A management strategy for the improvement of the effectiveness of secondary schools through total quality management

Philip de Bruyn
PhD thesis (Educational Management); Promoter: Prof PC van der Westhuizen
Faculty of Educational Sciences, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

Abstract
The new paradigm in managing organisations, known as Total Quality Management (TQM), was investigated in this thesis. TQM as a management concept represents a fundamental change in the management approach of organisations (such as schools). TQM comprises a comprehensive change to the theory and practice of management and in particular focuses on leadership and people. It is claimed in literature that the bulk of problems in organisations is leadership or management related; subsequently the implementation of TQM poses a major challenge to the managers of those organisations.

It has become clear from the literature that TQM comprises a radical departure from the traditional educational paradigm of bureaucracy, autocracy and mediocrity, towards a system that liberates the educator from bureaucratic red tape and which provides for a model of empowerment and participation. This research was aimed particularly at the application of quality principles in secondary schools. The aims of the research were to

- determine the nature and characteristics of TQM in schools through a review of the literature;
- identify methods from the literature for the implementation of TQM in schools;
- identify and analyse schools as case studies from the literature;
- determine to what extent effective schools make use of TQM and to what extent elements of TQM were to be identified in these schools;
- determine whether the strategies employed in schools are based on TQM assumptions and could be characterised as effective in terms of TQM; and to
- develop a management strategy for the improvement of the effectiveness of secondary schools through the implementation of TQM.

A literature study was undertaken to analyse TQM and to determine methods for implementing TQM in schools. The empirical research consisted of two phases: a quantitative phase comprising the use of a questionnaire to determine to what extent principals make use of TQM and a qualitative phase in which principals, educators, learners and parents participated in interviews to determine what strategies used by schools were based on TQM. Information from both the literature review and the empirical study was used to develop a management strategy as a guide for principals to improve the effectiveness of schools through TQM.

The conclusion chapter contains a summary of the research, findings and recommendations in respect of the research aims.

Key terms
Total quality management; total quality education; total quality leadership; total quality schools; school effectiveness; school culture; programme implementation; quality control; education improvement; transformation; school-based management.