. Iilonga commented that “To some of us it has been something new and we learned a lot, some of us have never had an idea on how to develop our school or just to think. We can do it ourselves without anybody’s help”.

Mr. Iilonga felt that from what they have learned from OD they could make it a part of their daily life. He commented that if they have issues that need to be solved on a daily basis at school, for example absenteeism, poor discipline among learners, or conflict among staff

members, they would use the problem-solving process. He felt that it was wonderful because it helped them to get to the root of the problem, rather than just punishing learners.

T4 felt strongly about carrying on with the OD approach in their school: "I was thinking if we follow this OD then it will help our school a lot, to solve our own problems. Sometimes we used to keep quiet and let the problems eat us but with OD if we are serious we will be a problem-free school."

Mr. Ilonga's perception of OD was first influenced by other change approaches. He is used to situations where they are told what to do and this is what he had to say:

"I thought you will show us the way or give us the solution to our problem, but it is about changing our problems, we know what is going on and we are not expecting somebody to come out from there and tell us that there is a problem here, do this. At least, we are now able to identify our own problems and find our own solutions, that we know will work in our situation. I think OD is the best thing that ever happened to us, and I am ready to use this approach, whether at home or here in school."

Ms. Shetu thought that the process was going to be very complicated and hard to understand. She thought that it was not possible for a school to come up with change on their own because normally they don't sit and work together to solve problems, they either put it in the hands of management to do it or just ignore it, but the OD approach made solving their problems easy.

According to Mr. Ilonga, the participants initially felt that they would not benefit at all from the OD intervention. Most of them agreed to take part in the process for the purpose of my study and they believed they would not get anything out of it, but they later realized it was benefiting them as well as, if not even more than, me (the facilitator).

4.9 Participants' experience of the process – "OD an eye opener"

On the question of how they experienced the whole process of OD, T1 commented that "It was fun, we really enjoyed and learned a lot, I mean, and it was a refresher of mind."

The HOD observed that his colleagues were really so impressed with the OD approach, they were all willing to work on the school development plan, which in the past was only done by some members, because they felt that they were not capable of coming up with the school development plan. Going through the OD process, especially the problem-solving process, helped to boost their confidence.

The principal felt that the OD approach encourages working together as a team, active participation and focusing. "I can say it again and again, OD opened my eyes, and it's an eye opener for the school on how to do things on our own. My school needs to work on lots of issues which need a lot of attention, but through this OD process, I am already guaranteed that one day or another, we will work through them. It can take us weeks or years but I know our school will be the best school in the region. In OD one has to take part in decision-making, you have to take part from the initiation of the programme to make action plans and to implement action. While on the other programmes, or workshops, we were told what to do, such as activities here and there, they have already been planned by other people; we don't get a change to show people what we are really capable of."

4.10 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present and discuss the findings in relation to participants' experience of the OD process. The discussion revealed that the participants were impressed by the OD process, they felt empowered, they developed the will to work together as a team and OD encouraged them to participate in decision-making in issues regarding their school.

In the final chapter, I give a summary of my findings, and make recommendations for further research. I give the limitations of my study and conclude with my personal reflections.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together all issues raised in this study by providing an overview and summary of the study.

In this study I have described an OD intervention process and presented some participants' experiences and perceptions of OD as a change approach. The study took place in one of the rural schools in the Omusati region of Namibia.

Organizations are increasingly being bombarded with change at all levels as change relentlessly increases. Change is seen as necessary merely to survive, transformation is required to thrive and a constant need for reinvention is needed to secure long-term success (Keene, 2000, p. 15). Schools are no exception, they are expected to cope with the changes that are being introduced in schools since Namibia's independence in 1990, for example with the change in the curriculum and the introduction of the national standard for performance indicators.

The main aim of the study was to introduce OD with the aim of examining whether it would help the participants to introduce change in their school using the OD approach. With so much change introduced, organizational members are left wondering why change is occurring. This happens when the members are not well informed of the reason for change, and this leads to organizations introducing change initiatives with few, if any, results because not all organizational members are involved in the planning of the change.

OD is an approach that involves all members, or all those who are affected by a problem, in their own problem-solving process. OD helps to get individuals, teams, and organizations to function effectively; it promotes collaboration between organizational members, interdependence and

interconnectedness of organizational members, empowerment, participation and involvement in decision making and problem solving.

In Chapter 1 I described my reasons for embarking on this study.

In Chapter 2 I presented a review of the literature on organizational change. I introduced OD by outlining part of its history, goals, key theories and concepts that inform OD.

Chapter 3 described the methodology, the method and process that I followed in conducting this study. I worked in the interpretive and critical paradigms and carried out a case study of an action research method. I described the tools I used to gather the data, namely observation notes and interviews.

In Chapter 4 I presented a narrative presentation of the data collected during the intervention through interviews and observation notes.

In the next section I summarize the key findings of my study.

5.2 Summary of findings

The evidence from the data indicated that the OD approach was something relatively new to the staff members of Pendje Primary School. Responses from participants showed that most of them had never been involved in taking part in problem-solving or decision-making concerning the school, decisions were always taken by some members who were seen as capable of coming up with perfect solutions to problems. With the OD approach members felt empowered, they appreciated the use of team-work. Participants felt that the use of team-work promotes the sharing of ideas and information that can lead to change in their school.

The process of OD intervention was successful in that all staff members were involved from the onset of the intervention to the implementation phase. They immediately put into action the plans they came up with during the action planning phase. In most organizations change is implemented top down, which brings about resistance in the organization, but in the case of Pendje Primary School the changes were being pushed from both sides, management and

teachers. However, learners were resistant to the change, which practically discouraged the teachers from carrying out the action plan. Teachers felt that with the OD approach they would see immediate change in the whole school both from the teachers and the learners, hence it was important for me to remind participants that the OD process is a long-term change approach and not a “quick fix” and that it would take learners time to adjust to newly introduced change.

Fullan (1991, pp. 105-107) suggests that there are ten “do and don’t” assumptions that are basic to a successful approach to educational change, namely:

1. Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the one that should or could be implemented.
2. Assume that any significant innovation, if it is to result in change, requires individual implementers to work out their own meaning.
3. Assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable, but also fundamental, to successful change.
4. Assume that people need pressure to change (even in directions that they desire), but it will only be effective under conditions that allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain technical assistance, etc.
5. Assume that effective change takes time: two to three years for specific innovations, three to five years for institutional reforms.
6. Do not assume that the reason for lack of implementation is outright rejection of the values embodied in the change, or hard-core resistance to all change. There are a number of possible reasons, including inadequate resources to support implementation, insufficient time elapsed and value rejection.
7. Do not expect all or even most people or groups to change. The complexity of change is such that it is impossible to bring about widespread reform in any large social system. Progress occurs when we take steps that increase the number of people affected. Our reach should exceed our grasp ... but not such that we fall on our face.

8. Assume that you will need a plan that is based on the above assumptions.
9. Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken.
10. Assume that changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not implementing single innovations.

5.3 Recommendations

In the light of my study, I offer the following suggestions for other researchers that I feel are imperative to people (researchers) wishing to embark on an OD project with participants.

- a) It is very important to have a very good knowledge of the topic, in this case, reading the relevant literature on OD before starting with the research, when it comes to conducting an action research, knowing the phases well, the methods of gathering and analyzing data helps to make the work a bit easier. I had had little experience of the action research process and this made my work a little complicated.
- b) The purpose, values, goals and what OD approach can offer the organization should be explained to participants in detail. During the intervention I realized the need to keep stressing the goals, values and benefits of OD to the participants in order to help them recall what they can gain from the process. Clarifying issues also helps the process to move on smoothly.
- c) Giving feedback to participants on how the research is going and how they as participants are contributing during the OD process is important for creating closeness and trust during the research process.
- d) It is advisable that the researcher makes the participants aware in advance of the time that the intervention will take.

- e) Interviewing skills (asking probing questions) are very necessary. I realized during my data discussion that my data was very shallow and superficial. I had to contact the participants again by phone or drive back to the school which was very expensive.
- f) Reading a thesis on research done on the same topic from the beginning of your research helps you to avoid mistakes and shortcomings experienced by other researchers.
- g) As a researcher or facilitator, make sure that the participants knows what your role is from the beginning, I learnt that participants think that the researcher's role is to solve their problems for them or to tell them what is best for their school.
- h) Lastly, as a researcher embarking on an OD project in an organization, it is vital to understand the culture of the school and the people that you are working with, encouraging them at all times, boosting their confidence by showing them that they are capable of bringing change to their organization, truly showing that you value them, being very patient with them (sometimes they cancel the meeting at the very last minute, after you have driven 30km to the school) and continuously supporting their effort.

5.4 Limitations

In the methodology chapter I pointed out the time factor as being a limitation to my study: I had so little time between collecting my data and compiling my report.

5.5 Personal reflections

OD is a new approach to change for me. I first encountered it as one of my subjects during my master's degree at Rhodes University. I immediately developed an interest in the subject, and I decided to carry out my research on OD. My main motive was that it sounded very promising and that it will help me in the future to bring about change in my own school.

When I started with the research I found out that OD is very demanding and that it needs a person who knows the procedures and phases very well, as well as having excellent interviewing skills. I felt like giving up and choosing another topic that I was familiar with, but decided to go on with OD on the basis that if I don't take challenges I will not learn. Facing the challenge of doing something for the first time at master's level helped me to fulfill one of my dreams, which is to teach people how to help themselves, in this case, Pendje Primary School, who learned through the OD intervention how to solve their problems.

Lastly I would like to encourage all who would like to embark on doing research that *hard work pays, and where there is a will there is a way.*

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions after the OD introductory workshop

1. Please describe what you do – your area of responsibility?
2. With whom does your work bring you in contact with most often? Whom do you need in doing your work? Are there people in your organization whom you need to see more often?
3. What are some aspects of the current situation in the school that need changing?
4. How much influence do you think you have over goals and activities in your school? How are the goals set?
5. How would you characterize your head's leadership?
6. How do you know when you are being productive? Who notices? What gives you satisfaction?
7. What is currently going well in your school?
8. In the SDF meeting we heard on the,..... came out as an issue that needs urgent and special attention, what do you think is the main cause for this?
9. If you were given a chance to be the principal of this school for a year, what would you change? How would you do that?
10. Is there anything that you would like to cover that I haven't touched?
11. What specific things that you feel we need to give attention to in the next meeting?

OD intervention (problem solving) – interview questions

1. For the whole month of July we have been involved in an OD process at your school. How did you experience the whole OD process? What was it like?
2. OD is a change approach; do you think teachers are ready for this approach to change?
3. What specifically struck you about OD?
4. What can you tell me about OD?
5. Problem solving was identified as one of the key area that needed attention, after the workshop on problem solving, are there any observable changes within your school?
6. What are the general feelings of your colleagues on the whole OD process?
7. For you what are the most challenges of OD?
8. Does your school have any idea of how to make OD a part of the school's daily life?

APPENDIX 2: CHANGE BRINGS FEAR

WE DON'T WANT TO MAKE YOU CHANGE
IF YOU ARE HAPPY

WE ONLY WANT TO HELP YOU TO CHANGE
IF YOU ARE NOT



APPENDIX 3

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

OD AGREEMENT CONTRACT

Agreement entered into by the OD facilitator (H.N.Perestrelo) and the staff members of Pendje Primary School (pseudonym).

Hereby, I, Mrs. H.N.Perestrelo (M.Ed. Student at Rhodes University 2007) wish to confirm to the staff members my commitment to conduct a Survey Data Feedback in fulfillment of my M.Ed. course requirements.

- I pledge to protect anonymity and confidentiality of all data and information as well as names and identities if so requested.
- My role will be to primarily to gather data and to assist in analysis and feedback of data.

Name (s)

Signature

APPENDIX 4: LETTER OF AUTHORITY



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Tel: (046) 603 8383/4
Fax: (046) 622 8028
e-mail: education@ru.ac.za

12 June 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Ms Helena Perestrelo (student number 07P0473) is a full-time Masters student of Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. She is following the M Ed in Education Leadership and Management.

Ms Perestrelo is carrying out an Organisation Development study in a school in Namibia. In order to carry out her project successfully she will need access to organisations and people so that she can collect data.

It would be highly appreciated if you could assist Ms Perestrelo by allowing her the kind of access she will need to complete her research. I believe her research will be of national and perhaps international importance, and hence she needs all the assistance and support she can get.

Thank you in anticipation. If you have any further queries about her research please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number appearing on the letterhead, or at my email address which is H.vanderMescht@ru.ac.za

Sincerely

(Prof) Hennie van der Mescht
(Supervisor)

APPENDIX 5 - FRUSTRATED TEACHER

Many teachers are feeling disenchanted

With the profession

Frustrated with the never ending changes,

Overworked and demeaned as professionals Powerless and unappreciated.

