

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT WITHIN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Sibanda Nenwe

School of Management, IT and Governance, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Majola B. Kennen

Department of Business Management, University of Limpopo, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

Globalization, internationalization and technology have increased the movement of people from different cultural backgrounds around the world. The coexistence has created rapid cultural diversity challenges, forcing many democratic countries to review their labour laws, compelling organisations to adopt sound diversity management policies. Pre 1994 in South Africa, the workforce did not represent the diversity of the country. The end of apartheid created opportunities for culturally diverse workforces in most sectors of the economy. Schools are no exception to this change due to the diverse teacher and learner population as women and people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds are sharing the workspace. The School Management Team (SMT) led by the Principal, need to be properly equipped in terms of knowledge, skills and capacity to deal with increased cultural diversity for the achievement of organizational goals. This paper aims to identify barriers and challenges related to cultural diversity management within the schools in uMzinyathi District, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province, South Africa. The research seeks to determine if schools in uMzinyathi district are utilizing cultural diversity management for the achievement of organisational goals. The paper was exploratory and descriptive in nature and adopted a qualitative approach. The focus was on the SMT of ten schools in the uMzinyathi District comprising the principal, vice-principal(s), and heads of departments, and senior teachers. Using purposive sampling, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face involving 36 SMT members. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Data were presented in tabular form. The study revealed that there are no work-related barriers due to the availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds under the uMzinyathi District in KZN. However, having no barriers and challenges does not mean that there is no conflict. Hence, the study recommends that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduces cultural exchange programmes and partnerships with other schools to share educational resources, sports development and leadership development.

Keywords: Cultural Diversity, Diversity Management, School Management Teams, South African Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, internationalization and technology have increased the movement

of people from different cultural backgrounds around the world. The coexistence has created rapid cultural diversity challenges, forcing many democratic countries to review their labour laws, and compelling organizations to adopt sound diversity management policies. In South Africa, the prescripts driving this change are the new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995), Skills Development Act (97 of 1998) which promotes equal employment and training opportunities for the previously disadvantaged population. Furthermore, the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998), Chapter 2(6) prohibits unfair discrimination, directly or indirectly against an employee on any ground including race, gender, ethnic origin, religion or age. The end of apartheid created opportunities for culturally diverse workforces in most sectors of the economy. Schools are no exception to this change due to teachers' and learners' diverse populations. Four different education departments, namely, the White, Indian, Coloured and Bantu education departments had to merge into one Department of Basic Education of South Africa (Soupen, 2017). As a result, leadership and diversity became invariably connected as schools move from mono-cultural, non-diverse contexts to ones that contain ethnically diverse, multilingual and economically disadvantaged educators (Soupen, 2017). The role of the principal and the functioning of the School Management Teams (SMTs) became central to whatever becomes of a school (Naidoo, 2021) including the management of cultural diversity.

The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 (as amended) refers to School Management Team (SMT) members as management structures with the responsibility of ensuring the professional day-to-day running of schools including diversity management. Diversity management means creating a workplace where differences in heritage, background, styles, traditions and views are valued, respected and used to increase organizational capacity (Gupta, 2019). Currently, the SMT members have an enormous challenge to effectively manage cultural diversity to achieve success as prescribed in s16 of the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996). The SMT led by the Principal, need to be properly equipped in terms of knowledge, skills and capacity to deal with increased cultural diversity for the achievement of organizational goals. This paper aims to identify barriers and challenges related to cultural diversity management within the schools in uMzinyathi District schools in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province of South Africa. The research seeks to find out if schools in the uMzinyathi District schools are utilizing cultural diversity management for the achievement of organisational goals. The findings of the paper will benefit policymakers to review and or customize policies to suit their work environment and add to the body of knowledge on cultural diversity management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review highlights theories underpinning the paper on the management of diversity, namely, the similarity-attraction theory, the social cognitive theory and the self-categorization theory. The section then focuses on the principal's role and leadership styles in managing cultural diversity and the role of SMTs and the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in cultural diversity management within schools.

The Similarity-Attraction Theory

The similarity-attraction theory was proposed by Berscheid and Hatfield in 1969 and in 1971 Byrne expanded their research. According to Byrne (1971), when people perceive themselves to be similar to other people, they experience positive feelings of attraction towards them. Montoya and Horton (2020) define attraction as an emotion that ranges from the professional to the romantic, to the familial, meaning that attraction can be operationalized as an emotion in a wide range of settings. Similarity as a concept is broad and may entail many dimensions as one may consider whether men and women differ in any preference for similarity domains (Treger and Masciale, 2018). Researchers have identified two general types of similarity: actual and perceived. Actual cultural similarity is conceptualized as the degree to which one is actually similar to another individual in cultural attributes and perceived cultural similarity is defined as the degree to which one believes oneself similar to another in cultural attributes (Liu, 2021). The similarities cover many factors typically separated into demographic (race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and age) and psychological (personality, values, interests, religion, education, and occupation) divisions. While similarity-attraction can help to create a sense of cohesion and unity within a group, it can also lead to homogeneity and a lack of diversity. In the context of managing diversity amongst teachers in schools, similarity-attraction can potentially be a barrier to creating an inclusive and welcoming learning environment. If teachers only interact with others who are similar to them in terms of cultural background, they may be less likely to understand and appreciate the diverse perspectives and experiences of their colleagues and students. The positive association of similarity to attraction can be explained by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991).

The Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura in the 1960s developed the social cognitive theory which argued that experience shapes people's specific behaviour that can be reshaped by reinforcements. The social cognitive theory posits that people learn by observing others and the consequences of their actions, as well as by receiving feedback and reinforcement for their behaviour. According to social cognitive theory, people judge others not based on individual qualities, but rather on the stereotype held regarding that individual's group membership (Kulik and Bainbridge, 2006, Abbasi, Billsberry, and Todres, 2023). Since humans are a highly cultural species, much of humans' social cognitive is intricately linked to the appropriation, modification, and transmission of culture (Kearner, Schuhmacher, and Torrens, 2020). According to Byars-Winston, (2010), social cognitive theory suggests that the effects of diversity management on perceived discrimination can be influenced by individuals' personalities. Social cognitive theory can play an important role in managing cultural diversity by helping individuals and organisations understand the cognitive processes involved in intercultural communication and interaction. In the context of managing cultural diversity, social cognitive theory suggests that individuals can learn to be more effective communicators and more culturally competent by observing others who are skilled in intercultural communication, receiving feedback on their behaviour and attitudes, and being reinforced for positive

intercultural interactions.

The Self-Categorization Theory

The self-categorization theory was developed by Turner in 1987. Self-categorization theory builds on social cognitive theory. It suggests that individuals tend to categorize themselves into social groups based on their shared characteristics and experiences. It makes predictions about group members' identification with their group as a whole rather than with individual members within that group (Chattopadhyay, George, and Lawrence, 2004). For instance, social categorization theory posits that employees categorize their colleagues and themselves based on observable characteristics such as gender (Ibarra, 1992; Louch, 2000) or age (Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989; Zenger and Lawrence, 1989) and race. When a particular category forms the basis for people's social identities, they perceive themselves and other members of their category as forming the in-group, and dissimilar others as forming the out-group (Abbasi et al., 2023). Therefore, diversity management helps employees understand the value of otherness and creates a space that ensures respect and equality for all employees.

The Benefits of Cultural Diversity Management in the Workplace

An organisation's success and competitiveness depends on its ability to embrace diversity and realise the benefits. Successful global companies are known to attract and retain the best talent through innovation learning (Mazur, 2010; Madera, Dawson and Neal, 2016). A culturally diverse workforce has been perceived as a vehicle to access global markets where language and cultural barriers pose a threat to the operations of the company (Choi and Rainey, 2010; Robbins and Mathews, 2014; Agocs and Burr, 2014). As the workforce becomes more diverse and the environment more open to new ideas and ways of thinking, organizations have found that employees and teams become more effective in processing information, solving problems, and contributing to the organization's mission (Gupta, 2019). According to Lo, Wang, and Zhan (2020), employees with culturally diverse backgrounds can contribute complementary knowledge and multiple perspectives that potentially benefit organisational performance. Gupta's study (2019) finds merit in schools adopting a positive approach towards cultural diversity management as educators from diverse backgrounds bring different skills and knowledge that can be used to enhance the core competencies of the schools.

The Challenges of Cultural Diversity Management within Schools

Despite the benefits of cultural diversity management, the concept is not without its challenges. Devine, Baum, Hearn and Devine (2007) identified three main challenges, namely, communication, discrimination and training that organisations should overcome to effectively manage cultural diversity. Firstly, communication challenges involve the lack of knowledge and uncertainty of how different people receive and interpret behaviour of others. A culturally diverse workforce can increase interpersonal conflict due to differences in opinions, thoughts, values and norms (Wrench, 2014). Differences in culture and religion can be a source of animosity that leads to communication problems. The SMTs should have a system known to all

stakeholders that provides for the support of educators including communication with parents and the community (van Staden, 2020). Secondly, the discrimination challenge reflects unjustified intentional negative actions towards members of a group simply because of their membership in the group (Ogbonna and Harris, 2006; Mousa and Alas, 2016). Discrimination and lack of respect creep into a work environment and lead to animosity in the workplace (Gupta, 2019). A diverse workplace can still lack inclusion if people in positions fail to address underlying factors such as bias, prejudice and discrimination. The SMTs including the principal can develop and implement pre-service and in-service training, policies to stop discrimination, and research on staff and learner diversity (Garson, 2000; Soupen, 2017). This can create a work environment in which educators respect, tolerate, understand, explore and accept their difference.

Thirdly, the training challenges means tolerant moral standards by designing programmes for enhancing employees' awareness and acceptance of others (King, Gulick and Avery, 2010). Mestry (2017) has attributed inadequacy to the lack of training in instructional leadership and the shortage of in-service training programmes for SMTs. Sensitivity training helps employees understand their own cultural biases and prejudices (Gupta, 2019). According to Ntsoane (2017), SMTs do not possess adequate skills and competencies to perform and carry out their responsibilities. Other school challenges directly and indirectly affecting the SMTs in dealing with cultural diversity are internal and external. For example, unemployment, poverty (Meyer, 2005); learner discipline and violence (Arends, 2017); attacks on educators, late coming (Maile and Olowayo, 2017), learner pregnancy (Matlala, Ntote and Temane, 2014), low morale, poor learning conditions and dropouts (Naidoo, 2021). Township and rural schools experience these challenges as there are educators and learners from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

Role of Principals within Schools

The management of schools is the responsibility of the principal and the SMTs according to Chapter 3, s16 of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) and the Personnel Administrative Measures contained in the Educator Employment Act, Act 76 of 1998. The Policy on South African Standards for Principals provides a comprehensive picture of what is expected of the principal as head of the institution (DBE, 2016: 8-19). Principals usually perform three interchangeable functions at the school level. As managers, they focus on managing and controlling human, physical, and financial resources. As leaders, they drive the vision of the institution and focus on organisational development and school improvement, while as administrators; they deal with day-to-day operational matters, and continuously shift between leadership and management functions (Kowalski, 2010; Naidoo, 2019). Therefore, a principal's leadership style plays a crucial role in managing cultural diversity within schools.

Leadership Styles of Managing Cultural Diversity within Schools

Several leadership styles can be effective in promoting cultural diversity management including transformational, servant, and collaborative and situational leadership styles. Transformational leadership refers to a kind of leadership that focuses on the creation of new ideas and views to inspire and motivate employees (Jacob and

Thilagaraj, 2022). Using this leadership style, principals can empower their staff to take ownership of their work and encourage creativity and innovation which can promote a culture of inclusivity and valuing diversity. Servant leadership styles “places the good of those led over the self- interest of the leader, emphasizing leader behaviours that focus on follower development, and de- emphasizing glorification of the leader” (Hale and Fields, 2007: 397). To manage cultural diversity by utilising a servant’s leadership style, principals prioritise the needs of staff members above their own, focus on building relationships and create a positive work environment. Collaborative leadership styles encourage teamwork and collaboration among their staff. This style of leadership can be described as considerate, consultative, participative, and employee-centred (Bass, 2008). This leadership style can be effective in managing cultural diversity as the principal can seek input from all members and value diverse perspectives which can lead to open communication, mutual respect and understanding. Situational leadership means that leaders have to change the degree of supportiveness and directness to their employees according to the given situation of subordinates and their level of motivation (Ghazzawi, El Shoughari, and El Ost, 2017). They adapt their approach to fit the individual needs of their staff. Therefore, the principal’s leadership style should prioritize inclusivity, empathy, and understanding to effectively manage cultural diversity within the school community.

SMT’s and Cultural Diversity Management within Schools

The SMT leads by the principal comprise Heads of Department (HoD) and are responsible for creating a supportive environment for educators. Their role is to create an environment that is inclusive and respectful of all cultures, while also promoting the educational goals of the school. SMTs play a leading role by offering guidance, advice, support, assistance and leadership mainly on curriculum matters (Mathipa, Magano, Mapotse, Matlabe and Mohapi, 2014, Basson and Mestry, 2019). The SMTs are responsible for implementing the school development plan, selecting, procuring and managing learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs), and determining the physical resource needs of their departments (Bush and Glover, 2016; Basson, and Mestry, 2019). However, Mlambo (2022) warns that SMTs must not view themselves as people in power; they must rather work towards building relationships. They must be described as the engine that gives the school its power (Schlebusch, and Schlebusch, 2022).

SMTs and SGBs within Schools

The SMT has to create a school atmosphere in which an educator can perform his job confidently and safely (Schlebusch, and Schlebusch, 2022). However, disadvantaged schools in South Africa continue to experience management challenges due to lack of capacity in physical resources, lack of adequate training amongst teachers and lack of synergy between SGBs and SMTs (Bryant et al., 2020). The SGB is the statutory body elected every three years to promote the best interest of the school. To create a good working environment, the SGB is obliged to determine the admission, language and religious policies, assist in appointment and redressing past imbalances and develop a school strategic plan (DBE, 2018). There must be no racial

discrimination practiced in the policy implementation. However, unproductive schools always have non-functional SGBs as sometimes there are no meetings, they have little or no understanding of their roles and responsibilities, rubberstamp the decision of the principal or cause conflict in the school (DBE, 2018).

Empirical Literature on Diversity Management in Schools

There are interesting studies on SMTs and the principal's leadership style influences the management of cultural diversity. A study conducted by Schlebusch and Schlebusch (2022) explored the impact of SMT on educators and job satisfaction in South Africa. The findings revealed that a significant consideration should be given to redesigning initial and in-service training programmes for SMTs to incorporate leadership practices focused on building supporting relationships, setting guidelines, building positive school culture, encouraging teamwork, involvement and team-building. Educators and learners from different backgrounds can acknowledge, recognise, respect and celebrate other people's cultures. Furthermore, the leadership style of the principal can positively or negatively influence the cultural diversity management. A study conducted by Atsebeha (2016) in Ethiopia that examined the leadership styles of school principals and their influence on the job performance found that all leadership styles except for the directive leadership style, have a positive impact on the teachers' performance. The supportive leadership style is the most frequently used style. Soupen (2017) found that principals are using various strategies such as integration as part of induction, in-house training, team building and celebrating cultural festivities to effectively manage diversity. Mkhize (2010) found that cultural rituals such as Heritage Day are essential in helping workers appreciate cultural diversity.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This paper is exploratory and descriptive in nature and adopts a qualitative approach. The focus was on ten schools in the uMvoti Circuit around the town called Greytown. As stated above, these schools are former Model C and township schools, some schools had more than 10 SMT members and the smallest had three members. Using purposive sampling, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face involving 36 SMT members. This was adopted to allow the respondents flexibility when responding to questions. There were 12 males (34%) and 24 (66%) females who took part in the study; 39 percent of respondents were Black, 25 percent White, 31 percent Indian and Coloureds comprised only 5 percent. Data was collected using secondary information such as annual reports, national and provincial policies and other relevant publications. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Data was presented in tabular form. The gatekeeper's letter was obtained from the KZN DBE and ethical clearance approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal was granted before data collection. The issue of confidentiality was communicated to all respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper is to identify barriers and challenges related to cultural diversity management within the uMzinyathi District schools in South Africa. The results were analysed and presented using tables that lists the themes and frequency of

responses.

Barriers and Challenges to Cultural Diversity Management

To identify barriers and challenges faced by the schools in relation to cultural diversity management, four questions were asked.

Challenge of Cultural Diversity Management and Performance

Respondents were first asked whether cultural diversity management was a challenge for them when performing their duties. The results are displayed in the Table 1 and it is followed by discussions of the responses. The results show that (n=26) 72 percent of the respondents which is the majority does not believe that cultural diversity management is a challenge when performing their duties. Respondent 17 stated that “cultural issues have never affected my work”. Respondent 3 said “we treat each other as professional at work; it does not matter where you come from”.

Table 1

Challenge of Cultural Diversity Management and Performance

Theme	Frequency of Responses
Cultural diversity management is not a challenge when performing duties.	26
Cultural diversity management poses a challenge when performing duties.	7
Do not know.	3

Source: Authors

However, seven respondents (20%) felt cultural diversity management poses a challenge to do their work and 8 percent (n=3) chose not to respond to the question. Respondent 6 pointed out “the way you speak English can be a challenge. Some teachers and learners do not understand that it is my second language”. Meanwhile, Respondent 22 argued that “it is not easy when you have a permanent medical condition...I am thinking of retiring early”. Respondent 19 said “I hardly notice...I do not know”. The finding is in line with Chattopadhyay et al, (2004) who argued that the theory of self-categorization allows individuals to categorize themselves into social groups rather than with individuals within that group. In this paper, teachers at uMzinyathi schools perform their duties without cultural interference which leads to job satisfaction. Employees contribute complementary knowledge and multiple perspectives that potentially benefit organisational performance (Lo et al., 2020). Gupta (2019) added that educators from diverse backgrounds bring different skills and knowledge to enhance the core competencies of the schools. However, there are gaps where some teachers are affected by how cultural diversity is managed. For example, when one educator is considering retiring early, it means her condition is not accepted by the colleagues. The study conducted by Schlebusch and Schlebusch (2022) on educators and job satisfaction suggested that the SMTs should redesign training programmes to focus on building supportive relationships, building a positive culture, and encouraging teamwork. The principal and the SMTs should create a school atmosphere for educators to perform their duties confidently and safely (Schlebusch and Schlebusch, 2022).

Management Style Accommodates Unique Differences

The second question asked the respondents whether their schools promoted a management style that accepts and accommodates the unique differences in individuals. Thirty-two (86%) respondents were of the view that their school management styles promote cultural diversity management followed by four respondents (14%) who stated that it depends on the individual managers. Respondent 31 stated that “our principal treats us all as equals. He understands each individual’s strengths and weaknesses”. Respondent 8 mentioned that “I like the fact that meetings are held every month and when it is necessary...my principal is very approachable...we know what is happening in our school”. Respondent 14 said “I have worked under different managers for 31 years and their management styles are never the same”. It must be noted that the principal’s leadership style plays a crucial role in managing cultural diversity within schools. The findings reveal that the leadership styles adopted at uMzinyathi District schools are collaborative and situational. Collaborative leadership style means that the Principals and SMTs are considerate, consultative, participative and employee-centred, according to Bass (2008). Whereas, situational leadership style means that educators are supported by Principals and SMTs according to the situation and their level of motivation (Ghazzawi, et al., 2017) at uMzinyathi District schools. The findings are also in line with Soupen (2017) who pointed out that principals are using various strategies such as induction, in-house training and celebrating cultural festivities to effectively manage diversity. In this way, the individual needs of educators at uMzinyathi District schools are taken care of as inclusivity and empathy are promoted.

Work Environment with Cultural Difference Barriers

Respondents were asked whether the school has a work environment with barriers created by cultural differences among individuals such as communication, promotional opportunities, working relationships etc. The majority of the respondents at 72 percent (n=26) stated that their school has a work environment that has no barriers created by cultural differences among individuals which can be seen in Table 2. Respondent 1 mentioned that “we know why we are here. We focus on our work which allows us to respect each other and our spaces”. Respondent 29 added that “most of our learners come from the township, they still respect us as their teachers. Management have created a good culture of open communication”.

Table 2

Work Environment with Cultural Difference Barriers

Theme	Frequency of Responses
My school has a work environment with no barriers (e.g., communication, promotional opportunities, working relationships, etc.) created by cultural differences among individuals.	26
Work environment has barriers as individuals have different needs.	5
No Response.	5

Source: Authors

Fourteen percent (n=5) indicated that the work environment has barriers as individuals have different needs. One of the respondents (Respondent 11), stated that “I am a Muslim and need to pray at times. There are no facilities in my school... the work commitments do not allow me to practice certain rituals. It is very sad.”. Five respondents (14%) chose not to respond to the question. Wrench (2014) argued that a culturally diverse workforce and environment can increase interpersonal conflict due to differences in opinion, thoughts, values and norms. According to the self-categorization theory, diversity management helps employees understand the value of others and create a space that ensures respect and equality. Van Staden (2020) argued that SMTs should have a system known to all stakeholders supporting educators including communication with parents and communities. To create a conducive work environment, all stakeholders must be involved in every aspect of the institution. Stakeholders in the form of SGBs will understand the working relationships and make informed decisions when promotional opportunities arise for educators.

For accommodating religious and special needs among educators, self-categorization can play a significant role in promoting understanding, respect, and inclusion. By recognizing and embracing the differences and similarities that exist among them, principals and SMTs can create a more welcoming and supportive work and learning environment for educators and all students. Furthermore, by using social cognitive theory to inform training and development programmes, principals and SMTs can help educators become more effective communicators and better equipped to navigate cultural differences in schools. This can lead to increased understanding, cooperation, and productivity, as well as a more inclusive and welcoming workplace culture. Mlambo (2022) reiterates that SMTs must work towards building relationships in schools. UMzinyathi District schools are in agreement with the view that they can communicate and share ideas with all colleagues, even those who belong to different cultural groups.

Cultural Discrimination in Schools

In the last question, respondents were asked whether the work environment is free from cultural discrimination. Seventy-eight percent (n=28) of the respondents were of the view that their school work environment was free from cultural discrimination. Respondent 3 mentioned that “I would be lying if I say I have been culturally discriminated against. We are all Africans in my school anyway. But Zulu’s are dominating and very proud of their heritage”. Twenty-two percent (n=8) indicated that there is some cultural discrimination in their schools. Respondent 18 points out that “sometimes as a foreigner, there will be informal comments about your country or your people that are not good or true...they just want you to react. I just ignore most of them”. Although the majority indicated that there is no cultural discrimination within uMzinyathi District schools, one cannot ignore individuals that are still experiencing some discrimination. The literature mentioned actual and perceived similarities that SMT members should be aware of which covers demographic and psychological matters. The similarity- attraction theory can result in negative and positive outcomes due to ethnic, racial, gender and

other reasons without being aware sometimes. According to social cognitive theory, people judge others not based on individual qualities, but rather on the stereotype held regarding that individual's group membership (Kulik and Bainbridge, 2006, Abbasi et al., 2023). Bandura (1999) reiterated that perceived discrimination can be influenced by individuals' personalities. A diverse workplace can still lack inclusion if people in positions fail to address underlying factors such as bias, prejudice and discrimination. Therefore, SMTs in managing of cultural diversity should not ignore educators feeling being discriminated against in the uMzinyathi District schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper aimed to identify barriers and challenges related to cultural diversity management within the uMzinyathi District schools in South Africa. The SMT members in the uMzinyathi District schools affirmed that cultural diversity management is not a challenge when performing their work. Furthermore, the paper revealed that the SMT management styles led by the principals promote cultural diversity in their schools. They are content with the collaborative and situational leadership styles adopted by their principals and other members. In addition, the majority of SMT members felt that the work environment in their schools at uMzinyathi District had no barriers created by cultural differences among individual educators. Lastly, the paper discovered that there is no cultural discrimination among the staff members in the uMzinyathi District schools. However, the fact that cultural diversity management is not a challenge and there are no barriers, does not mean that there are no challenges and conflicts. Therefore, one way to overcome the potential negative effects is to actively promote diversity and cross-cultural interactions among educators. This can involve creating opportunities for educators from different backgrounds to interact and collaborate. Additionally, SMTs can encourage teachers to be reflective and self-aware about their own cultural biases and assumptions and to actively seek diverse perspectives and experiences. The paper recommends that the Department of Basic Education introduces cultural exchange programmes and partnerships with other schools to share educational resources, sports development and leadership development.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, A., Billsberry, J. and Todres, M. (2023). Empirical studies of the "similarity leads to attraction" hypothesis in workplace interactions: a systematic review. *Management Review Quarterly*, 1-49. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11301-022-00313-5>
- Agocs, C. and Burr, C. (2014). Employment equity, affirmative action and managing diversity: Assessing the differences. *International Journal of Manpower*, 17(4/5), 30-45.
- Arends, R. (2017). 'Classroom stresses take toll on educators', *The Weekend Argus*, 9 September 2017. Atsebeha, A. T. (2016). Principals' Leadership Styles and their Effects on Teachers' Performance in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia. Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, UNISA.

- Bandura, A. (1991). Social cognitive theory of self-regulation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 248–287. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90022-L](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90022-L)
- Bass, B. M. (2008). *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*, (4th Ed). New York City: Free Press.
- Basson, B. and Mestry, R. (2019). Collaboration between school management teams and governing bodies in effectively managing public primary school finances. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(2), 1-11. Available: <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n2a1688>
- Berscheid, E. and Hatfield-Walster, E. (1969). *Interpersonal Attraction*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison- Wesley.
- Bush, T. and Glover, D. (2016). School Leadership and Management in South Africa: Findings from a Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(2), 211-231.
- Bryant, K. C., Berry, J. R. and Cevik, S. (2020). A South African high-needs school: A case of context driven by history. *International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership*, 113-127.
- Byars-Winston, A. (2010). The Vocational Significance of Black Identity: Cultural Formulation Approach to Career Assessment and Career Counseling. *Journal of Career Development*, 37(1), 441- 464.
- Byrne, D. (1971). *The attraction paradigm*. New York: Academic Press.
- Chattopadhyay, P., George, E. and Lawrence, S. A. (2004). Why Does Dissimilarity Matter? Contrasting Self-Categorization with Similarity-Attraction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 89(5): 892-900.
- Choi, S. and Rainey, H. G. (2010). Managing diversity in U.S. Federal Agencies: Effects of diversity and diversity management on employee perceptions of organizational performance. *American Society for Public Administration*, Jstor. Available: <http://about.jstor.org/terms> Accessed: 17/06/2023.
- Department of Basic Education. (2016). *South African National Professional Qualification for Principalship (SANPQP) (Concept paper, September)*. Directorate: Education Management and Governance Development.
- Department of Basic Education. (DBE). (2018). *Strategy to Improve School Management and Governance in Schools*. Republic of South Africa. Available: <https://edupstairs.org/strategy-to-improve-school-management-and-governance-in-schools/> Accessed: 31/05/2023.
- Devine, F., Baum, T., Hearn, N. and Devine, A. (2007). Cultural diversity in hospitality work: The Northern Ireland experience. *The International Journal of Human*

- Resource Management, 18(2), 333-349. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585190601102596>
- Garson, P. (2000). Value-added education. *The Teacher/Daily Mail and Guardian*, June.
- Ghazzawi, K., El Shoughari R., El Ost, B. (2017). Situational Leadership and Its Effectiveness in Rising Employee Productivity: A Study on North Lebanon Organization. *Human Resource Management Research*, 7(3), 102-110.
- Gupta, P. (2019). Workforce Diversity Management: Key to Inclusive Sustainability. *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management*, 2(11), 592-596.
- Hale, J. R. and Fields, D. L. (2007). Exploring servant leadership across cultures: A study of followers in Ghana and the USA. *Leadership*, 3, 397-417.
- Kearntner, J., Schuhmacher, N. and Torrens, M. G. (2020). Culture and early social-cognitive development. *Progress in Brain Research*, 254, 225-246. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.pbr.2020.06.011>
- King, E., Gulick, L. and Avery, D. (2010). The Divide Between Diversity Training and Diversity Education: Integrating Best Practices. *Journal of Management Education*, 34(6), 891-906. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1052562909348767>
- Kowalski, T. J. (2010). *The school principal - Visionary leadership and competent management*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Kulik, C. T. and Bainbridge, H. T. (2006). HR and the line: the distribution of HR activities in Australian organisations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resource*, 44, 240–256. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1038411106066399>
- Ibarra, H. (1992). Homophily and differential returns: Sex differences in network structure and access in an advertising firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 37(3), 422–447. Available: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393451>
- Jacob, D. and Thilagaraj, A. (2022). Transformational Leadership Theory – A Critical Analysis with reference to Banking Sector. *Webology*, 19(2), 152 -159.
- Lo, F., Wang, Y. and Zhan, W. (2020). Does TMT Cultural Diversity Contribute to Firm Performance and Do Socialisation and Tenure Matter? A Test of Two Competing Perspectives. *Personnel Review*, 49(1),324-348.
- Louch, H. (2000). Personal network integration: Transitivity an homophily in strong-tie relations. *Social Networks*, 22(1), 45–64. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-8733\(00\)00015-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-8733(00)00015-0)
- Liu, C. (2021). Leader-member Exchange and Job Performance: Comparing the Influence of Actual and Perceived Cultural Similarity. *Proceedings of the 1st International Symposium on Innovative Management and Economics*. Advances

- in Economics, Business and Management Research, 185, 522– 532.
- Madera, J. M., Dawson, M. and Neal, J. A. (2016). Why investing in diversity management matters: Organizational attraction and person–organization fit. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 1096348016654973.
- Maile, S. and Olowoyo, M. M. (2017). The Causes of Late Coming among High School Learners in Soshanguve, Pretoria, South Africa. *Pedagogical Research*, 2(2), 04.
- Mathipa, E., Magano, M. D., Mapotse, T., Matlabe S. and Mohapi, S. (2014). The School Management Team Leadership Role in Rural Primary School Setting. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(7), 367–373.
- Matlala, S. F. Nolte, A. G. W. and Temane, M. A. (2014). The Need for a Model to Facilitate Health for Pregnant Learners Attending Secondary Schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(4), 1-11.
- Mazur, B. (2010). Cultural diversity in organizational theory and practice, *Journal of Intercultural Management*, 2(2), 5-15.
- Mestry, R. (2017). Principals' Perspectives and Experiences of Their Instructional Leadership Functions to Enhance Learner Achievement in Public Schools. *Journal of Education*, 69, 257-280.
- Meyer, A. G. (2005). School violence in secondary schools: Guidelines for the establishment of Health Promoting Schools (Masters Dissertation). North West University. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/10394/479>
- Mkhize, M. V. (2010). A Study of Managerial Competencies Required by Managers to Effectively Manage Diversity in KwaZulu-Natal (Masters Dissertation). University of KwaZulu-Natal. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/10413/6064>
- Mlambo, B. L. (2022). Exploring the Role of the School Management Teams in Inducting Novice Educators (Masters Dissertation). College of Humanities, School of Education. UKZN. Available: <https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/20981>
- Montoya, R. M. and Horton, R. S. (2020) Understanding the attraction process. *Journal of Social Personality Psychology Compass*, 14, e12526. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12526>
- Mousa, M. and Alas, R. (2016). Cultural Diversity and Organisational Commitment: A Study on Teachers of Primary Public Schools in Menoufia (Egypt). *International Business Research*, 9(7), 154-163. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v9n7p154>
- Naidoo, P. (2019). Perceptions of Teachers and School Management Teams of the Leadership Roles of Public School Principals. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(2), 1-14.

- Naidoo, R. R. (2021). Instructional Leadership Roles of School Management Teams: An Exploratory Study of Five Township Secondary Schools (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Free State. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/11660/11657>
- Ntsoane, L. D. (2017). The Role of School Management Team Members in the Induction of Novice Educators in Rural Schools (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Pretoria. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/65459>
- Ogbonna, E. and Harris, L. (2006). The Dynamics of Employee Relationships in an Ethnically Diverse Workforce: Human Relations, 59(3),379-407. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0018726706064181>
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. (1998). Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998. South African Department of Labour. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. (1998). The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Robbins, R. L. and Matthews, T. J. (2014). Cultural diversity: is it present in American law schools and the legal profession? Journal of Diversity Management, 9(1), 75.
- Schlebusch, G. and Schlebusch, L. (2022). Impact of School Management Teams on Educator Job Satisfaction. International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies, 4.
- Soupen, C. (2017). An Investigation into the Role of School Leaders in Managing Cultural Diversity Among Educators in Two Ex-Model C Primary Schools in Gauteng, South Africa. Educator Multidisciplinary Journal, 1(1), 206-238.
- Treger, S. and Masciale, J. N. (2018). Domains of Similarity and Attraction in Three Types of Relationships. An International Journal on Personal Relationships. 12(2), 254–266.
- Tsui, A. S. and O'Reilly, C. A. (1989). Beyond simple demographic effects: The importance of relational demography in superior-subordinate dyads. Academy of Management Journal, 32(2), 402–423. Available: <https://doi.org/10.5465/256368>
- Van Staden, J. J. (2020). The Causes of Stress and its Management by School Management Teams in Private Primary Schools in the Tshwane South District. UNISA. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/26957>
- Wrench, J. (2014). Diversity management. In Routledge international handbook of diversity studies.

Edited by Vertovec, S. New York: Routledge.

Zenger, T. R. and Lawrence, B. S. (1989). Organizational demography: The differential effects of age and tenure distributions on technical communication. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(2), 353–376. Available: <https://doi.org/10.2307/256366>