

**AN ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION
IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE ERONGO REGION OF NAMIBIA**

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ABSTRACT

The challenge for Namibia is to translate Vision 2030 into realistic and implementable programmes and to develop and adopt a set of interventions which will raise the quality of education. The quality of education currently on offer varies from school to school and, indeed, from class to class (Namibia. MoE, 2006, p. 1). The National Standards and Performance Indicators (ETSIP, 2006) for schools in Namibia and the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), have been developed to address the quality of education across the country, and to make provision for school managers to be trained.

Organisation Development is a planned change approach which focuses on the change processes of the organisation, by opening up communication, decreasing internal destructiveness – such as win-lose conflicts – and by increasing creativity in problem solving. It is based on the values and assumptions about people and their organisations. OD promotes interdependence and interconnectedness, involvement in problem solving and decision making. OD is a process for teaching people how to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities, and learn how to do better over time.

OD was introduced to Evergreen Senior Secondary School in the form of a Survey Data Feedback (SDF) where data was collected, analysed and fed back to the participants.

The case study involved 20 staff members made up of the principal, two head of departments and 17 teachers. Formal and focus-group interviews, as well as observation, were used to collect data.

What was derived from the data was that the OD approach was something new to the participants, and served as an eye-opener. Further, it became evident from the data that

participants had high hopes that OD would bring about immediate visible changes regarding the operation of their organisation. It is essential to remind participants that OD is a long-term change process, and not a “quick fix”.

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ACRONYMS

AR	Action Research
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
FS	Future Search
HOD	Head of Department
MED	Master of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
OD	Organisation Development
SDF	Survey Data Feedback
T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7,	Teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that all 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

Ours is an era of change. Inspired and guided by Namibia's national vision statement – Vision 2030 – Namibia is currently undergoing a major reform of its overall national development strategy (Namibia. MoE, 2007, p. 1). As the Minister of Education of Namibia stated, “Our society is dynamic; so, too, education has to change to meet the ever-increasing demands for relevant education” (Ministry of Education [MoE] 2005, p.1).

The challenge for Namibia is to translate Vision 2030 into realistic and implementable programmes, and to develop and adopt a set of interventions which will raise the quality of education. The quality of education currently on offer varies from school to school and, indeed, from class to class (Namibia. MoE, 2006, p. 1). The National Standards and Performance Indicators (ETSIP, 2006) for schools in Namibia, and the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), have been developed to address the quality of education across the country and to make provision for school managers to be trained. Many managers in the Ministry of Education often do not follow best practices to organise work, plan programmes, run meetings, supervise and monitor action. Many lack the skills and tools to do so (Namibia. MoE, 2006, p. 1). The challenge is to bring about a change in attitude in order to improve management practices (Namibia. MoE, 2007, p. 86). During interviews with some principals, they revealed that they are not confident with the new change that was envisaged, because no effective training was being conducted.

Whitaker (1993, p. 6) suggested that, “for an education system to be in tune with change, it needs to be flexible, adaptable and awake to constantly changing circumstances and needs”. Smith (2003, p.1) stated that change and renewal is a universal requirement for ongoing group and organisation life. Understanding and managing change is an important part of school

management today. A school manager is sometimes seen as the focal point of change at a school. The principal should, therefore be able to initiate change and prepare stakeholders at the school for planned changes (Ministry of Basic Education Culture [MBEC], p. 1).

Studies done in the USA (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994), in South Africa (Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus, 1995), and in Namibia (Neshila, 2005), have shown that Organisational Development is an effective change strategy in schools. It can make a difference in the learning environment and enhance working relationships. OD is about people and organisations and how they function. OD is a planned approach to change (French & Bell, 1995, p. 2). Planned change is consciously thought about and implemented systematically (Smith, C., 2003, p. 2).

OD is based primarily on a normative-re-educative or cultural change strategy, and secondarily on an empirical-rational strategy (Smith, C., 2003, p. 3). Change is likely to occur when people involved, change their normative orientations to old patterns and develop commitments to new ones – for example, changes in normative orientations involve attitudes, values, skills and relationships. An assumption of the empirical-rational strategy is that people will change when they realise that they will benefit from the change (Smith, C., 2003, p. 4). It means that the situation must be advantageous, effective, and in line with their self-interest (French & Bell, 1995, p. 102).

Creating readiness to change builds individual and organisation-wide momentum, excitement, and commitment to change. A sense of need and urgency for change is important, and the change message and the plan for change should be communicated to the employees well in advance (Smith, I., 2006, p. 301). This argument is supported by Kotter (as cited in Smith, I, 2005, p. 409). Smith, I., (2006) states further that, to achieve successful and persisting change, effective communication is critical. Employees tend to commit themselves to change when they have full and clear information about the reasons for change or the nature of change (p. 304).

I conducted a survey data feedback intervention where data were collected and fed back to organisation participants followed by an initial cycle of change.

1.2 Personal context

I carried out an OD intervention at a senior secondary school in Omaruru circuit. What sparked my interest was that, after the class presentation on Organisational Development, I realised immediately that this initiative could probably solve many problems in the schools if one were to carry out an OD intervention at those schools which normally lodge many complaints regarding poor management, conflict and communication problems. As the inspector of the school, it was my responsibility to assist the institution by dealing with the problems. The research was worth doing for two main reasons: firstly, to investigate the applicability of OD in this particular school and, secondly, to encourage the Namibian Education Sector to sponsor more people to become OD practitioners in order to carry out interventions at schools.

1.3 Goals of the research

The purpose of my research was to facilitate an OD intervention, and to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the participants of the intervention at a Senior Secondary School in the Omaruru Circuit in the Erongo region of Namibia. This included:

- The facilitation of an OD intervention
- An investigation of participants' experience and perceptions of OD as an organisation change strategy
- An investigation of the short-term outcomes of the intervention.

1.4 Research approach

Due to the nature of my research, which is an attempt to bring about change, I conducted qualitative research involving interpretative and critical paradigms. My interest was in the participants' experience and perceptions of the change process. In that I raised awareness of the dysfunctionalities of the organisation to bring about change towards a more satisfying and democratic situation in the organisation, my study is located in the critical paradigm.

I used a case study method. Merriam (as cited in Winegardner, 2001, p. 14) sees a case study as particularistic. It focuses on a particular situation and evaluates programmes and interventions – in my case, an OD intervention.

1.4.1 OD as action research

French & Bell (1995, p. 138) state that OD is cyclical and interactive. It involves the members of the organisation participating actively in all phases of the process from its introduction, through data gathering and analysis, to action planning, implementation and review (Whyte, 1995, pp. 289-290). The action research phases of an OD intervention are explained in section 3.3.2.

1.4.2 Data gathering and analysis

I used observation and interviews as data-gathering tools. I conducted informal interviews at the key transition points in the OD process, such as after the introductory OD workshop, after the SDF, and after the action planning. The reason for the interviews was to determine the experience and perception of the participants of the OD process.

I used interpretational analysis to analyse my data, which is “a process of close examination of case study data in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns” (Gall, as cited in Winegardner, 2001, p. 5).

1.5 The outline of the thesis

The thesis is outlined as follows:

Chapter 1:

This chapter describes the historical and theoretical contexts of the study; and my personal context. It then explains the research goals and research approach.

Chapter 2:

Chapter Two is a presentation of the literature on organisation change. The main theme of the thesis is an Organisation Development (OD) intervention. Therefore, Chapter Two describes the history, key theories and concepts that are employed in OD, Lewin's three-stage model of change, and OD interventions.

Chapter 3:

In this chapter, I describe my research methodology in terms of my research paradigms (critical and interpretative), and my research method, which is an action research case study. I present a detailed description of the phases of action research, which I apply to the OD process. I also explain the collection and presentation of my data. Ethical issues end this chapter.

Chapter 4:

In this chapter, I present the respondents' experience and perceptions of the OD process and the outcome of the intervention.

Chapter 5:

This final chapter concludes by summarising the main findings, and my reflection for future researchers. The limitations of my studies are spelt out, and followed by the conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

“We live in an age of discontinuity”

(Stephen Robbins)

My research goal was to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the participants of an OD intervention in a Senior Secondary School in the Omaruru Circuit in the Erongo region of Namibia. This chapter reviews critically the literature that has shaped and informed this research, and that provides a foundation and framework for the study.

In this chapter, I begin with a brief introduction on the different types of change and, secondly, I discuss planned change strategies. The third section introduces OD as a strategy of planned change, which will help to clarify the development of the term. The next section explores the core theories and concepts which are employed in OD. This leads to the final section, which discusses some of the OD interventions that help to address specific organisational issues. I conclude the chapter with a brief summary of the literature review.

2.2 Different types of change

According to Smith, C., (2003, p. 1-2) Hanson identifies three types of change: spontaneous, evolutionary and planned. An example of spontaneous change in an organisation setting is like, for instance, the sudden death of all the management members of a school in a car accident. Spontaneous change is unforeseen and sudden. This change is very much shocking and hurting. It creates severe emotions.

In the case of evolutionary change, on the other hand, one is seldom aware of it happening. It is slow and hardly noticeable. One only realises that things are not longer the same when one looks back years afterwards. Eighteen years ago, a black face was not seen in a former white school. Today, such a school is inundated by black faces, while the white faces have phased out gradually. This change is not planned; it takes place as changes take place in the education sector.

Lastly, planned change is always thought about; it is in one's mind, and it is applied systematically. The implementation of the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act, 1998 (Act 29 of 1998), is an example of planned change at an organisation level, where it intended to promote and ensure gender and racial balance at schools or at any other organisation.

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

2.2.1 Planned Change Strategies

Chin & Benne (as cited in French & Bell, 1995, p. 95) describe three types of planned change strategies, namely empirical-rational strategies, normative-re-educative strategies, and power-coercive strategies. According to Passfield (2002, p. 153), "The key differentiating aspect among the categories is the source of influence of the change strategy". Empirical-rational strategies rely on knowledge to obtain influence; normative re-educative strategies employ non-rational determinants of human behaviour, while power-coercive strategies portray political and economic sanctions and moral power. The strategies will be described with more emphasis on the normative-re-educative strategy because, according to French & Bell, (1995, p. 95), OD falls within this category, although a combination of normative-re-educative and empirical-rational strategies is represented in OD.

2.2.2 Power-coercive strategies

According to Cox & Makin, (1994, p. 21) these strategies involve the use of power to force individuals into changing. Forcing a teacher to be transferred from one school to another in the

interest of another school is an example of this strategy in use. Change is normally implemented from the top down, and it is taken for granted that the presence of power will ensure the desired change. Heckscher *et al.* (as cited in Tsai & Beverton, 2007, p. 9) point out that, “top-down management uses the power of the top not only to create shared commitment but also to explain rationales and strategies for change”. The assumption is that change will occur when those with less power comply with the demands of those with more power (Smith, C., 2003, p. 3).

2.2.3 Empirical-rational strategies

Cox & Makin, (1994, p. 24) state that:

This approach assumes that people are basically rational. Change can be effected, therefore, by showing that it is in the individual’s own interest to change. Such change is achieved by the use of data and rational persuasion. The assumptions underlying this strategy lie deep in traditional education and include a belief in the value of research and the dissemination of knowledge.

This strategy is based on assumption that people will normally change if and when they come to realise that they will benefit from the change (French & Bell, 1995, p. 95).

2.2.4 Normative re-educative strategies

According to Owens (2001, p. 197; Chin & Benne, as cited in French & Bell, 1995, p. 95), this strategy is based on an understanding of organisations and people in them, and also on the assumptions that norms form the basis for behaviour, and change comes through re-education in which old norms are discarded and replaced by new ones.

Chin and Benne (as cited in French & Bell, 1995) describe the nature of the normative-re-educative strategy as follows:

These strategies build upon assumptions about human motivation different from those underlying the first. 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 value systems of individuals – normative outlooks which undergird their commitments.

Change in 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 (p.95).

According to (Burke as cited in French & Bell, 1995)

If one attempts to change an attitude or the behaviour of an individual without attempting to change the same attitude or behaviour in the group to which the individual belongs, then the individual will be a deviant and either will come under pressure from the group to get back into line or will be rejected entirely. Thus, the major leverage point for change is at the group level; for example, by modifying a group norm or standards (p. 96).

French & Bell (1995, p. 97) conclude by saying that, “norms help determine individual behaviour and a normative-re-educative strategy of changing pervades the practice of OD”.

The next section will give an overview of organisation development.

2. 3 Organisation Development (OD)

OD is a programme of planned interventions, which improves the internal operations of the organisations by opening up communication, decreasing internal destructiveness – such as win-lose conflicts – and by increasing creativity in problem solving (King & Anderson, (2002, p. 168). French & Bell (1999) point out that OD is a process for teaching people how to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities, and learn how to do better over time (p.1). Schmuck & Runkel (1994) describe OD in school districts (or colleges) as:

A coherent, systematically planned, sustained effort at system self-study and improvement, focusing explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms, or structures, and using behavioural science concepts. The goals of OD include improving both the quality of life of individuals, as well as organisational functioning and performance with a direct or indirect focus on educational issues (p. 5).

In the next section, I will give a brief overview on the origin of OD.

2.3.1 History of OD

OD has its roots in the business world, but is applied worldwide in all types of organisations, including schools (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 9; Van der Westhuizen, 2002, p. 243).

The studies carried out in the 1920s and 1930s, at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company is seen to have set the stage for the development of OD (Smither, Houston & McIntire, 1996, p. 9). The studies were a reaction to the theory of organisation in ‘scientific management’, which advocates the view that the work of humans should be made as machine-like as possible. The experiments showed that, “workers would respond favourably with higher production, to interested and sympathetic attention from supervisors and managers” (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 9). According to Roethlisberger and Dickson (as cited in Grievies, 2000, p. 347) the Hawthorne studies focus on the role of informal groups in organisations.

According to Schmuck & Miles (as cited in Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 9), the psychologist, Kurt Lewin, is known as the founder of OD. The first experimental workshop in OD was held by Lewin at the Teachers’ College, Connecticut, in 1946, after he directed an inter-group relations workshop as an experiment in change, and as training for workers in inter-group relations. This was later known as the T-groups, which focus on communication between individuals in the workplace. Lewin believes that work has ‘life- value’, which gives meaning to a person’s existence. He claims further that the worker does not want his/her life to be crippling and narrow; work can involve love, beauty, and the soaring joy of creating (Baliga, 2008, p. 1). In 1947, the National Training Laboratories were established, where people were trained to become skilled in order to manage change and improve group relations.

The history of OD is one of slow development. The term OD was, according to Weisbord (1987, p. 112), coined by Douglas McGregor and Richard Bechard in the 1950s, in reference to, ‘an innovative, bottom-up change intervention they conducted, that fit no traditional consulting category or practice’.

In the next section, I will discuss some of the core theories and concepts which are employed in OD.

2.4 Key theories and concepts that are employed in OD

OD draws on theories and concepts from a host of disciplines in the social and management sciences (Smith, C., 2003, p. 9). Some of these theories and concepts and how they are employed in OD will be discussed in this section.

2. 4.1 Systems theory

According to French & Bell (1995, p. 82) systems theories view organisations as open systems in exchange with their environment. They state further that system theory is a tool which enables one to understand the dynamics of organisations and organisational change.

As French & Bell state (1995, p. 89), the term ‘system’ indicates “interdependency, interconnectedness and interrelatedness of a set of elements that constitute an identifiable whole or gestalt”. Senge (1990, p. 12) perceives systems thinking as the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of all different parts. The system perspective directs the OD practitioner to be acquainted with interdependencies, inter-relatedness, multiple causes and multiple effects.

According to (Sisaye, 2005, p. 53; White, 2000, p. 165), the approach views organisations as consisting of several systems that are interdependent. Beer & Bertalanffy (as cited in Sisaye, 2005, p. 53) state that the organisation consists of individuals, groups/teams, structures, systems, and policies, where a change in one or more parts of the system will affect the entire system.

According to Sisaye (2005, p. 53), since teams draw members from several cross-functional areas to manage complex tasks that have a broader, organisation-wide scope, systems analysis suggests that the formation of teams in an organisation is developmental and systemic integrative.

The following section will focus on teams.

2.4.2 Teams

Meyer and Botha (2000, p. 124) state that team building is one of the most common OD activities, and is designed to develop the task and interpersonal functioning, and values of groups as teams

Mussnug & Hughey (1997) define a team as:

A group of employees working towards a specific goal, interacting to share information about the best procedures or practices, and asking decisions which encourage all team members to perform to their full potential. (p. 20)

To enhance quality and productivity, teams have the authority to implement, and not just recommend, specific courses of action. However, to give the approach a legitimate chance to succeed, managers have to be willing to relinquish some of their authority to the team – but some managers find it difficult to give up such control (Mussnug & Hughey, 1997, p. 20). Huusko (2007, p. 244) says that duties that have earlier belonged to supervisors are taken care of by teams. At the same time, supervisors have changed from acting as close foremen to facilitators.

Mussnug & Hughey (1997, p. 25) state further that the goal of all team programmes is to reach efficacy. “Team efficacy occurs when employees believe that the team initiative is real and management is serious about using and maintaining teams” During team efficacy, the attitudinal and behavioural changes start to take hold, and the organisational culture begins to develop into a supportive, nurturing environment where everyone feels that their contributions are appreciated, desired, and absolutely essential to the future of the organisation.

Hackman (2004, p. 86) states that, when you compose a team, you need to pay attention to ensure that the team includes members who have the knowledge, the skills, and the experience that are required for doing the work. The knowledge, skills, perspectives and experiences should be diverse. Smither, *et al.* (1996, p. 310) say that these skills are not inborn, but must be practised to get them right. OD team-building activities and interventions include effective

meeting procedures, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, conflict-management and communication skills.

Weisbord (as cited in Smith, C., 2003) concludes:

Team building is useful at some point in any change programme. Most team members come away feeling more 'in', more influential, more competent, more supported, and more committed to their common enterprise. They may also have solved some problems, devised a new strategy, moved toward a new structure and consolidated a future vision (p. 17).

In the next section I will discuss organisational culture.

2.4.3 Organisational culture

Different authors like Deal & Kennedy, Peters & Waterman, including Schein (as cited in Lakomski, 2001, p. 69), assert that culture is widely understood as an instrument which should be used by management to shape and control in some way the understandings, beliefs, and behaviours of individuals – and thus the organisation – to reach specified goals.

Kilmann *et al.* (as cited in Lund, 2003, p. 220) define culture as “the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms” that knit an organisation together. Deal, (as cited in Lund, 2003, p.220) defines it as “the human invention that creates solidarity and meaning and inspires commitment and productivity”, while Uttal (as cited in Lund, 2003, p. 220.) defines it as “a system of shared values (what is important) and beliefs (how things work) that interact with a company’s people, organisational structures and control systems to produce behavioural norms”. Deshpanda and Webster (as cited in Lund, 2003) maintain that no strong consensus has formed on a definition of culture, but in the present study, culture is defined as “the pattern of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand organisational functioning and thus provide them with norms for behaviour in the organisation” (p. 220).

Schein (1992) defines culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 12).

According to Van der Westhuizen (2002, p. 119), the willingness of staff members to devote themselves to a school depends on the level to which they identify themselves with the organisational culture of that particular school. He elaborates further that organisational culture influences teachers and learners, and their academic, sporting, cultural achievement, as well as their attitudes towards the school.

Organisations are cultural establishments, and to bring about desired change in the organisation requires cultural change from within. According to (French & Bell, 1995, p. 5; Fullan, 2001, p. 44), if one wants to bring about change in an organisation, then the culture needs to be altered. If culture changes and the new ways are accepted as the right ways, then change becomes permanent (French & Bell, 1995, p. 30).

“The prime mover of change is the leader, who transforms the current stagnating culture into a productive one.” (Lakomski, 2001, p. 68) Change leadership will be discussed later in the chapter.

Simpson (as cited in Levin, 1999) states that the success of an OD intervention depends on how well the facilitator is able to diagnose, understand, and change the culture of the organisation. It is essential that the OD facilitator does not make incorrect inferences from organisational artefacts, such as stories, myths and symbols, without examining and understanding first the deeper underlying assumptions behind them. This can be done through open-ended interviews, intensive observation, and through involving motivated members of the group in intensive self-analysis (Schein, 1992, p. 112).

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, p. 42-43) point out that:

If we do not understand or recognise the culture that exists at a school, attempts at change and innovation could prove futile, because we are not acknowledging or dealing with the aspects of school life that will most likely hinder processes of transformation. One of the ways of changing the culture of the school is to help people working in schools to identify what the culture is.

Before an organisation can change effectively, it needs to be ready to change. In the next section, I discuss readiness.

2.4.4 Readiness

According to Smith, I., (2005, p. 408), the real source and vehicle for change is people and it is those people who make up organisations. They are the ones who will embrace or resist change. He points out further that for any organisational change to take grip and to be successful, it is imperative that there be readiness for change (Smith, I., 2006, p. 301). Creating readiness to change builds individual and organisation-wide momentum, excitement and commitment to change. A sense of need and urgency for change is important, and the change message and the plan for change should be communicated with the employees well in advance (Smith, I., 2006, p. 301). This argument is supported by Kotter (as cited in Smith, I., 2005, p. 409). Smith, I. (2006) states further that, to achieve successful and persisting change, effective communication is critical. Employees tend to commit themselves to change when they have full and clear information about the reasons for change or the nature of change (p. 304).

This is supported by ‘top-down’ approach (2008):

Many organisations have learned the lesson that change can be welcomed by employees if they are given compelling reasons why change is needed, convincing evidence why the status quo is no longer an option, effective involvement in managing the change process, sufficient time to get used to and involved in the new systems, and relevant training and development to equip them to take on new challenges (p. 26).

According to Cox & Makin (1994, p. 21), if all those affected by the change are involved in its planning and implementation, change in organisations is more effective and is carried out with least resistance. However, it is not unusual to find that managers deem their subordinates to be

quite reluctant to take any responsibility for implementing change, while the subordinates show a high degree of suspicion about the motives of managers and their readiness to listen to subordinates – attitudes which are, of course, mutually reinforcing.

Research shows that individuals who are given a choice have a higher level of motivation; they are more positive about training, receive higher test scores and are more committed to a situation or decision. Thus perceived choice to attend training will affect readiness for change and will have differential effects on dimensions of change (Narayan, Steele-Johnson, Delgado & Cole, 2007, p. 49).

Narayan *et al.* (2007) assert that individuals' readiness to change might be affected by age, gender and tenure. Moreover, researchers find that, "older employees might have less access to, and be involved in, fewer training and development activities, as compared with younger employees". In addition, it is suggested that older workers are more anxious about and less willing to participate in, development activities than are younger employees (p. 50).

In Weisbord's view (as cited in Smith, C., 2003, p. 18), readiness (he refers to readiness as being well motivated, as in being caring enough to be ready to do something) is "the building block for all constructive change". According to Smith, C., (2003, p. 18), readiness to participate in an organisation change process refers to desire or willingness, capability, confidence and a belief that 'we can make a difference', as forms of readiness. There can be various reasons that groups or organisations don't want to change – it might be that they had previous disappointments, where the promise turned out to be an empty one. Time and effort were put into a project that failed. Some are fearful of the unknown. For organisations to change their operations, or improve their organisation, they need the participants of that organisation to be ready to take part in the OD process. If there is no readiness, no effective change will take place.

According to Smith, C., (2003, p.19), an introduction to an OD workshop can raise levels of readiness by inculcating a sense of 'we can do this', and 'let's try it'. In this workshop, the objectives of the workshop, the goals, and the potential benefits of OD, should be emphasised.

Smith, C. (2003, p. 20) states, “SDF serves as a readiness-raising function”. It makes people aware of the challenges of the organisation which need to be addressed. Weisbord (as cited in Smith, C., 2003, p. 20), points out further that the readiness level can be raised by focusing attention away from present, demoralising issues, to the future and energising possibilities.

In the next section I will focus on Action Research.

2. 4.5 Action Research (AR)

Kurt Lewin, the social psychologist who is recognised by many authors (Carr, 2006, p. 423; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 332; Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007, p. 413; French & Bell, 1999, p. 130; Weisbord, 1987, p 88; Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 22) as the father of action research and OD, employed action research in research related to community action programmes in the United States during the 1940s. Lewin proposes AR as a new method for behavioural science, and believes further that efforts for change should be focused on the group, which challenge the group norms and process. Zuber-Skerrit (as cited in Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007, p. 416) developed a theoretical framework of effective action research independently, this being known as the CRASP model:

Action research is:

- Critical (and self-critical) collaborative enquiry by
- Reflective practitioners being
- Accountable and making the results of their enquiry public,
- Self-evaluating their practice and engaged in
- Participative problem-solving and continuing professional development

Cadno (2006) sees AR as a cyclical process. He explains it as follows:

It moves through stages of investigating and analysing a problem (reconnaissance), to planning a change strategy and then implementing this (intervention), followed by monitoring the change and reflecting on its effectiveness (evaluation). This reflection could lead into a re-clarification of the problem, or revelation of further dimensions of the

problem that warrant a further cycle of investigation (research), intervention (action) and evaluation (more research) (p. 457).

Lewin sees action research as “a spiral, a never-ending learning cycle, based upon trial and error, feedback and learning”. Figure 1 below shows the phases of action research. A detailed description of each phase is given in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3).

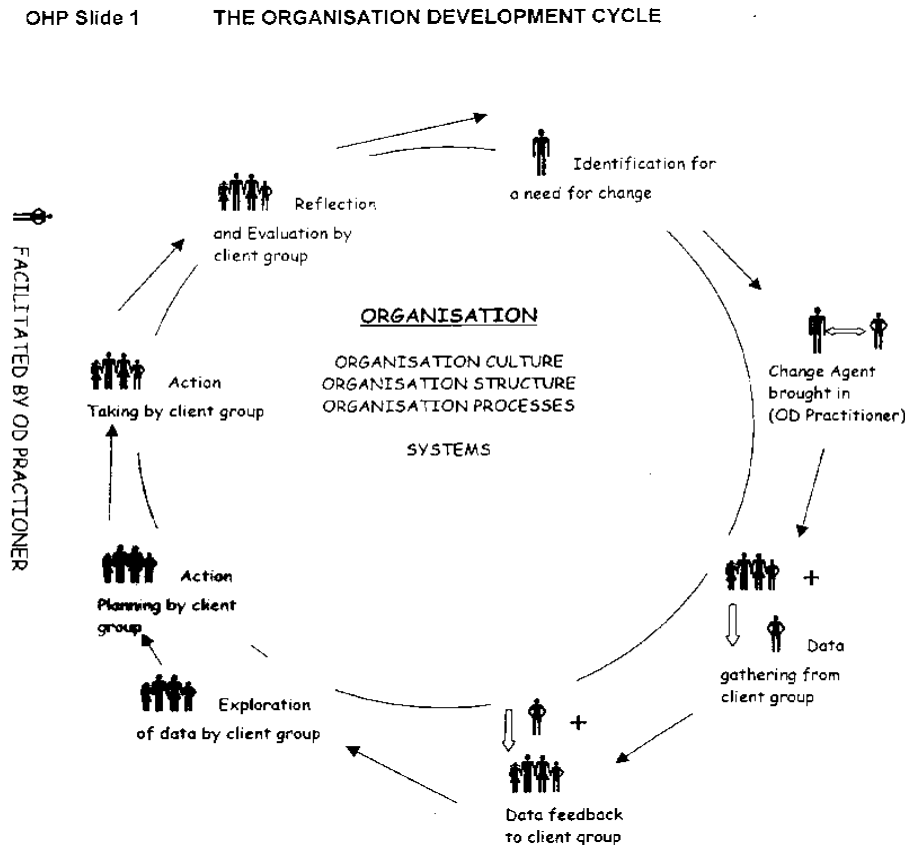


Figure 1: The OD cycle (Source unknown)

In the next section I am going to discuss leadership.

2.4.6 Leadership

Diefenbach (2007) points out that:

If change is a process of taking an organisation (or a nation) on a journey from its current state to a desired future state and dealing with all the problems that arise along the journey, then change is about leadership as well as management (p. 130).

By focusing on a small number of core aspects of leadership, and by developing a new mindset about the leader's responsibility to him- or herself, and to those with whom he or she works, each and every leader, whether the principal or chief executive officer of an organisation, can become more effective (Fullan, 2001, p. 2).

Heifetz (as cited in Fullan, 2001) accuses us of looking for the wrong kind of leadership when the going gets tough:

In a crisis... we call for someone with answers, decision, strength, and a map of the future; someone who knows where we ought to be going – in short, someone who can make hard problems simple...Instead of looking for saviours, we should be calling for leadership that will challenge us to face problems for which there are no simple, painless solutions – problems that require us to learn new ways (p. 3).

Heifetz (as cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 3) argues further that the image of leadership is “mobilising people to tackle tough problems”. Leadership is there to help people to confront problems that have never been addressed successfully.

According to Fullan (2001, p. 3), there are five components of leadership that reinforce positive change. The effectiveness of leaders will be increased if they work continuously on these five components.

Firstly, moral purpose

Moral purpose means, “acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers and society” (Fullan, 2001, p. 3).

To lead in a culture of change, the leader should act in such a way as to influence positively the people with whom that he/she is working. A clear direction should be created for positive result. Leaders are guided by a moral purpose, and moral purpose is accompanied by a sense of urgency. This urgency could possibly cause leaders to feel rushed, which is why it is necessary for the leader to be supported by his/her staff. Working as a team helps release some of that urgency (Fullan, 2001, p. 9).

Secondly, leaders should understand the change process.

The combination of commitment and moral purpose tends to allow leaders to be successful because of their understanding of why change is necessary. If leaders are up to date regarding the need for change, it will be easier to influence their followers. An informed leader will perform better and make a greater commitment (Fullan, 2001, p. 5).

Thirdly, the relationship improved because of the common fact of change initiative.

In any given organisation, if a relationship improves, performance output will automatically improve. Leaders should aim constantly at building a healthy relationship with their staff members. Interaction between the leaders and those they lead is very important in order to solve problems amicably (Fullan, 2001, p. 5).

Fourthly, knowledge creation and sharing are necessary in order to facilitate change in the organisation.

If people notice that they are appreciated, they are more willing to share their knowledge and they will become more committed towards their work, especially if they see the change as positive. To be able to use information as knowledge, a good relationship should be fostered (Fullan, 2001, p. 6).

According to Fullan (2001)

Energetic – enthusiastic – hopeful leaders ‘cause’ greater moral purpose in themselves, bury themselves in change, naturally build relationship and knowledge, and seek coherence to consolidate moral purpose (p. 7).

Lastly, coherence making

According to Fullan (2000, p. 6), “leadership is difficult in a culture of change because disequilibrium is common (and valuable, provided that patterns of coherence can be fostered)”.

Effective leaders encourage people to believe that the most difficult problems can be solved, as problems would always be taken as challenges that can be overcome. Leaders with a moral purpose provide guidance, direction and results, but they can also make mistakes. Effective leaders commit themselves to the organisation, especially if the group members inspire them. The interaction around moral purpose, the new knowledge, and the achievement of coherence, are necessary to ensure that problems are solved willingly. If leaders stick to the five components, their work will be more rewarding and benefits will be visible (Fullan, 2001, p. 8).

In the next section, I will discuss Lewin’s three-stage model of change

2. 5 Lewin’s three-stage model of change

Lewin (as cited in Walker, Achilles, Armenakis & Bernerth, 2007, p. 761) argues that a successful change must involve three distinct phases: unfreezing, moving, and freezing. Lewin (as cited in Elrod & Tippett, 2002, p. 274) points out that each of these three phases of change is subject to its own issues and problems

2.5.1 Unfreezing

According to Smith, I., (2005) Kurt Lewin, a pioneer in the analysis and understanding of organisational changes, describes the ‘unfreezing’ of an organisation as “a key phase in

organisational renewal and the first critical step towards achieving change”. To achieve this first step, he advocates bringing about a deliberate ‘emotional stir up’ in order to ‘break open the shell of complacency and self righteousness’ in organisations (p. 409). Klein (1996, p. 38); Meyer & Botha (2000, p. 91) emphasise that, during this stage, the organisational participants need preparation for the change. Kotter (as cited in Smith, I., 2005, p. 409) argues that the vital first step towards achieving successful organisational change is the creation of a sense of urgency and a need for change, because not enough people in the organisation perceive or accept the need for change.

Once there is enough dissatisfaction with the current situation, and real desire to make some changes, a group must identify precisely what needs to be changed (Van der Westhuizen 2002, p. 190).

2.5.2 Movement

According to Schein (as cited in Burnes, 2004, p. 313), “unfreezing is not an end in itself; it ... creates motivation to learn but does not necessarily control or predict the direction”. Meyer & Botha (2000, p. 92) are of the opinion that changes can be designed and implemented once people have been prepared for change through the process of unfreezing. Change involves movement to new patterns of behaviour from those that have existed in the past. This step shifts the behaviour of the organisation to a new level. For Cummings & Worley (2001, p. 23), it involves intervening in the system to develop new behaviours, values and attitudes, through the changes in the organisational structures and processes.

As soon as the forces of change have made enough impact to bring about the desired changes, the next step, refreezing, can commence.

2.5.3 Refreezing

It is at this step that the organisation stabilises at a new state of equilibrium. This means that new forces are in place to support the new behaviour (French & Bell, 1995, p. 81).

In the following section, I am going to discuss a selection of OD interventions.

2.6. OD interventions

For an organisation to improve its performance and effectiveness, organisation development intervention, which is a series of activities, actions, and events, helps the organisation in the change process (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 142).

French & Bell (as cited in Meyer & Botha, 2000) describe OD intervention as:

The range of planned activities clients and consultants participate in during the course of an OD programme. These activities are designed to improve the organisation's functioning through enabling organisation members to manage their team and organisation cultures better (p. 114).

Schmuck & Runkel (1995, p. 28) identify four common designs for OD in education, and each one demands for different interventions from the OD practitioner.

2.6.1 Training

According to Schmuck & Runkel (1994, p. 28) the OD practitioner establishes the learning outcomes for a fixed period of time, and organises and directs the activities. Skills, exercises and procedures are regarded as the building blocks of organisational training. It means the facilitator should be knowledgeable about the change topic, and such matters as adult learning theory, when he/she is involved with training. For example, a particular skill may be one of communication, such as paraphrasing the words of the sender. Restate the sender's feelings or ideas in your own words, rather than repeating their words. Your words should be saying, "This is what I understand your feelings to be; am I correct?"

2.6.2 Survey-data-feedback (SDF)

According to (Schmuck & Runkel, 1993, p. 29; Rosenbach, Gregory & Taylor, 2001, p. 317), SDF is the collection of information through questionnaires, interviews and observations, which is then reported back to the work group as a basis for diagnosis, problem solving and planning.

In Schmuck & Runkel's opinion (1993, p. 29), the success of SDF depends on three aspects:

- The OD practitioner must collect data and put the data into a feedback form that will be understandable and energise the participants.
- The practitioner must attempt to show significance in mundane data to capture participants' interest.
- The practitioner must find ways of incorporating data feedback into the natural ebb and flow of larger OD designs.

2.6.3 Constructive confrontation

This is the least-used OD design. It is appropriate when there are obvious disagreements between groups in a larger target system, and when these disagreements become disruptive (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 76). Some of the research indicated that constructive confrontation is most effective when it is carried out by a team composed of both inside and outside facilitators (Schmuck & Runkel, 1998, p. 76).

Schmuck & Runkel (1994, p. 29) argue that constructive confrontation clarifies the social relationships between two or more work groups. Inter-group images are used for problem solving or negotiation (Schmuck, 1995, p. 204; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 354). It can be the introductory activity in a sequence of training events. The OD facilitator should clarify both the nature of the relationship between the two groups, and the tribulations that are contributing to their conflict (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 354). Schmuck & Runkel (1994) point out further that the strategy sharpens and clarifies problems that are causing conflicts between groups (p. 29).

Schmuck & Runkel (1994) see the role of the facilitator in two ways: firstly, to bring the conflicting groups together to help them to communicate the perceptions that each has of the other and, secondly, to help organise 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 (pp.29-30).

2.6.4 Process observation and feedback

For Schmuck & Runkel (1994, p. 30), the purpose of this design is to help group members to become aware of how they are working together. Schmuck & Runkel propose that the facilitator do the following: sit with the participants to observe a working session; observe the group processes, and offer occasional comments to turn the participants' attention to their way of working and its effects on getting the job done. The goal of this intervention is to involve participants in talking about their working relationships, and making group agreements to alter their ways of working together in the future (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 30).

In conclusion, Schmuck (1995) explains the four designs as follows:

In a training macrodesign, participants begin to identify real problems through skill practice and learning games. In contrast, problems are identified within a data feedback design by the OD consultant imposing considerable structure on the data he or she has collected. Confrontation macrodesigns call for problems being identified as a consequence of cross-role and cross-group exchanges; whereas in process observation and feedback, the OD consultant tries to help group members see their problems during the time they are working together on real tasks (p. 204).

Another intervention which is gaining in popularity amongst OD specialists is that of the 'future search' conferences.

2.6.5 Future Search (FS)

This idea was developed by Emery & Trist (Weisbord, 1996, p. 282). The basic principle of future search is to get an organisation to distinguish changes that have occurred by investigating their past and present situations, as well as examining hopes for the future.

According to Baliga (2008):

Weisbord has improved upon Trist's & Emery's theories to propagate his Future Search techniques to involve everyone in decision making, focus on the future, explore the entire problem statement, and take charge of self-managing with minimal intervention from supervisors (p. 3).

For Weisbord (1987, p. 285), search conferences are exciting, connected, create new insights, and build a sense of common morale and purpose. They are attractive to organisations faced with change. Conferences are used to set the stage for work design, and serve as a turning point for people who are unsure what to do. Weisbord (1997, p. 286) states that a 48-hour investment in a search conference reduces misunderstandings and raises the level of commitment. It provides a forum and norms that respect individual differences. It brings people together in their goals and attitudes. Further, it creates hope and optimism (Weisbord, 1997, p. 286).

Weisbord (1987, pp. 290-291) refers to Lippitt, who has a simple exercise whereby people have to generate a list of 'prouds' and 'sorries', about the things which are going on right now within their organisation; that they feel good and bad about. The outcome of the exercise leads to a shared appreciation of present strengths, needs and hopes. It results further in a mutual owning up to mistakes and shortcomings, and builds commitment to do something about such mistakes.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature review addresses the different types of change – planned change strategies in particular. The literature also discusses OD as a strategy of planned change, the theories and concepts which are employed in OD, and the OD interventions that help to address organisational issues. I conclude with a review of literature on leadership and change.

In the next chapter I discuss my research design.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the literature review that supports the importance of my research. In this chapter, I explain the methodology followed in conducting this study. The methodology was chosen to support the goal of my research, which is:

To investigate the experiences and perceptions of the participants of an OD intervention in a Senior Secondary School in the Omaruru Circuit in the Erongo region of Namibia.

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

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

I capture a closer look at the research paradigms in which my work is located, namely, the interpretive and critical paradigms. This leads to the description of my method, which is a case study of an Organisation Development (OD) intervention. I go on to describe the data-gathering tools, which consisted of semi-structured interviews (individual and focus-group) and observation. I then discuss data analysis and the quality of my research. Finally, I discuss ethical issues, and give a brief account of the limitations of my research. All names that will be used in my research are pseudonyms

3.2 Research paradigm

When you are planning to conduct research, you have to select the paradigm in which you will locate your study; this is a particular way to think about reality and knowledge.

Paradigm is a Greek word that refers to the way in which we understand and interpret the world (Covey, 1989, p. 11). According to Guba (1990), a paradigm is “a basic set of beliefs that guides action” and, later, as “a guide to disciplined inquiry” (pp. 17-18).

This is in line with Bassey (1995), who defines a research paradigm as:

A network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the functions of researchers, which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions (p. 12).

Janse van Rensburg (2001) suggests that a researcher should have a clear understanding of philosophical frameworks that guide research activities, including the underlying assumptions of these frameworks (p. 11). This is imperative because, depending on the researchers' question and goals, data is collected and analysed according to a specific paradigm which will serve as a direction guide for the researcher through the research process.

Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006) distinguished between three paradigms, namely positivist, interpretive and critical paradigm (p. 6). I found myself drawn to the interpretive and critical paradigms that underpin my studies. According to Connole (1998), in the interpretive paradigm, the task of a researcher becomes that of understanding what is going on (p. 14), and Smith, C., (2005) says if you are interested in helping people to become aware of their organisation's dysfunctionalities with the view to change them, you will use the critical paradigm (p. 3). My study is, therefore, located in the interpretive and critical paradigms because I am interested in the participants' experiences and perceptions of a change process.

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

Interpretivists base their view on the Hegelian perspective that “humans can only understand the world as it appears to them – not as it really is” (Janse van Rensburg, 2001, p. 16). The interpretive paradigm is, therefore, concerned with the subjective world of human experience,

and is characterised by a concern for the individual (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p. 16). According to Merriam & *et al* (2002), this paradigm allows for the construction of multiple meanings of reality that are in a state of flux and can change over time (p. 3). Cultural and historical contexts are included in this process of understanding.

According to interpretive theorists (Janse van Rensburg, 2001, p. 12; Fien & Hillcoat as cited in MacFarlane 2000, n.p.), research knowledge is developed in the minds of the people who are active in the research process. This is achieved when the researcher becomes part of the people in the research situation in order to listen to them and to share in their experiences and perceptions. Nevertheless, researchers should attempt to understand the “complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1999, p. 221).

Although this study is concerned with change, my interest was to understand how participants experienced and perceived the process and outcome of an OD intervention in a school.

3.2.2 Critical paradigm

According to Smith, C., (2005, p. 2), the ontology in the critical paradigm assumes that “people are subjected to real injustices, dysfunctionalities that can be transformed because they are human creations”. Epistemologically, Winegardner (2001, p. 13) and Burrell & Morgan, as cited in MacFarlane, (2000, n.p.) state that, in a critical approach to research, the researcher cannot simply report the status quo, but must look towards provoking and facilitating change and improvement. According to Smith, C., (2005), “research is ideologically motivated, dialogic (raising awareness of injustice, dysfunctionality), value laden” (p.2).

My research falls within the critical paradigm, because it is concerned with raising awareness of the need for change, and with facilitating change towards a more desirable state, as determined by the participants, in a school. According to Janse van Rensburg (2001, p. 24) and Cohen *et al.* (2001, p. 28) the critical paradigm embraces research that helps to bring transformation toward democracy in individuals and groups through the research process. The critical paradigm “seeks

to emancipate the disempowered, to redress inequality, and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society” (Cohen *et al.*, 2001, p. 28).

Participants are empowered to make changes to their situation. Critical research is intended to improve participants’ situations, rather than for them to accept and cope with their present situation (Hosch, 2002, p. 1). Critical theory is a ‘vehicle’ for change through discussion, understanding, interpretation and reasoning. It is, therefore, an appropriate approach to organisational change. As my research is concerned with raising awareness of the dysfunctionalities of an organisation, and bringing about desired change, it is a pertinent approach to my study.

3.3 Method

The method I use is a case study of an action research or OD process.

3.3.1 Case Study

According to Yin (2003), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 13). Bassey (in Coleman & Briggs, 2002) gives a thorough definition of the case study method. In his view, an educational case study is an empirical enquiry which includes the following:

- It is conducted within a localised boundary of space and time
- It looks into interesting aspects of an educational activity, or programme
- It is done in order to inform the judgment and decisions of practitioners or policy-makers
- Sufficient data must be collected for the researcher to be able to explore and interpret the data, present a worthwhile argument that is trustworthy and enables other researches to add to or challenge it.

(p. 109)

According to Stake (1995), “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” (p. 243). Case studies strive to portray “what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and thick description of participants lived experiences of, thoughts about, and feelings for, a situation” (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 182). Hence, it is essential that events and situations be allowed to speak for themselves, rather than be largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 182). For Merriam (as cited in Winegardner, 2001), a case study is particularistic, meaning that it focuses on a particular situation and evaluates programmes and interventions (p. 14).

The usefulness of a single case study is supported by Gluckman (as cited in Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2002), who asserts that it is a reliable and respectable procedure of social analysis (p. 165). Gluckman says further that one good case can illuminate the working of a social system in a way that a series of morphological statements cannot.



Figure 2: Evergreen Senior Secondary School

My research was conducted in one school, namely Evergreen (pseudonym) Senior Secondary School. It opened its doors for the first time in 1987. The total enrolment of learners is 555 and there are 20 teachers. The academic performance of the school is below average. The results for grade 10 and 12 were always below 50%. The working relationship between management and staff members is not healthy at all. 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 outcome of the intervention.

The data-gathering approaches involved in a case study can be wide and diverse. Any number of data-gathering methods – for example, interviews, observation, and document analysis, can be involved (O'Leary, 2004, p. 15). I discuss mine in section 3.4.

3.3.2 Action research

Action research is a powerful tool for change at the local level (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 226). It is a data-based, problem-oriented process that diagnoses the need for change, introduces the change, and then evaluates and stabilises the desired change (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 93). Action research is a highly participative process, involving the role-players throughout its various stages. According to Botha & Meyer (2000), this participation is a fundamental philosophy of action research. It increases commitment to the change process, and provides valuable information for conducting an organisational diagnosis and evaluation (p. 94). Zuber-Skerritt (as cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000) asserts that action research facilitates practitioners' understanding of their practice, and helps them to improve the quality of life in their social context (p. 226).

According to (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 227), action research can be used in almost any setting where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures, cries out for solutions. O'Hanlon (1996) sees action research as a necessary development to assist teachers and schools in coping with dynamic developments, divergent demands and complex practical situations (p. 61).

Most OD activities rely on action research as the primary method for planned change (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 93). French & Bell (1995) state that, "a sound organisation development programme rests on an action research model" (p. 151). According to Whyte (1995), OD involves members of the organisation participating actively in all phases of the process from the initial design of the project, through data gathering and analysis, to final conclusions and actions (pp. 289-290). I adopted this participatory approach, in which all staff members of Evergreen Senior Secondary School too part in the process.

3.3.3 The OD Cycle

Nel (in Meyer & Botha, 2000) describes seven phases in the OD consulting process (pp. 95-98). I conducted my research within their seven-phase plan, and this is how the intervention proceeded at Evergreen Senior Secondary School.

Phase 1: Problem recognition

This phase involves the recognition by organisation members of a problem that exists in their organisation, and which requires change. The organisation gatekeeper, such as the principal in a school, or organisation members, will normally initiate contact with an OD facilitator. However, because I wanted to conduct an OD intervention in a school for my thesis, I initiated the contact. I contacted the Regional Director for Education, who is the highest management member in the region, and the principal of the school, to seek their approval to conduct my research. After having acquired this, I met with the entire staff, a total of 20 teachers. I invited them to work closely with me on a steering committee, so that they could develop the skills to conduct their own future OD processes. According to Schmuck & Runkel (1994, p. 68), “the most effective organisational diagnoses are carried out collaboratively by the facilitators and an OD planning committee in the educational system”. Four staff members volunteered to work with me, namely Ms Muduva, a Head of department, Mr Ndindwa and Ms Rachie, both teachers, and Mr Ezzy (pseudonyms).

Phase 2: Entry

I conducted an OD introductory workshop to give participants, through practical exercises, a clear understanding of what OD is, how it works, and what potential benefits it can offer the school. The purpose of the workshop was to raise the readiness level of the participants to participate in the intervention.

The Steering Committee was very involved with the workshop; certain tasks were assigned to them – for example, the icebreaker, compilation of the ground rules, recording of proceedings, and the evaluation of the workshop. Of the 20 staff members, 19 were present at the OD introductory workshop. Pleasingly, all participants decided to continue with the OD intervention.

After the school had given the go-ahead for the intervention, we discussed and recorded our mutual expectations and commitment in a memorandum of agreement that was signed by the participants and myself (Appendix E). The agreement raised issues like confidentiality and anonymity, an assurance that information given would not be used to disadvantage anybody in any particular way, and that active participation and commitment would be on a voluntarily basis, and, most importantly, the issue to be diagnosed and how it would be dealt with.

Phase 3: Diagnosis

This is the most important phase of the consulting strategy as the success of an OD process depends largely on thorough research and problem analysis. The readiness for change as well as the underlying culture and attitudes of the participants can be assessed here.



Figure 3: Staff members busy with diagnosis

In order for me to collect data, I borrowed from the Future Search (FS) method (Weisbord, 1996, p. 282) for identifying the ‘prouds’ and ‘sorries’ of the school. The participants were divided into groups, and they had the opportunity to identify the strong as well as the weak points of the school. It was a lively discussion, and there you could assess that staff members realised their weaknesses only at that moment.

Phase 4: Feedback

The goal of this stage is to ensure that the participants receive and accept the diagnostic information as a valid and accurate picture of the current state and desire, and ideas for change.

Phase 5: Action Planning

Once problems were identified, prioritised, and consensus reached on the need to resolve them, the participants and I decided on specific strategies of change: a macrodesign (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 51). The first priority was to conduct a workshop on communication. Amongst other priorities, participants also enquired about the possibility of a problem-solving workshop to be conducted, but due to time limitations, this workshop and the remainder of the intervention are not included in my research. The participants compiled an action plan that we could work on.



Figure 4: Action planning

Phase 6: Intervention Implementation

This phase involved undertaking the changes decided upon during action planning. It is at this point that change is intended to occur in the organisation.

Phase 7: Evaluation

This final phase in the OD process is an evaluation of the impact of the changes. The goal is to assess the extent to which problems identified in the initial diagnosis had been solved or improved upon. This can result in another cycle of diagnosis, change and evaluation. OD is an

ongoing cyclical process of identifying problems→implementing → evaluating the change, and then going back to the first stage again (Cardno, 2006, p. 457).

In the case of Evergreen Senior Secondary School, although there was an improvement with regard to communication, there was still underlying problems that required further investigation.

3.4 Data gathering

In order to address my research goals, data was collected after the introductory workshop, survey data feedback, the communication workshop, and at the end of the intervention.

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are seen as the most important source of case study information (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 116; Yin, 2003, p. 89). I have used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Appendix G). This allows for a more flexible style “adapted to the personality and circumstances of the person being interviewed” (Johnson, 1994, p. 45). According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006) semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions give an opportunity for the researcher to ask probing questions on issues that emerged from the participants’ responses. As Merriam stated (2001), “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, one head of department, and two teachers. I selected the principal, because of his key position as the “gatekeeper” (Weisbord, 1987, p. 89). The head of department and the two teachers were selected on the basis of their active participation and openness during the whole process.

All interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the interviewees. The use of tape-recorder permits the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee, and it also increases the accuracy of data collection (Patton, 1990, p. 348). I wanted to know how they had experienced

the OD process, the readiness level of participants, their perceptions of OD, their expectations, and their view on the potential for OD to assist with the development of the school.

3.4.2 Focus groups

According to (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 288; Patton, 1990, p.335), in a focus-group interview the participants are a homogeneous group of people who reflect on the questions asked by the interviewer. Participants have the opportunity to hear the response of others, and to comment on those responses. The group does not need to reach consensus or disagree. The purpose is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the view of others.

I conducted two focus-group interviews; the groups were divided equally, with six members, different teachers and one head of department. One of the groups consisted mainly of the steering group members. Unfortunately, only four (4) participants of the one group and three (3) of the other group turned up for the interview. (Morgan, as cited in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 288) suggested the need to over-recruit by as much as 20%, to allow for people who do not ‘turn up’ on the day. In my case, I did this, and was able to compensate for those who did not arrive.

3.4.3 Observation

Observations will complement the interviews. Observational data gives the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data through ‘live’ situations (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 305). Patton (as cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 305) suggested that observational data should enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described. Patton stated further that the researcher is given the opportunity to look at what is taking place on the spot, rather than at second hand. I conducted several observations during the workshops, and other activities such as steering committee meetings. I went to the school uninvited during breaks to do informal observations. I observed participants as they interacted with each other, levels of participation, the atmosphere, body language, the relationships created, and the level of communication. I took notes to record my observations.

3.5 Data analysis

According to Stake (1995, p. 71), data analysis is a process of unlocking information hidden in the data that the researcher transforms into meaningful and useful information.

I used interpretational analysis, which is “a process of close examination of case study data in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns” that addresses my research goal (Gall as cited in Winegardner, 2001, p. 5). I have analysed the data from my interviews and observation notes to find the themes and patterns. I read and reread my data before deciding on themes.

Thereafter, I extracted quotes which fit with my themes. The quotes of the participants were pasted on the flipchart according to the different themes. Thereafter, I read my literature which fits with the themes and the quotes of the participants. I also pasted the extracts from the literature and pasted it on the flipchart where it fits with the different themes. The coding system revealed eight themes. These were readiness for change, attitude, unfreezing, teamwork, leadership, experience of the OD approach, perceptions of participants of the OD intervention and the implementation process.

3.6 Validity

To enhance validity and reliability in the qualitative paradigm, it is imperative to triangulate your data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 275; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 408). With regard to my case, I used multiple methods, namely observation and interviews. I also made use of member checking by giving back the transcripts to participants for verification before I analysed the data (Winegardner, 2001, p. 6).

3.7 Ethical issues

The research was conducted in a school that I know very well. Before I started with my research, I requested permission from the Regional Director of Education and the principal to do my research in this school (see appendices A and B). After being given the green light, I explained to the participants the issues regarding confidentiality, and that they should feel free to withdraw

from the research at any time. I also explained to them that the data that would be collected was only for the purpose of my research, and would not be used for any other reason. Basse (1995) emphasised “respect for persons; respect for truth; and respect for democratic values” (p. 15). I used pseudonyms when referring to the school (Evergreen Senior Secondary School), or to the interviewees (i.e. T8, T9, T10, and T11).

3.8 Limitations

My research was limited by one main factor, namely time. The research had to be completed over a period of seven months, which is very restrictive with regard to an OD intervention. My time, as well as that of the participants, was very much restricted because of their own tight schedules with their main duties – mainly being those of an inspector and teachers.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter, I describe the research paradigms which underpinned my research. This led to the description of my case study method and the OD cycle. I then discuss data gathering and analysis and the validity and ethics of my studies. Limitations that restricted my research concluded the chapter. In the next chapter, I present and discuss my data in a narrative form in addressing my research goal.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.

John F Kennedy

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I outlined the methodology used in conducting my research. In this chapter, I present a narrative account of my interaction with the school, using the model of an OD intervention. This chapter is divided in two parts:

Part 1: A narrative account of what happened (the OD process), that addresses my first and third research goals.

Part 2: In this part I discuss the data and give meaning to it. This addresses my second research goal, themes that emerged out the participants' experience, and perceptions of the OD process.

The data which is obtained from my interviews, focus group interview, and observation notes are presented here. I interviewed the principal (T8), one head of department (T10) and two teachers (Tjii and Ojac). For the focus-group interview, I had two focus groups, consisting of four (Cameraman –HOD – Rachie, Ndindwa and Kau) and three (Papii, Meisie and Ndu-yandjondjo) members respectively. The name of the school and the respondents' names used in this research are all pseudonyms. I present the data mainly in the respondents' direct words (verbatim).

PART ONE

4.2 OD PHASES

4.2.1 Phase 1: Problem recognition

This phase involves the recognition of a need in the organisation which requires change. The contact is normally done either by the initiation of the key person, the principal, or by members of an organisation. Due to the nature of the circumstances – I wanted to conduct my masters’ OD research in a school of my choice – I initiated the contact.

4.2.2 Phase 2: Entry and contracting

4.2.2.1 Initial contact

I contacted the Regional Director of Education, who is the highest management member in the region, and the principal of the school, to seek approval for my intervention and to undertake my research. I followed it up with a written request to carry out my research at the school, whereupon permission was granted to do so (see appendices A - D).

4.2.2.2 Meeting with staff members (10 April 2008)

I went on to have a meeting with the entire staff, a total of 20 teachers, because I felt that, if I were to request co-operation from all staff members, and they were all to agree, this would probably encourage them to give their full commitment. Schmuck & Runkel (1994, p. 31) state that it is important that the OD practitioner should communicate where possible with the entire work group and not allow that they should believe that they are less powerful than others in authority. At this meeting, I requested the permission of the staff members to carry out my research at the school. If I received approval, I intended to repeat the OD introductory workshop which I presented to the same staff members in fulfilment of my MED course work. The repetition was necessary due to the fact that I had not conducted the OD introductory workshop with the intention of doing my research at that particular school.

I feared that teachers would take a negative stand towards the request, but I was very surprised with their positive attitude towards me, even going so far as to encourage me to proceed with my

studies and not to be discouraged. All of them agreed to my request, and wanted me to present the workshop immediately, because they were busy with examinations. With regret, I informed them that this was not possible as I did not have all my information with me. Before they decided on a date, one teacher said, “You are the inspector, why can’t you close the school one day earlier and then we can have our workshop?” That was a very difficult request. I explained to them that I did not have the authority to close schools earlier – only the Permanent Secretary of Education had the authority to do so. My concern was that if I were to give that permission, they could exploit the situation in the future. The staff members deliberated, and then decided that I could come back the following week, before the school closed, and after all learners had finished with their examinations.

It was evident that the atmosphere at the school was very relaxed; people laughed with each other, and made jokes. I asked them what had happened at the school, because at the previous workshop I had noticed that staff members were displeased, and angry at one another. They agreed that the workshop that had been held previously had been an eye opener. They had realised that they had to change if they wanted to make a success of their school. They agreed unanimously that we should have the workshop on 16 April 2008 at 15:00.

At the same meeting, I made use of the opportunity to invite participants to work closely with me on the steering committee so that they could develop the skills to conduct their own future OD processes. Four staff members volunteered to work with me, namely Ms Muduva, a head of department, Mr Ndindwa, a teacher, Ms Rachie, a teacher, and Mr Ezzy (pseudonyms). I express my gratitude to all staff members. One staff member stood up and said, “Madam, I am so glad that you have selected our school, because I am seeing the positive changes after the first workshop which was conducted with us. If we can proceed, I am sure that we will change for the betterment of the school, and that the change will help us to improve on our results. Therefore, you have the blessing of all of us to proceed with the OD workshop”. All participants started to applaud me. That was an indication that I was really welcome at the school. I started to feel at ease, and I assured them that I would be part and parcel with the change process of the school.

4.2.2.3 OD introductory workshop (16 April 2008)

The day before the workshop, I had a meeting with the steering group committee, to prepare jointly for the workshop. Different duties were allocated to the members; for example, the preparation of the venue, making of cards to divide participants into groups, handling of the icebreaker, record keeper, handling of the workshop rules, and the questionnaires. My observation was that the members were very eager to be associated with the process (Observation notes, 10 April 2008). One member said that I should take a photo of them and include it in my thesis, and also asked that I should acknowledge them.

I provided every staff member with the programme of the workshop. Of the 20 staff members, 19 were present for the introductory workshop; the remaining staff member was busy marking her examination scripts. One of the participants (T8 – a pseudonym) opened the gathering with a prayer. In his prayer, he asked the Lord that the workshop be conducted in good spirit, and wished me the best with my studies. The principal of the school gave me a warm welcome, and expressed his appreciation that I had selected their school, because the previous OD workshop had already borne fruit. Then the principal officially handed over to me.

I made use of the opportunity to thank each staff member for their time, because they had decided to assist me, despite it being examination time. I introduced my steering group to the staff members officially, and the staff members had the opportunity to introduce themselves. I could sense that I was very welcome. They made remarks like, “Madam, we would love to see you obtain your degree; this will be an encouragement to all of us. May the Lord bless you!”

I handed out the attendance list. One of the steering committee members handled the ground rules with the participants. Thereafter, the objectives of the workshop were communicated fully to the participants.

The five-puzzle square was carried out with the staff members as an icebreaker. This exercise (adapted from Bavelas, 1950, as cited in Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 171) demonstrates co-operation in a group task characterised by non-verbal communication. It is administered to

participants in groups of five. Observers are instructed to look for ways in which participants communicate non-verbally, and for ways in which co-operation is helped or hindered. Before we gave the opportunity to the participants to share their feeling regarding the five-square puzzle, the steering group members made the following observations:

- T10 clearly did not know where to start with the puzzle.
- T1 raised his hand for assistance. Nobody assisted him. He looked demoralised.
- T2 looked very uncertain.
- One group was just laughing because T9 took all the blocks and didn't want to share with others.
- At another group, T8 dominated his group.
- The gatekeeper started to join in on the laughter.
- At least two groups attempted to finish the game. (Observation notes, 10 April 2008).

The participants began to give their opinions about the exercise. They felt that it had been an eye-opener so far as communication was concerned, because this is the most important aspect in any organisation. They made remarks to the effect that it had been very difficult to communicate with each other because no verbal communication had been permitted. They felt that people in organisations relied heavily on each other, and it was frustrating if someone did not share information with others. If no information moves upwards or downwards or horizontally, there is a communication breakdown. Without communication, our schools will go nowhere, because communication is the backbone of success; teamwork and sharing of ideas is essential. Those who didn't finish on time, and who were observed by others, felt very discouraged and intimidated. Other people were impatient because nobody could assist them. One staff member made a remark that was how their learners felt; they should try, therefore, to practise patience with slow teachers and learners. All the participants enjoyed it very much, and all of them wanted a copy of the game.

I handed out notes to the participants on OD – what it is, its features, its benefits, and how it worked. I explained in detail what OD entailed. I showed the picture (below) to the participants, asking them what they observed in it.

What is Organization Development (OD)



They came up with answers as follows:

- A very clean building with different colours.
- The picture was taken during morning hours.
- I only see a building and nothing else.

I asked a follow up question: Do you think that this is an organisation, or not?

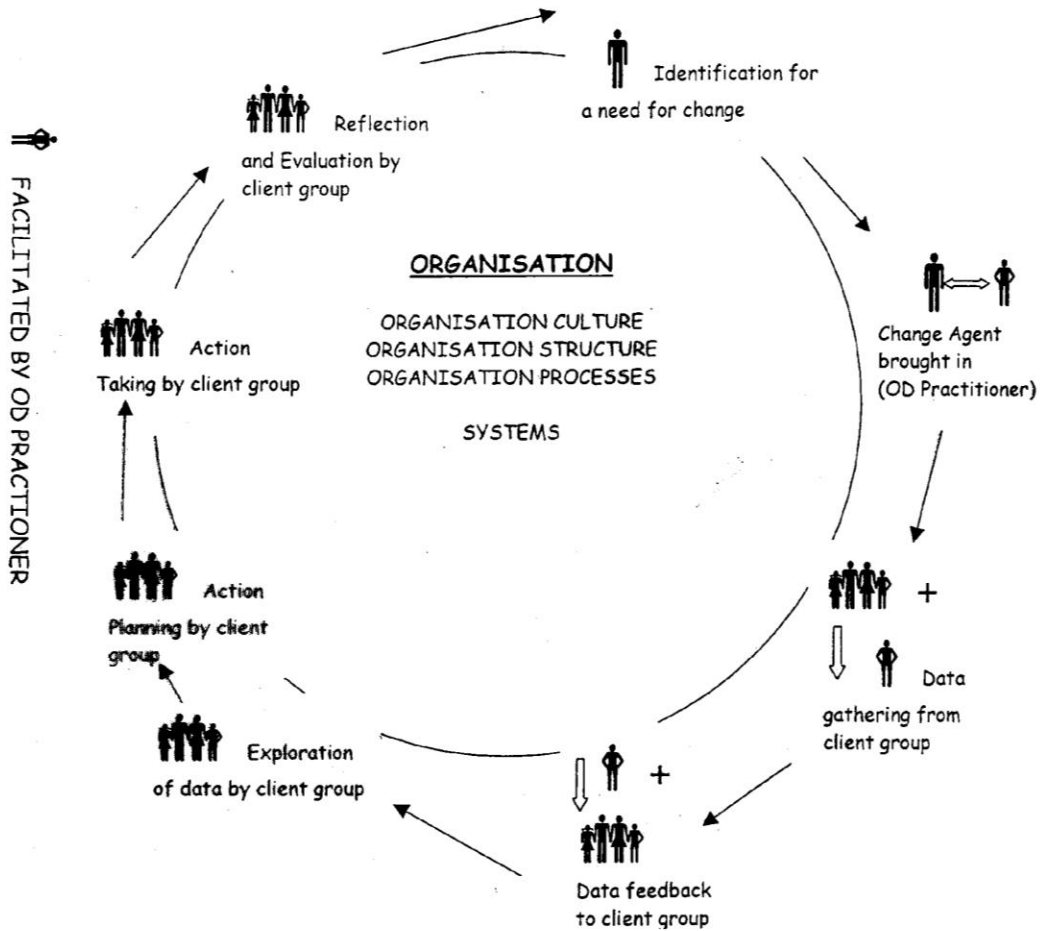
They came up with answers such as:

- No, there is no person around the building to make part of an organisation.
- A building is part of an organisational structure.

I continued with another question: “What do you think organisation development means?”

I received responses along the lines that plans had to be developed and implemented, but one important aspect was that such plans needed to be monitored and sustained.

I used the organisation development cycle reproduced below to explain to the participants the process of OD, and pictures were used to demonstrate OD. Participants took part very enthusiastically.



The picture of a little drop was used to stimulate participants, so that they kept in mind that a positive attitude could make a big difference in the change process of any organisation (See appendix G).

The picture of Noah’s Ark was presented to the participants in order to encourage them never to lose hope while change was taking place (See appendix H).

After the workshop, participants started to share their feelings, comparing the two OD introductory workshops which had been presented to them, and the impact that the workshops

had on them. The first workshop had served in fulfilment of my MED course work, and the second one was for research purposes. The following observations were made:

- They felt more relaxed in the second workshop than in the first one, because at that time they had had negative feelings towards each other.
- The atmosphere had been very tense the first time, in comparison to this occasion, as now they felt more relaxed and could talk freely to each other.
- At the first workshop they had attacked each other.
- In the second workshop, however, they had a chance to carry out a more personalised investigation, and things had developed more positively.
- It was observed that there had been a positive change of attitude towards one another.
- One staff member said the biggest difference between the two workshops had been that, with the first one, “We focused on ourselves and on our personalities; we never had an opportunity to reflect on ourselves and our behaviour towards one another. We never felt sympathy for someone else. We have seen that most of the staff members associated themselves with a lion during the icebreaker. After the first introductory workshop, we worked very hard on our personalities and attitudes. This is what brought so many changes at the school. We started to enjoy each other, listened to one another and communicated more freely. With today’s workshop, you could feel the relaxed atmosphere. There were no attacks on a person, because the focus was more on learning. More ‘prouds’ were identified than happened at the previous one” (Observation notes, 10 April 2008).
- Some participants described the OD introductory workshop as the “best workshop” that they had ever attended. This was because all staff members took part with lively enthusiasm.

After the workshop, the participants completed the evaluation form, and made the following remarks in response to the question as whether they would like to continue with the OD intervention:

- “Yes, we could only benefit from it. It opens doors of communication. People spoke openly and encouraged communication.”

- “Yes, because it gives us a clear picture of the problems at our school, and what can be changed.”
- “Yes, because if a school participates in OD, most of their obstacles will vanish.”
- “Yes, it serves as an eye-opener for the organisation, and it might assist the school to be well organised”.

4.2.2.4 Contracting

Once the school had given the go-ahead for the intervention, we discussed and recorded our mutual expectations and commitment in a memorandum of agreement that was signed by 19 participants and me (See appendix E).

4.2.3 Phase 3: Data collection and diagnosis

According to Huse (as cited in Rosenbach, Gregory & Taylor, 2001, p. 317; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 26), the purpose of the survey data feedback is to gather and analyse data from a work group by using questionnaires, interviews or observation, and feeding the data back for their use in diagnosis, action planning and problem solving. Weisbord (1987, pp. 290-291) refers to Lippitt, who has a simple exercise whereby people have to generate a list of ‘prouds’ and ‘sorries’ – the things which are going on at the time within their organisation, about which they feel good and bad. The outcome of the exercise leads to a shared appreciation of present strengths, needs and hopes. It results further in a mutual owning up to mistakes and shortcomings, and builds commitment to do something to rectify these mistakes.

At the next day meeting data was gathered from participants following the procedures used in the future search conference, whereby participants were divided in groups to identify the “prouds” and “sorries” of their school. The groups compared each other’s comments and played with the differences and similarities. One staff member pasted the “sorries” and “prouds” on the notice board. The staff members really enjoyed talking about the good and bad things of the school. The table 1 below represents the “prouds” and “sorries”.

'PROUDS'	'SORRIES'
Staffroom with an inviting atmosphere	Poor academic performance of school
Functional library	Many teenage pregnancies
Well-equipped computer lab	Grade 10 repeaters not serious about their
Approved school budget	school work
Improved 2007 grade 10 results	Absenteeism of teachers and learners
A successful training course with the	Negative attitude of teachers towards grade
Learner Representative Council	10 repeaters
Time management changed drastically	Lack of proper planning
Well-qualified teachers	Lack of feedback
Improvement in disciplinary procedures	Lack of training facilities
Children excelling in sport and culture	Lack of parental involvement
	Disobeying of work-related orders
	Lack of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation
	Lack of communication and problem-
	solving skills

Table 1: 'Prouds' and 'Sorries' of Evergreen Senior Secondary School

According to Meyer & Botha (2000, p. 96), the purpose of feedback phase is twofold: firstly, it is to make sure that participants receive and accept the research information as a valid and true picture of the current state and its problems, and, secondly, it is to use the feedback to create interest among the employees towards undertaking the changes designed to solve the problems identified. The posters with the 'prouds' and 'sorries' were pasted against the wall. The participants discussed the 'prouds' and 'sorries', coding them and dividing them into five categories, and prioritising them in the following order of importance:

- Lack of communication and problem-solving skills

- Lack of proper planning
- Discipline (both teachers and learners)
- Lack of parental involvement
- Lack of resources

All staff members felt that all these problems were created because of a lack of proper communication among staff members. One of the teachers commented as follows: “We have to be honest with ourselves – communication is our biggest weakness. We have to work on this shortcoming” (Observation notes, 2 June 2008). The principal said, “It’s true we have to take hands and solve our communication problem first. I would suggest that we have a workshop on how to improve communication” (Observation notes, 2, June 2008).

During the evaluation conducted after the workshop, staff members revealed that they felt relief after they were able to write down that really disturb them. Another participant said that they did not feel threatened about opening up, because OD gave them the feeling of openness.

The participants decided that I should present a workshop on communication, because communication was the backbone for any organisation. As DiFonzo & Bordia; Lewis & Seibold; Schweiger & Denisi (as cited in Elving, 2005, p. 129) all concur, communication is a vital element to effective implementation of organisational change. The staff members decided to have the workshop on 30 June 2008 at 15:00.

4.2.4 Phase 4: Communication Workshop

The aim of the communication workshop was to give training on communication and to solve a problem which had been identified. I went to the school at 14:30 to deliver my presentation. I waited until 15:30, and only eight of the teachers of the 20 staff members arrived. The gatekeeper informed me that he would be late. The staff members suggested that we postpone the workshop until the next day, because some teachers had other commitments. I was very disappointed.

The next day, 16 of the 20 participants turned up for the workshop, and a detailed programme was given to them. I started with an icebreaker, whereby a statement was whispered in the ear of the first participant; for example: “OD is a change process; are all of you ready to change?” At the end of the transmission process through the various participants, the wrong message emerged. The moral of the game was that we had to listen carefully to make sure that the transmission of a message was clear, and perceived correctly. This exercise helped the participants to realise that communication was only effective if the receiver understood the exact information the sender intended to transmit.



Figure 5: Staff members attended the communication workshop

The objectives of the workshop were explained fully to the participants.

I handed out notes to the participants on what communication was; the communication process, types of communication, non-verbal behaviours of communication, barriers to effective communication, active listening, feedback, communication skills for managers, and how to improve one’s communication skills.

These aspects were explained through different type of activities or exercises. For example, for the purpose of paraphrasing, staff members clustered in groups of six. A question was posed; for example: “What is the most important problem facing your school?” One staff member would answer briefly, and another staff member in the circle would paraphrase the answer before giving his/her own answer. Everybody in the circle had a chance to paraphrase the answers. One of the

staff members said that, as a management member, one should practice this skill in order to improve feedback sessions with staff members (Observation notes, 1 July 2008).

Participants requested that the five-square puzzle exercise (adapted from Bavelas, 1950 as cited in Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 171) be repeated, to demonstrate the co-operation in the group through non-verbal communication. This time, they performed much better than as described in section 4.2.2.3. A number of non-verbal activities were designed to assist participants in becoming more aware of the non-verbal clues related to leading and following, sending and receiving of messages.

With the presentation of the barriers that affect effective communication, participants emphasised that the biggest problem at their school was that received messages did not make provision for any feedback; receivers, therefore, ignored most of the messages. The participants used the learning content of the various barriers, and related this to their daily involvement in school affairs. For example, one staff member said, " My personal problem is that I will look at the person talking, and hear the words, but I am thinking about something else. I think that, with the knowledge that I have gained from this workshop, will improve my involvement" (Observation notes, 2 July 2009).

When it came to the problem-solving phase of the workshop, the transfer of learning to the context of the participants' workplace was important. T8 said, "I know where we have to start; we have to work on the communication structure of the school" (Observation notes, 1 July 2008).

4.2.5 Phase 5: Action Planning.

According to Meyer & Botha (2000, p. 9), "Once problems have been identified, and consensus achieved on the need to resolve them, the next step is to develop plans for dealing with these problems". Before the participants started with the plan of action, I emphasised the need to decide on appropriate actions that would solve their particular problems in respect of

communication. They need to make sure that they were making practical and attainable plans to which they would be able to commit themselves, thus leading to the implementation of change.

As Weisbord (1987, p. 285) says: “People will commit to plans they have helped to develop.” This is what I really wanted from them.

The plans which were drawn up by staff members are presented in Table 2, below. The activities that were compiled were intended to improve communication at the school. The policy included various activities, such as how to deal with grievances. During the morning briefing, management could give constructive feedback, during which paraphrasing could be practised. The organogram depicts the line of communication – who has to report to whom. In order for them to do away with long, tiring and unproductive meetings, staff members felt that they need a workshop on how to conduct effective meetings

Action steps (what will be done)	Responsible person (who will do it)	Timeline (by when)	Review date
Compile an internal policy on communication including grievance procedures.	All staff members and school board	7 July 2008	7 August 2008
Regular morning briefings (feedback sessions) to be held before the school starts, and records kept of discussions.	Management	Continuously	

Compile an organogram (communication structure) that indicates the line of communication	All staff members	7 July 2008	7 August 2008
Every teacher to acquire a dairy for record keeping	Ms Tjii to contact banks and publishers	7 July 2008	7 August 2008
Improving staff meetings. Invite an expert to conduct a short workshop on effective meetings	Mr Muduva, the HOD responsible, to write a letter to the inspector	7 July 2008	7 August 2008

Table 2: Action plan

4.2.6 Phase 6: Action implementation

This phase involves undertaking the changes decided upon during action planning. It is at Phase 6 that change occurs in the organisation (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 97). Most of the activities were implemented successfully. An organogram had been compiled which indicated the line of communication. Regular morning briefings were held to inform staff members about the events of the previous day, and the daily activities for the new day. This was also recorded in a book for further reference. It was evident that all teachers acquired dairies in which they made notes to transmit information through to the learners. Teachers were very busy making notes during the briefing sessions (Observation notes, 12 August 2008). The inspector had been contacted with a request to present a workshop on how to improve meetings, but she had informed the school that she would be available only in 2009, because of her involvement with national inspectorate duties.

At the informal interview I held with teachers, they revealed that they were very excited about implementing the changes – but not all teachers contributed to the success of the implementation. T4 thought that, “Some people feel that this is just an extra programme on its own. It is not part of them, so why should they implement it?” T11 also felt that, “Some people lack commitment; they don’t want to take ownership of the programme”.

4.2.7 Phase 7: Evaluation

This is the final phase of the OD process, which evaluates the impact of the changes undertaken. The aim is to evaluate the extent to which problems identified in the initial diagnosis have been solved or improved upon (Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 98).

A month after the implementation phase, participants had a discussion during the morning briefing sessions on the implementation of the action plan. They had realised that the line of communication had improved in several ways. For example, there were no longer cases piled up, waiting for the attention of the principal; some issues were being addressed by the heads of departments. For example, the Learners’ Representative Council worked through their guardian teacher; cases of minor misconduct were handled by the class teacher while more serious ones were referred to the disciplinary committee. Both teachers and learners knew exactly what were expected of them, and the teachers used the register period to inform the learners about the activities of the day. The internal policy on communication was endorsed by the school board members.

4.3 Conclusion

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

PART TWO

4. 4 Introduction

In part 1, I presented a narrative account of the process of OD. In this part, I present and discuss the data obtained from individual and focus-group interviews and observation notes, in order to address my second research goal, themes that emerged out of the participants' experience, and perceptions of the OD process.

I interviewed the principal, the head of department (HOD) and two teachers. For the focus group interview, I had two focus groups, consisting of four (T1, T2, T3 and T4) and three (T5, T6 and T7) members respectively. The data revealed the following themes: readiness, empowerment, collaboration and teamwork, and power.

4. 5 Readiness

Readiness is a key principle in OD interventions. According to Smith, (2003, p. 9), readiness relates to various levels of organisation life. It has an individual, personal aspect, an organisation aspect, and a system aspect. Four main issues emerged in the data – divided views on the potential benefit of change, the importance of participants understanding the need for change, a cultural perspective on the uncertainty associated with change, and the value of the OD introductory workshop as a readiness-raising device. I begin with a discussion of participants' divided views on the potential benefits of change.

Participants had mixed feelings about the potential benefits of the proposed OD process. T4 said, "Not all staff members wanted to be part of the OD process". According to T4, there were different perceptions of the potential value of an OD intervention. Some believed it could be helpful. For example, T8 thought, "Change is for the betterment ... it is for the organisation to run smoothly". Others – for example T9 – made comments such as, "I was very reluctant. It was like this is another burden on my shoulders. James said, "All of us are scared of changes". Others – for example T8 – noted that, "People like their comfort zone". T11 commented that, "Some

people got used to things at the organisation that become an embedded culture. Why should we change; we have been doing this all these years at the school?” Change is perceived as “Not an easy process” (T8). T5 thought some were opposed to the intervention, “Because they think it’s something more private,” referring to it being for my masters’ degree.

It is clear from the literature that change is disturbing (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997, p. 46). It does upset one’s equilibrium and, if conducted thoroughly, can be time consuming and demanding of one’s energy. Already-overloaded teachers can see it as the “straw that breaks the camels back”.

Another theme that emerged in participants’ perception of readiness related to their understanding of the need for change. According to Smith, I. (2005, p. 301) a sense of need and urgency for change is important, and the change message and the plan for change should be communicate with the staff members well in advance. In line with this, T8 noted that, “People should have an idea why they need to change”. T11, however, believed that, “Everybody knew ... the reasons that we have to change”. According to him, “If we are living in an ever-changing world, people should be prepared to go through changes”. He believed people were aware of this, but that the reluctance to engage in change was because of “a fear of failing”. He argued that, “You will not know whether you are successful or not unless you at least give it a try”.

Smith, C., (2003, p. 19) has found that various OD activities, such as the introductory workshop I carried out, can help to elevate levels of readiness to participate in an OD intervention. There is some evidence that my workshop achieved that. For example, T9 mentioned that, despite her initial reluctance to participate in the OD process, “After I attended the workshop, I realised that I was wrong. I was even thinking that, if we really implement it the right way, we at the school might change from level to level ... I think OD is the best thing. No matter whether you are a principal, no matter whether you are an institutional worker, we should work together.” The working together won her support. This highlights the importance of modelling the OD principle of collegiality, and OD principles in general, during the introductory workshop.

According to T2, “When OD was introduced; people were looking forward to change, because it really opened up their minds. Later on it’s like ... there was a gap; something was lacking”.

Unfortunately, the intervention was interrupted by a month-long school vacation, during which time it seems the initial optimism receded. This disrupted the initial momentum of the intervention.

In summary, in some respects the OD intervention was stillborn. From the outset, there was not widespread and enthusiastic support for the intervention. And, over time, what support there was dwindled further.

4.6 Empowerment

Empowerment is to give someone the opportunity to realise their intrinsic potential, the power within themselves, meaning using their talent and ability for the interest of the institution (Smith, C., 2003, p. 6; French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000, p. 2760). Smith states further that OD helps members of the organisation, "... take responsibility for their own future, not to depend on some external agency to prescribe their future". As T11 states, "Members ... eventually even open up and talk..." and they realised that they are "... involved in the decision making, that it is not just being imposed. T8 said that, "... everybody is involved, even the lowest ranked person in the school ... so that it will work well ...". The data reflects, from the responses, that members of the organisation felt that they were the only ones who solve their problems. They felt that they had the opportunity to express themselves and try and find solution to their problems by themselves. That the process has strengthened them and that there is hope for improvement. As T10 confirms "... we all discovered ourselves ... we all identify it together ... and we all opted to change..."

4.7 Collaboration and teamwork

"Each tributary that makes up a large river might contribute a little on its own but the result of all the small contributions is a massive current that sweeps all before it." (Smith, C., 2003, p.12)

This statement emphasises the power of the team and collaboration; the power of synergy – how each part of the organisation depends on each other and can have enormous effect on the change

process. Smith, C., (2003, p. 1) refers to the organisation as 'living', which means that it has parts that are interdependent in order to create the bounded whole. T5 states that, "... the issue is not about management but about the whole organisation as a system ... Therefore, members ... know that you are part of the team ...and ...everybody is involved ...and it makes the whole process work smoothly ...". This enables them to "... fit the challenges that come our way, which we will tackle together ...". This is done by "talking to each other if you want the school or the organisation to run smoothly". This creates a sense of ownership: "... I am part and parcel of the organisation."

Fullan (1993, p. 17) stresses that collaboration is important for personal mastery and personal strength that members of the organisation start to feel their worth and what they are capable of. He states that personal mastery and group mastery feed on each other. This is an essential element of a learning organisation, which is a core component of organisation development (Smith, C., 2003, p. 12). T6 said: "Now we even have the opportunity to confront each other and talk about our problems in a healthy manner.... The ...teachers understand each other very well. They communicate; they laugh, even..."

The collaboration is strengthened further, as T5 states: "When they (management) have an idea, they come to the staff room. Then they will place the idea on the table and ask the people what they think of it ...". "... They must really try to work on it in order for us to work together as a unit, because really the school needs to stand together as a group."

4.8 Power

According to Smith, I., (2006, p. 302) effective change requires good and sustained leadership at all organisational levels. Vision, commitment and direction from the top of the organisation are vital.

During the interview, participants commented about management being the driving force if change was to occur. They felt that the management had to take the lead if change was to be sustained. T9 said: "If you are on top, you need to set an example for others, and have to take the

lead in order for the organisation to be successful”. Another staff member, T10, felt that, “Change is not about critics, but rather about building the organisation, because the issues at school are not about management, but rather about the organisation as a whole”. On the other hand, one of the management members felt, like T11, that, “The staff members got use to things at the institution which have now become an embedded culture. Why should we change; we have been doing this all these years at the school?” However, T9 said, “People need to be guided every day with everything, and the management has to do it little by little. Then change will be effective”.

4.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present and discuss the findings on how the participants experienced and perceived the OD process and the outcome of the intervention. The discussion revealed that OD came at the right time at the school, as they were encountering many problems. They were impressed by the OD process; they felt empowered as a team.

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

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous three chapters, I have explained how I planned, carried out, analysed and interpreted the data.

This chapter serves four purposes: (i) a summary of the main findings, (ii) reflections for future research, (iii) limitations of the study, and (iv) a conclusion.

In this section, I summarise the key findings of my study,

5.2 Summary of main findings

The evidence from the data indicated that the OD approach is something new to the participants of Evergreen Senior Secondary School, and served as an ice-breaking activity, raising the level of readiness so that unfreezing took place. It created an opportunity for them to discuss that issues on hand and devise possible solutions for them. They felt that this initiative enabled them to conduct a self-evaluation and to make them aware of where changes were needed. As a staff body, they became much more open to each other. The responses from participants showed that most of them had never been involved in taking decisions on school level; decisions had always been imposed on them by management. They felt that, with the OD approach, their views were appreciated and considered.

What was derived further from the data was that participants had high hopes that OD would bring immediate visible changes regarding the operation of their organisation. They thought that teamwork would prevail at the school, and that staff members would become united. One teacher said that she thought that OD would enable them to solve the whole communication problem at the school once and for all.

The process of the OD intervention was, to some extent successful, because all participants were involved from the start up to the implementation stage. Action plans were put in place, but not all teachers executed the plan. According to Elving (2005, p. 129), it is computed that, at the minimum, more than half of all the organisational change programmes fail, reach a standstill, or do not reach the outcome at which they were aiming initially. This might be because of the organisational culture, the timing of the change effort or the role of the change agent. In the case of Evergreen Senior Secondary School, the majority of the staff members were willing to implement the action plan; however, numerous complaints arose because of time limitations.

With regard to power, the study has found that it is essential for the management of the school to be the driving force during the OD process if change is to be effective. According to Fullan (2001, p. 5) if leaders are up to date regarding the need for change, it will be easier to influence their followers. Participants felt that they need to be guided little by little by the management on a daily basis, if change has to be effective.

Team work is essential for enhancing quality and productivity at an organisation. Some participants were of the opinion that teamwork is not just about management, but rather about the whole organisation. Everybody has to work together to overcome the challenges of the organisation. This will create a sense of ownership.

Gibson *et al.* (as cited in Meyer & Botha, 2000, p. 101) state that certain guidelines should be in place if the OD intervention is to have some chance of bringing about the desired change, namely:

1. All those involved must have visible and high commitment to the effort.
2. People who are involved need to have advanced information that enables them to know what is to happen, and why they are to do what they have to do.

3. The effort (especially the evaluation and reward systems) must be connected to other parts of the organisation. An organisation consists of many other stakeholders; for example parents, learners, hostel workers and the regional office staff. All these stakeholders have their expectations regarding the said school. It is essential that the reward system should go in line with improvement of the school results. The reward system should be in such a way that it will also encourage staff members to implement planned changes. It should create a sense of ownership or empowerment.
4. The intervention must be directed by management and assisted only by a change agent if necessary for sustainability and empowerment.
5. The effort must be based on a good diagnosis, and must be consistent with the conditions in and the culture of the organisation. If you want desired change, you need to know the operation of the organisation, which of the staff members will have the critical information, how ready the staff members are for change, and what is the underlying culture and attitudes of staff members.
6. Management must remain committed through implementation and evaluation. Management is in the best position to monitor and control. They are the ones that should see that plans are executed.
7. People must see clearly the relationship between the effort and the organisation's mission and goals. Ironically, the mission statement of this school is perseverance.
8. The change agent, if used, must clearly be competent.

5.3 Reflections

In this section, I offer suggestions to other researchers wishing to embark on OD programmes:

1. It is very important that, before you embark on action, that you research your topic – the process of OD – extensively. The seven (7) phases suggested by Meyer & Botha, (2000, pp. 95-98) are crucial, and you have to make sure that you understand how to execute these phases. I realised only well within the process that I should have performed certain activities with the staff members, but it was too late to go back to start the process again.
2. It is imperative that participants be informed clearly as to how the intervention will influence their daily activities at the school, in terms of time, energy, commitment and dedication.
3. The goals and values of OD should be very clear to all participants. They should have full and clear information about the reasons for change.
4. Be in constant contact with the participants – although you will feel sometimes that you are not really welcome. You have to do follow-up. Work constantly with your steering group.
5. It is essential to have read theses written on your topic, before embarking on one's own. This will help you to avoid common mistakes.
6. It is very important that you try to keep to your planned schedule, because it is very difficult to catch up lost time.
7. Interview skills are essential. You have to know when and how to probe.
8. Lastly, as a researcher, you need to have certain character traits or attitudes, such as determination, perseverance, communication and patience. Sometimes you will feel that staff members don't want you there – their body language is so clear, that you really feel very uncomfortable and discouraged by the time you leave.

5.4 Limitations

In my methodology chapter, I pointed out the time factor as being limiting to a study of this nature. Action research requires quality time. Taking into consideration that I had to work with 20 staff members, added to the demands of preparing a half-thesis, whilst concurrently being a full-time inspector of schools, the process required a great deal of time. I would have liked to have had a focus-group interview with the entire management body of the school to find out how they experienced the OD process but, due to time constraints, this was impossible.

I could not give much attention to the school during the OD process, because I was involved in activities in other regions. This restricted my observations to periodic visits. Being on site for the duration of the OD process would probably have resulted in a better outcome.

5.5 Conclusion

What I have realised is that OD is relatively new to me, and to the staff members of Evergreen Secondary school. I developed a love for OD because I have seen the benefits which are inherent in it if one embarks on the programme with eagerness. With all the problems that education is facing, this could be the best method of addressing such challenges within our organisations.

I feel that the study was worthwhile in that it made a difference to some staff members at the school. A seed has been planted, as was said by one staff member. Although change had not yet become visible, the OD process created high hopes for some staff members.

I have realised that, if one is to embark upon OD, one needs to have the time and energy to pursue it diligently, and one's readiness level should be high. One needs to be ready.

“One man with courage makes a majority”

Andrew Jackson

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APPENDIX: A

P.O. Box 12

OMARURU

20 January 2008

The Education Regional Director of Erongo Region

Mr. J./Awaseb

Private Bag 5024

SWAKOPMUND

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH

I, Angeline Steenkamp would like to seek access to one of your schools, namely S.I.Gobs Senior Secondary School in the Erongo region to carry out my research. The benefit for doing an intervention at the school is that it enables the school to achieve a sustained capacity for solving their own problems.

I am a registered student at Rhodes University, following the Master degree in Educational Leadership and Management. The research will be conducted as from January till September 2008.

My research topic is:

An Organizational Development (OD) Intervention at a Senior Secondary School of Omaruru Circuit in the Erongo Region of Namibia

The goal of my research is:

To facilitate an OD intervention and to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the participants in a Senior Secondary School in the Omaruru Circuit in the Erongo Region of Namibia.

I would like to assure you that anonymity and confidentiality are of the utmost importance. Hence, the identity of the Institution or any other information I will be provided with, will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the stated purpose of the research and for no other purpose.

Hoping for your favorable response.

Yours faithfully

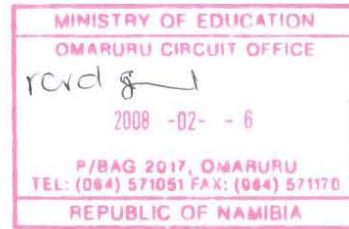
Angeline Steenkamp

APPENDIX: B



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ERONGO REGION



PRIVATE BAG 5024
SWAKOPMUND

TELEPHONE: 064 – 4105000
FAX: 064 – 4105158

Enquiries: M. R. Jacobs

28 January 2008

Ms. A. A. Steenkamp
P. O. Box 12
OMARURU

Dear Ms. Steenkamp

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH


Your letter dated 20 January 2008 regarding abovementioned matter has reference.

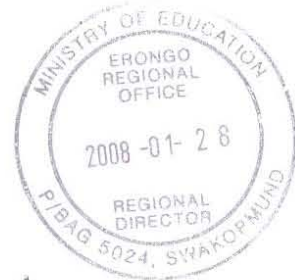
Herewith permission is granted to conduct research for your Master degree in Educational Leadership and Management at S. I. Gobs Secondary School.

We would like you to avail a copy of your dissertation at the end of your studies to the regional office.

We wish you all success with your studies.

Yours faithfully


J. Awaseb
REGIONAL DIRECTOR



*Correspondence to this office must be addressed to: The Director, Education, Private Bag 5024, Swakopmund.
Tel : (064) 4105000 | Fax: (064) 4105136*

APPENDIX: C

P.O. Box 12

OMARURU

23 January 2008

The Principal of S. I. Gobs SSS

Mr. Clarke

Private Bag 2030

OMARURU

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

I, Angeline Steenkamp would like to seek access to your school to carry out my research. The benefit for doing OD at an organization is that it enables institutions to achieve a sustained capacity for solving their own problems.

I am a registered student at Rhodes University, following the Master degree in Educational Leadership and Management. The research will be conducted as from January till September 2008.

My research topic is:

An Organizational Development (OD) Intervention at a Senior Secondary School of Omaruru Circuit in the Erongo Region of Namibia

The goal of my research is:

To facilitate an OD intervention and to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the participants in a Senior Secondary School in the Omaruru Circuit in the Erongo Region of Namibia.

I would like to assure you that anonymity and confidentiality are of the utmost importance. Hence, the identity of the Institution or any other information I will be provided with, will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the stated purpose of the research and for no other purpose.

Hoping for your favorable response.

Yours faithfully

Angeline Steenkamp

APPENDIX: D

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
OMARURU CIRCUIT OFFICE
rcvd
2008-02-12
-HURU
TEL: (064) 570270 FAX: (064) 571170
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

S. I. !GOBS SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL		
Tel: 064-570270 Fax: 064-570219		Private Bag 2023 OMARURU NAMIBIA

12 February 2008

Ms. A. A. Steenkamp
P. O. Box 12
Omaruru
Namibia

Dear Madam

RE.: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

Herewith permission granted to conduct research for your Masters Degree in Education, Leadership and Management at S. I. !Gobs Secondary School.

We wish you all the success with your research.

Yours faithfully


.....
H. S. Clarke (Mr.)
PRINCIPAL

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
S.I. Gobs Secondary School
T 2 FEB 2008
P/B 2023 Omaruru
Tel: 064-570270 Fax: 064-570219
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

APPENDIX: E

OD CONTRACT

I the undersigned, Ms. Angeline Anna Steenkamp agreed upon the following that

- The intervention will be conducted by me in collaboration with the staff members of XXX School.
- I will diagnose the organization climate
- I will give feedback to you at a later stage.
- I do not require any payment as facilitator.
- Data collected will be kept secret and confidential and that no names will be written on the questionnaire we are going to hand out.
- Information obtained will not be used to disadvantage anybody in any way.

We the undersigned XXX staff members agreed upon that

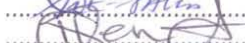
- No name will be written on questionnaires
- Agreed and give full and active participation voluntarily
- Data sources will remain anonymous and confidential
- Information given will not be used to disadvantage anybody in any way.

Signed at Omaruru on 16/04/08 at XXX School

Facilitator: 

Co-facilitators: 





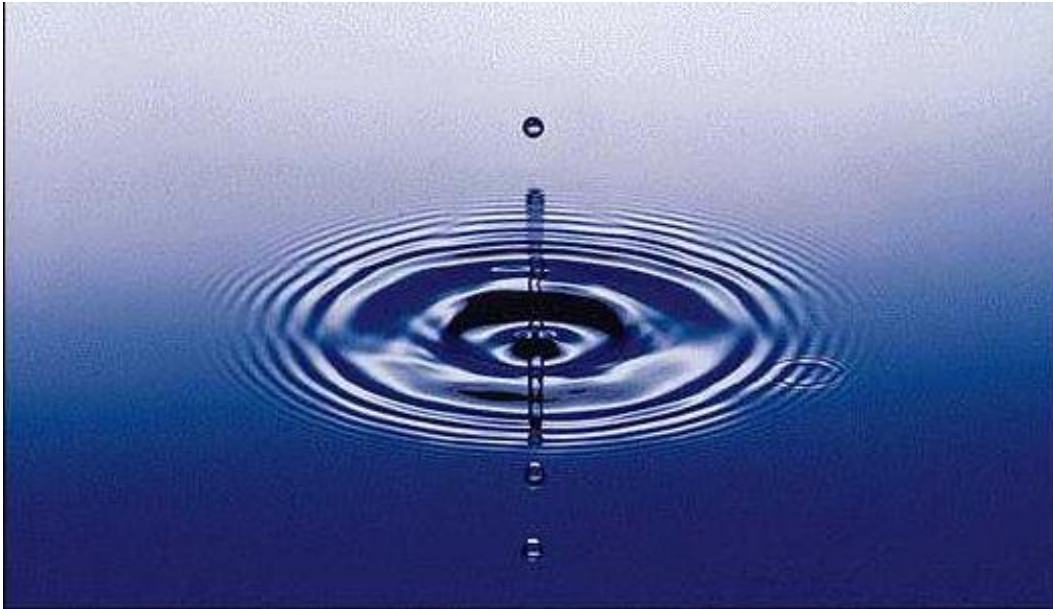
Participants:

APPENDIX F: OD INTERVENTION- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. For the past 7 months we have been involved in an OD process at your school. How did you experience the whole process? What was it like?
2. OD is a change approach; do you think teachers are ready to change?
3. What specific fascinated you about OD?
4. Communication was identified as one of the key areas that needed attention. After the change process is there any observable changes in communication within the organization?
5. What are the feelings of your other colleagues on the whole process? To which extent do they want to be part of the process?
6. Because of the participatory nature of OD it requires time, how do you feel about it?
7. What are the most challenges of OD?
8. OD emphasizes equally about people whatever position he / she holds. Are you comfortable to influence decisions taken by management?
9. Would you recommend OD to any other school in Namibia? Why / Why not?
10. Do teachers have any idea on how to integrate OD as part of the school's daily activities?
11. As a school you are excited to come up with new ideas or changes. Is there anything in the Namibian system which is in obstruction to OD?

APPENDIX G: LITTLE DROP



ATTITUDE

- Is a little thing that makes a big difference

APPENDIX H: LEARN FROM NOAH'S ARK



- Don't miss the boat.
- Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- Beware of the woodpecker!
- Plan ahead – It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- Stay fit. When you're 600 yrs old someone may ask you to do something really big.
- Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- Build your future on high ground.
- For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
- Speed isn't always an advantage; the snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- When you're stressed, float a while.
- Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.