

# **How school governing bodies manage new legislation in South Africa?**

by

**BALENTHRAN GOUNDEN**

A Dissertation Submitted In Partial Fulfilment Of The  
Requirements For The Master of Education Degree  
(Educational Management)

of the Faculty of Education

University of Durban-Westville

**EDMINSON LIBRARY**  
031 - 2603 467

**Supervisors: S.D. Bayeni & Prof. J.D. Jansen**

10 December 1999

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

## DECLARATION

I,

**BALENTHRAN GOUNDEN,**

Do solemnly declare that this research work is my original work and supervised by the supervisors whose names appear on the title page and the views of the experts in my research have all been duly acknowledged and listed in the bibliography.

This research report has not been previously submitted for a degree at another university.

This declaration was signed by me on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of December 1999.

---

Balenthran Gounden  
(Researcher)

## ABSTRACT

Despite the commendable qualities of the new staff selection and appointment process such as stakeholder participation it seemed to have generated a host of problems such as nepotism, subjectivity and personal preferences. Although selectors were involved in the selection process for the very first time they were quite confident in their choices of candidates.

Selectors believed that the short training programme did not prepare them adequately for the selection of school leaders. In spite of severe difficulties, such as little knowledge acquired, members dropping off during the process and time constraints, 80% of the parents were quite confident in their choice of candidates for their schools. It was found that 52% of the selectors indicated that the selection was not vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity and personal preferences. However, a relatively high percentage (42%) indicated that the process was not carried out fairly.

Selectors believed that the selection process required their time as well as money. Making personal sacrifices affected their commitment to the process. Selectors were not remunerated for the execution of this mammoth task.

Although there were severe time constraints 73% of the parents indicated that all CV's were allocated equal time for evaluation. It was noticed that 60% of the parent selectors and 64% of the senior managers as selectors found it extremely difficult to differentiate whether the CV's were original or professionally written. However, it was interesting to note that 70% of the selectors believed that applicants were not given preferences such as Heads of Department and those from their own schools.

An extremely important point is that there was consensus among the various stakeholders in reaching their final choices. This is confirmed by the fact that 87% parents, 82% principals and 82% deputy principals, indicated that decisions were reached through consensus rather than a vote. This is a positive sign because all selectors took ownership of these appointments.

Clearly, there were several shortcomings of the new staff selection and appointment process. However, parents felt really empowered since they were afforded the opportunity of choosing a senior manager who would lead their children to greater heights.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to

My parents:

**Subramoney Kolundai Gounden and Sakundalai Gounden**

for providing support and taking excellent care of my two children Lavani and Kimen during my studies which made it very much easier to accomplish my achievements

&

My family:

My adorable wife **Valerie** for your moral and spiritual support during my studies. You've always been the pillars of strength, courage and support. Many thanks to my adorable children **Lavani** and **Kimen** who were also a source of inspiration.

&

finally to:

My friends for your moral support which made it possible for me to complete this research.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation to my supervisors Mr S.D Bayeni (whilst on study leave) and Prof. J.D. Jansen for their excellent and untiring guidance that enabled me to complete this research timeously. I most definitely benefited academically and professionally from your powerful supervision.

I also thank the following organisations and individuals for their contribution towards the completion of this research report.

- National Research Foundation for their scholarship towards my research.
- Lecturers in the Faculty of Education especially Nhlanhla Cele & Murthi Maistry for your motivation and assistance in my research.
- Lucky Kumalo. I know I have troubled you whilst you were very busy. Your invalid assistance in SPSS and Powerpoint will not be forgotten.
- My industrious wife Valerie Gounden for type setting, transcription of the interviews and posting of assignments & draft reports during difficult times.
- The principal and members of the Staff Selection Committee for your valuable time that you sacrificed during data capture for the case study.
- Mr Karunen Ramsamy for attending to my computer when there was a problem with the programmes.
- Shakila Thakurpersad for your assistance in providing all research material and dissertations when I requested them.
- All my respondents to my questionnaires, a big thank you for your views, opinions and experiences on the selection and appointment process.
- And finally to Almighty for the spiritual guidance and the immense power you provided during the course of my study.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE

PAGE

### *SETTING THE FOCUS*

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PURPOSE OF STUDY	3
3. CRITICAL QUESTIONS	3
4. RATIONALE	4
5. METHODOLOGY (SUMMARY)	5
6. THE FINDINGS OF THIS RESEARCH WOULD BE USEFUL TO	6
7. ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS	7

## CHAPTER TWO

### *SYNTHESIS THE SOUTH AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE*

2.1 LITERATURE ON THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT STAFF IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW LEGISLATION IN SOUTH AFRICA	9
2.1.1 THE SIFTING & SHORTLISTING PROCESS	11
2.1.2 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS	14
2.1.3 RATIFICATION BY GOVERNING BODY	16
2.2 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT STAFF IN SCHOOLS	16
2.2.1 EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998 IN BRITAIN (ENGLAND AND WALES) AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT OF 1996	17
2.2.2 THE EDUCATION (SCHOOL GOVERNMENT) REGULATION 189 OF BRITAIN AND SOUTH AFRICAN REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION PROCEDURES	18

**CHAPTER THREE****PAGE*****THE INTERPRETATION OF TEXT: A PROBLEM STATEMENT*****36****CHAPTER FOUR*****PLOTTING THE METHODOLOGICAL COURSE***

4.1	INTRODUCTION	45
4.2	TWO LEVELS OF DATA COLLECTION	45
4.2.1	FIRST LEVEL OF DATA COLLECTION	45
4.2.2	SECOND LEVEL OF DATA COLLECTION	46
4.3	TARGET POPULATION	48
4.4	SAMPLING	49
4.4.1	SAMPLING OF SCHOOLS FOR THE SURVEY	49
4.4.2	SAMPLING OF SCHOOLS FOR THE CASE STUDY	51
4.5	INSTRUMENTS	52
4.5.1	SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	52
4.5.2	CASE STUDY	53
4.6	PILOT TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULES	54
4.7	VALIDITY	55
4.8	THE ISSUE OF ETHICS	55
4.9	DATA ANALYSIS	56
4.9.1	ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES	56
4.9.2	ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDY	57
4.10	LIMITATION	58
4.11	CONCLUSION	59

**CHAPTER FIVE*****LINKING THE CHAINS OF EVIDENCE***

5.1	INTRODUCTION	60
5.2	MOVING FROM DATA INTO NARRATIVE	60
5.3	CONCLUSION	101

***A SINGLE SCHOOL CASE STUDY : A DISPUTE OVER THE SELECTION AND  
APPOINTMENT OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL***

6.1	INTRODUCTION	104
6.2	TRAINING RECEIVED BY SELECTORS	109
6.3	EXPERIENCE	110
6.4	COMMITMENT OF SELECTORS	111
6.5	USE OF TIME	112
6.6	NEPOTISM AND PERSONAL PREFERENCES	113
6.7	THE SHORTLISTING PROCESS	115
6.8	THE SCORING DILEMMA	117
6.9	THE LUCKY CANDIDATES THAT MADE THE SHORTLIST	120
6.10	THE INTERVIEW STAGE	121
6.11	THE FINAL RANK ORDER BY THE STAFF SELECTION COMMITTEE	124
6.12	RATIFICATION OF FINAL ORDER BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY	125
6.13	MEETING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	128
6.14	AT THE RE-CONVENED MEETING	128
6.15	SELECTORS AT WAR!	131
6.16	THE AFTERMATH	133
6.17	WHY VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE?	134
6.18	AT LAST!	134

**CHAPTER SEVEN**

***EVALUATING THE CASE OF VALAKIM PRIMARY:  
FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS***

136

## *CHAPTER EIGHT*

### *SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION*

8.1	SUMMARY OF MY RESEARCH	145
8.2	RECOMMENDATIONS	147
8.3	CONCLUSION	152

BIBLIOGRAPHY	153
--------------	-----

#### APPENDIX A

#### APPENDIX B

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Title of tables</b>	<b>Page</b>
5	5.1	The level of respondents	61
	5.2	The demographic distribution of stakeholders	61
	5.3	The spread of stakeholders within each Ex-Departments	63
	5.4	Stakeholders participated in the process for the first time	65
	5.5	Dropping out of members	70
	5.6	Confidence of selectors in Ex-Departments	73
	5.7	Percentage of selectors who were confident in their selection	74
	5.8	Everyone had equal influence in the selection process	74
	5.9	Shortlisting and interviews were conducted at odd hours	80
	5.10	The selection process required time and money	82
	5.11	Difficulties of assessing CV's	85
	5.12	Gender balance was always given preference	88
	5.13	Only HOD's were considered for principalship	90
	5.14	Interviews were not effective in selecting the best candidate	92
	5.15	A need for an education officer with selection experience	97
	5.16	A need for an education officer with selection experience	98
6	6.1	Number of candidates and scores received	120
	6.2	Applicants and their scores during interviews	124
	6.3	Results of votes	127
	6.4	Outcome of votes before the reconvened meeting	130
	6.5	Outcome of the votes after the casting vote	131

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Figure</b>	<b>Title of figures</b>	<b>Page</b>
5	5.1	Respondents from Ex-Departments	62
	5.2	Percentage of males/females who participated in the study	64
	5.3	The short training programme did not prepare selectors for the selection process	66
	5.4	Some members had little knowledge of the selection process	68
	5.5	Members dropping off caused major problems	69
	5.6	Most members were not experienced in the selection process	71
	5.7	Selectors were confident in their choices of candidates	72
	5.8	Selection was vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity & personal preferences	76
	5.9	Some selectors were not interested in the selection process	79
	5.10	The selection process required personal time and money	81
	5.11	All CV's were not given equal evaluation	84
	5.12	All information in the CV's were not verified when in doubt	86
	5.13	the shortlisting criteria were always objective and fair	87
	5.14	The scoring system was very objective	93
	5.15	It was difficult to differentiate the strengths of applicants	94
	5.16	Observers were always present during the selection process	96
	5.17	Decisions were reached through consensus rather than a vote	100

# CHAPTER ONE

## SETTING THE FOCUS

### 1. Introduction

The careful selection and appointment of senior management staff in any organisation is the key towards the success of that organisation. Time spent on the careful selection of staff is not a wasted effort. Ihle (1987) and Eratuuli (1996) emphasise that principals are pedagogical leaders and are more important than teachers within the school environment. An incompetent teacher can only ruin the lives of children. On the other hand a “weak” principal if selected, would ruin the lives of teachers as well as pupils. Therefore, it is imperative that effective selection procedures be used to choose the most competent individual for the job. Every organisation will strive towards appointing staff who will achieve the mission of that organisation (Burgess & Sofer, 1978; Stiggins, 1985; Wendel & Breed, 1988; Wragg & Partington, 1995).

Prior to 1998, the Department of Education in South Africa was totally responsible for the selection and appointment of senior managers in schools. The senior management staff comprised principals and deputy principals. The selection of senior managers were done by Superintendents of Education who assessed the candidates using their record books, classroom observation, checking on pupil's work and finally, interviews. Seniority was a strong factor in the promotion process. In 1997, there was a dramatic shift in the selection process where principals assisted the Department by assessing candidates in their schools.

The more recent transformation in the education system in South Africa gave power to various stakeholders (principal, parents, educators, non-educators, community leaders etc)



to participate in school decision making. Baltzell and Dentler ( cited in Anderson, 1991:39), supporting the view of stakeholder involvement, argue that :

*Without some other participation (parents, teachers, principals or students), screening loses its external credibility. It appears to take place in a way no one can attest to as trustworthy or well executed, except by the selectors themselves.*

They added that the participation of all stakeholders makes the process fair and prevents favouritism. It must be pointed out that in the South African context, the move towards greater stakeholder representation elicited much more problems such as nepotism and personal preferences.

The enactment of the South African Schools Act of 1996 mandated the formation of democratically elected, representative school governing bodies which have the responsibility of selecting and appointing senior management personnel at schools (South African Schools Act No. 84 Section 20(i) of 1996). In 1998, for the first time, parents were now empowered to choose staff of top calibre for the management of their schools. Such reforms are supported by Esp and Saran (1995:4) who argue that if parents pay for their children's education, then there is a need to give such parents a say in the school policies. There needs to be a sharing of the school's mission by both teachers and parents.

In spite of a more transparent system of selecting and appointing senior management staff at schools there seems to be some shortcomings in the selection procedures. These shortcomings seem to be caused by insufficient training, gender bias and that selectors preferred candidates from their own school. Such shortcomings gave rise to problems and

concerns in the actual implementation of new policies. The shortcomings were also expressed by Dentler (cited in Anderson, 1991:29) who argues that :

*The principal recruitment and selection process is ridden with chance and often doesn't confirm to sound policy. In most cases, principal recruitment and selection still operates on the buddy system. Without changes in the integrity and vitality of the selection process, the ablest educational leaders may never turn their faces towards principalship.*

In the light of these anecdotal accounts of problems in the new staff appointment process, I decided to systematically research the perceptions and assess the experiences of school governing bodies with respect to the process of selecting and appointing senior management staff in schools.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of my study was to examine the views and assess the experiences of school governing bodies with respect to the process of selecting and appointing senior management staff in the context of new legislation.

## 3. Critical questions

- 3.1 What do school governing bodies perceive to be the strengths and advantages of the new staff selection and appointment process?
- 3.2 What do school governing bodies identify as the limits and weaknesses of the new staff selection and appointment process?

#### 4. Rationale

I am presently the General Secretary of a school governing body (SGB). I found that the latest procedures for selecting and appointing of senior management posts, released early in February 1998, constituted a somewhat difficult task for SGB members since many of them had no or limited experience in selecting senior managers. Further, the Department of Education requested all SGB's to complete their selection within a fixed time period. All chairpersons of SGB's attended a full day workshop conducted by department officials. Later all chairpersons had to conduct a similar workshop for other members of the SGB. Members complained that the training time was insufficient.

It would have definitely benefited all selectors if the entire staff selection process was conducted in a series of workshops culminating in a full "mock" selection process. In this way selectors would be au fait with the process and more effective in observing candidates according to selection procedures and criteria in the context of new legislation.

After my discussions with governing body members in Phoenix, I argued that the system seemed to be vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity and personal preferences especially with respect to the appointment of senior management staff. I also want to emphasise that the system of selection gave parents the power to select senior staff they so desired such as those having the same political affiliations, belief systems, religious affiliation etc.

At the moment there are a number of disputes lodged by applicants regarding the process of selection such as inconsistent scoring, selectors rating their friends and relatives very high, change of selectors during the process, the use of incorrect selection procedures,

absence of Department official, observers etc. Such disputes were investigated by my research. Therefore, I firmly believe that this study was worth researching because of the apparent tension between policy and practice with respect to the role of school selectors in the staff selection and appointment process.

Without a shadow of doubt proper selection and appointment of qualified senior management staff is vital for "whole school development". The new appointees must fit into the school situation and also make the best contribution to the various sectors of the school.

## 5. Methodology (Summary)

I plotted the methodological course using two levels of data collection. The first level involved a comprehensive questionnaire which was sent to 295 schools in the North Durban Region. The focus at this level was to obtain data on the selection process which will reveal general views, experiences as well as perceptions of selectors on the school governing bodies.

The second level of data collection involved an indepth case study of one school in which there was a serious dispute with the selection of a primary school principal. The main reason for the inclusion of this level of data collection was to obtain additional "close up" data on the selection process which will directly give depth, context, content and nuance to the survey questionnaire data.

6. The findings from this research would be useful to:

- National, provincial and regional policy makers. They would then take cognisance of school inputs before designing policies and would enquire about how the policies are working at school level. Policy makers could then amend staff selection policies for schools so that the most suitable senior management staff will be selected at schools. In this way schools in the country will be managed by personnel who are dynamic and have exceptional leadership qualities.
  
- Superintendents and Directorates who would conduct workshops for school governing body members in areas of need such as drawing up a job and person description, sharpening the sifting and interview process.
  
- Governing body members who would be much more thorough and confident to select the right person for the job.
  
- Researchers who would focus more sharply on aspects or sections of the selection process that require further research. For example, it is interesting to note that in theory there is a sophisticated staff selection policy in place yet the implementation of the policy is highly fragmented in practice. Therefore, researchers could delve deeper into the policy-practice gap.

## 7. Organisation of Chapters

I have included a summary of each of the chapters in my research. In Chapter 2, I reviewed the South African and international literature on the selection and appointment process of senior managers. The literature captured the various perspectives in different countries on the way school governing bodies select and appoint senior management staff. I provided a review of the South African literature because I needed to inform the reader at the outset of how the selection of senior managers by governing bodies had to be implemented according to the new legislation.

In Chapter 3, I included a section on “The interpretation of texts: A problem statement” because I felt that there was a great degree of subjectiveness throughout the selection process. This chapter explains the difficulties of selectors in choosing candidates for their schools and also bearing in mind that parent selectors had been recently introduced.

In Chapter 4, a detailed explanation of my methodology had been outlined which includes aspects such as my target population, sample, the two layers of data capturing, the research instruments, the rationale for using these specific instruments, methods of data analysis and validity. Validity is a very important aspect in any study. I used many methods of validity checks which are explained in this chapter. This was done to increase the degree of truthfulness and accuracy of responses collected.

Chapter 5, presents a detailed analysis of 90 questionnaires (respondents) using the SPSS programme. This chapter captures a general perspective of how members of school governing bodies select staff in all public schools and presents a synopsis of how the

selection process was conducted within each of the racially divided departments of education (ie. Ex-HOD, Ex-HOR, Ex-HOA & Ex- Model C, Ex-DET & Ex-DEC). My discussions also present responses differentiated on the basis of gender as well as the views of the various stakeholders, ie. parents, teachers, unions, principals and deputy principals.

A detailed case study which represents a dispute over a primary school principal within a single school setting has been outlined in Chapter 6. The main idea was to focus on the minute details of how a school governing body actually implemented the selection process in the context of new legislation. Thereafter, I presented the findings and reflections after evaluating the case of Valakim Primary School in Chapter 7. This chapter also includes the meanings and lessons learnt from the experiences at Valakim Primary.

Chapter 8 culminates with a summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Synthesising the South African and International Literature

#### 2.1 Literature on the selection and appointment of senior management staff in the context of the new legislation in South Africa.

I included this section specifically to explain how the selection and appointment process is implemented in the South African context according to new legislation in comparison to the selection process in other countries. In the South African public schools senior managers forward statistics to the Department of Education during the fourth term indicating vacant posts, shortages or surpluses each year. This is done so that the Department of Education can plan vacancy lists for the following year. For any institution or Department to run smoothly, effective planning and good organisation is essential. Once these lists have been compiled, the Department sends these to school governing bodies for candidates to make their choices in respect of the vacancies available. Applicants can then apply for senior management positions.

Due to the new selection and appointment process, governing bodies are allowed to set up various sub-committees such as a Staff Selection Committee to make recommendations for the appointment of staff as stipulated in section 30 of the South African Schools Act 1996. Whether all SGB's are following the SA Schools Act of 1996 is still a big question. Nevertheless, I argue that it is essential for all governing bodies to elect a Staff Selection Committee since it is a specialised Committee formed for the purpose of selection. It must comprise 3 or 5 members from the elected or co-opted members who will then work very



closely with the Principal and Superintendent (Management) to select senior staff. In some cases a school may only receive 100 applicants while the other schools may receive 1000 or more. Therefore, it is important that more competent stakeholders be co-opted onto the Committee when there are many applicants. However, the Selection Committee under the control of the SGB's in South Africa must comprise a Chairperson and 2 or 4 members all being from the parent sector only. The principal or deputy principal is part of the Committee except where they are also applicants for the same post.

However, the Staff Selection Committee could co-opt one or two members from outside the school governing body to facilitate the process. The co-option must be done on the basis of experience, competency and expertise in staff selection. When co-opting members onto the Selection Committee, it is vital that such a member is given consent by the entire school governing body. Reason being, a certain member could be co-opted by the Staff Selection Committee having the same interest and belief system of the other selectors. I concur with Walter (1984) that proper record keeping is essential at all times ie. when selectors are co-opted and during the selection process because there may be a case of nepotism and thus verification would be required.

Therefore, it is imperative that one department representative and union officials must be present to ensure that the correct procedures are followed. I argue that having a Department official to oversee the process is not all. The official must possess the necessary skills and knowledge of selection so that inconsistencies during the process can be corrected immediately. Furthermore, such officials must be acquainted with the present Labour Laws and the Education Employment's Act so that the process, the selectors and the applicants are all protected.

### 2.1.1 The sifting and shortlisting process

There are 8 regions in Kwa-Zulu Natal. In each region there are many Superintendents of Education and other administrative staff assisting with the sifting process. All applicants who are currently not employed as educators in public schools or in educational institutions in South Africa, as well as those who are employed by universities, technikons, independent/private schools, governing bodies and NGO's are excluded from the promotion process. There are also further requirements for promotion such as application forms that must be signed, applications must be received on or before the due date, applicants must be employed by the state etc. Once all the application forms are checked by the Department they are then submitted to the respective school governing bodies.

When the Chairperson of the Staff Selection Committee receives all the applications, the number of applicants are verified in presence of the Principal and Selection Committee members. The Chairman of the Selection Committee must submit the data together with the relevant documents to the Superintendent of Education (Management). This 'verification method' is a good system because it doesn't allow any other CV's to be included in the list of applicants. Without this method, dishonesty could result.

All applicants having the minimum qualification (M+3) should be verified for senior management promotion. I disagree with this requirement because this should be the minimum criteria for a qualified teacher and that such a candidate should not be promoted as principal of a school without management experience.

Joseph (1998) in her study states that educators with M+3 qualification were promoted to senior management positions. She argues that managers of such calibre would find their task difficult once plunged into the deep end. 'If the calibre of management is so undermined in its selection process, subsequently we may be placing incompetent school managers. Are we not perpetuating poor management?' Joseph (1998:4).

Therefore, I feel that only staff from management such as Heads of Department and Acting Deputy Principals having the potential for the Deputy principal and Principal posts respectively, must be considered. My thinking follows a bureaucratic management structure where there are different levels and lines of authority within the organisation. This is supported by Max Weber (cited in Stoner, 1995:37) a German sociologist who believes that an 'ideal organisation to be a bureaucracy whose activities and objectives were rationally thought out and whose divisions of labour were explicitly spelled out.'

However, the Staff Selection Committee has the mammoth task of shortlisting applicants based on their curriculum vitae ie. post requirements, qualification, and related experience. The Committee must shortlist about 8-10 candidates on merit so long as it is manageable. The shortlisting criteria based on the following aspects only must be considered viz.

- ◆ Leadership (administrative, management and related experience)
- ◆ Organisational ability and experience
- ◆ Professional development/educational experience and insight
- ◆ Leadership (community related)

It is important that the Staff Selection Committee be guarded not to discriminate in respect of age, marital status, race, gender, religious groupings etc. This was supported by Emmerson & Goddard (1993) that an appointment based on discrimination will be unlawful and legal action could be instituted against the school governing body.

Further, the Selection Committee must ensure that the departmental representatives and union officials are present so that the process can be validated. The members must have a properly labelled waiting area to avoid applicants waiting at various points in the school. Essential aspects such as objectives of the interview process and interview questions etc. must be thoroughly discussed by all selectors before the actual interview process begins. This facilitates careful selection by members. It would be most embarrassing when selectors themselves are haphazard in their selection. Observers, union officials or Department officials could complain about the inefficiency of the selectors.

According to the Education Labour Relations Act and Resolution 13 of 1995 teacher organisations do play an observer role in the promotion process. But, according to the procedures and practices as laid down by the Department of Education in South Africa, observers must not be directly involved in the selection process. Observers must make sure that all the procedures and practices are strictly adhered to. I disagree with this procedure because all stakeholders including teacher unions must be actively involved in the selection process. This kind of involvement allows all stakeholders to offer various perspectives of the candidate thus making it possible to select the most dynamic leader for the post.

### 2.1.2 The interview process

When the shortlisting process is completed candidates are invited to an interview process.

I acknowledge that at least one Teacher Organisation observer and department representative must be present at all the meetings of the Staff Selection Committee. Their presence would increase the validity of the decision-making at the Selection Committee. Although the interview method is most widely used, I disagree with interviews as a sole method of selecting a candidate. This view was supported by Mary Cihak Jensen (cited in Anderson, 1991:41) who argues that :

*Typically, the interview is unstructured, lasts less than one hour and is highly influenced by first impressions, appearance, non-verbal behaviour and conversational skills.*

I argue that an interview combined with other methods such as asking candidates to make a short presentation on the specific job he or she is applying for, will make the selection process more reliable.

It is important to note that the scores allocated by selectors during the shortlisting process must not influence the outcome of the interview process because each interviewee starts the interview on equal terms. After all the interviews are completed, members of the Staff Selection Committee must complete the nominations in rank order, taking into consideration the overall impression of the candidates, using the score only as a guide. A candidate with a lower score can be placed as the first nominee provided that the relevant factors such as gender, affirmative action, demography etc. are taken into consideration.

I agree with the above factors because of the discrimination in the past. One good example to cite here is that we live in a country where apartheid was heavily practised and there is

still a distinct imbalance between men and women, especially African women in senior management positions. African women have been severely excluded from the world of educational management because of colour and gender.

### 2.1.3 Ratification by school governing body

Once the selectors have made their choices taking into consideration aspects such as gender, historical discrimination, age and relevant experience, it must be agreed by the entire school governing body. The Chairperson of the school governing body (SGB) must convene a Special Meeting of the entire governing body to consider the nominations of the Staff Selection Committee. It is important to note that if the selection panel was mandated to arrive at the most suitable candidate for the post, then the SGB should not interfere with the decision, provided that all procedures were followed. But, in the case where there is a "tie" for the post after the applicants have been ranked, a vote should not be taken. Instead, the entire SGB should listen to the motivation for each candidate by the selectors and a decision be taken at a full SGB meeting. Certainly, a decision taken together with the other SGB members would definitely be a stronger one.

There seems to be variations in the literature as to whether the selection panel's, the SGB's or the Department of Education's decision on the selection process is final. During 1984 in Australia, the school council would accept or reject the panel's recommendations and would forward its decision to the Appointments Board who then finally decided. The Australian Department of Education does not decide on the eligibility of candidates but it is finalised by the selection panel within the schools councils and the Appointments Board (Walker, Farquhar & Hughes, 1991).

#### 2.1.4 Finalisation of the promotion process

However, in the South African Context, the Regional Office finalises the promotion nominations from the respective governing bodies. The Chairperson will have to inform the candidate who is first on the nomination list. If the candidate refuses the post then the person second on the nomination list must be offered the post. I want to forewarn that Selection Committee members must not only focus on the top two or three candidates as some highly ranked candidates in one school may be also highly ranked in another school. Hence, these highly ranked candidates may accept an offer in one school and reject offers in other schools.

#### 2.2 International perspectives on the selection and appointment of senior management staff in schools.

Most literature have focussed mainly on aspects of the selection process in United Kingdom and America. My review includes literature on the selection and appointment process in other countries such as Australia, Scotland, India and Kenya. This was done to bring rich experiences of many countries in respect of the selection and appointment of senior management staff. I also found that the findings of the Project of Secondary Head Teachers (POST), which was commissioned in 1979 in England and Wales contributed to much evidence on Secondary Head teacher selection.

The choice of selectors is vital. It would be useful to choose selectors having abilities to make sound decisions, ability to suppress biases and being alert to cues etc. Sallis (1996) argues that there is no "one system" in staff selection. However, it is vital that all the



stakeholders in education such as teachers, parents, principals and union representatives are represented on the Selection Committee. Holman (1995) supports all decisions which have been concluded with broad-based participation. He strongly believes that these decisions are much stronger and would be positively received by the participants as compared to unilateral decisions. The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 in America allowed a broad-based community involvement in the selection process of staffing personnel. But, there was a difference when compared to the South African context, in the sense that School Councils had to select the principal from the list of potential candidates recommended by the superintendents (Lindle & Shrock, 1993).

Selectors have a difficult task of selecting candidates even from a list of potential applicants supplied by the Department. In view of the enormous task, I concur with Wragg and Partington (1995) that governing bodies need to set up a highly specialised committee to share the workload among other members. Non-governing body members could also serve on these committees for their specialist knowledge. Certain aspects such as the appointment of the principal or deputy principal could be first discussed by the sub-committee but the final decision must be made by the full governing body. However, I believe that only when there is no consensus by the Selection Committee should the SGB make the final decision since a broader stakeholder participation allows for stronger decisions to be taken.

### 2.2.1 Education Reform Act of 1988 in Britain (England and Wales) and the South African Schools Act of 1996.

The South African Schools Act of 1996 is similar in many aspects to the Education Reform Act of 1988 section 44-47 in Britain. This Act outlines changes to employment



procedures in schools in Britain from local education authorities to school governing bodies. In this Act, SGB's are now responsible to undertake a number of tasks and duties, one of which is selecting senior management staff for schools. All governing bodies have the responsibility to appoint a staff selection panel. The panel must consist of at least three members who will then be responsible to select, interview candidates and make recommendations to the governing body. If the SGB approves the recommendation of the Staff Selection Committee, then it must recommend the appointment to the Local Education Authority. The Local Education Authority must then ratify the recommendations made by the governing body. One of the legal requirements with respect to the appointment of either a principal or a deputy is that the chief education officer or departmental representative must attend all selection meetings to provide advice to all SGBs on the appointment of senior managers (Bush, 1995:5; Emerson & Goddard, 1993:63).

### 2.2.2 The Education (School Government) regulations 189 of Britain and South African requirements for selection procedures

The above regulation makes provision for teachers as members of the SGB to play a role in the staff selection process with respect to the appointment of principals and deputy principals. It is acknowledged that teachers are quite knowledgeable as far as the teaching and learning situation is concerned and would make valuable inputs to the Staff Selection Committee. However, the participation of teachers in the South African context, in the actual selection process of Principals/Deputy Principals is excluded.

A study conducted by Gips and Bredeson (1984) reveals that teachers were dissatisfied with the choice of principals and indicated that they were willing to be part of the selection of principals because they have the ability to choose a principal who would be sensitive to the concerns of teachers, the community and the school as a whole. I agree that teachers should be involved in the selection process since they are part of the various stakeholders and would make valuable input in so far as school professional matters are concerned.

According to Sallis (1996:89) all governing body members must be encouraged to take opportunities for training in selecting the right person for the job. He personally doesn't favour schools having appointment committees because all governing body members must be exposed to the selection and appointment experience so that they get a sense of commitment towards the choice of candidates.

Waters (1984) confirms that some education authorities in England and Wales do provide short courses in respect of offering training to staff selectors of the governing body. He adds that the training programmes quite often include assimilation of a typical interview situation. Most certainly, every selector must be trained in multiple assessment techniques and more especially the legal guidelines of the selection process. Without such training, selectors may be influenced during the shortlisting and interview process by attitudes and personal preferences (Walker et al, 1991).

Clearly, many of the authorities in England make quite an investment in conducting short training courses and workshops for governing body members to improve their selection skills . The above courses last a half or whole day, over week-ends or over many sessions

spread over a period to ensure that members do their job effectively (Johnson Packwood & Whitaker, 1984:91; Wragg & Partington, 1995:72).

In South Africa all SGB members require capacity building programmes especially in areas such as the staff selection process, since a large number of them are conducting their duties for the very first time. At present the Provincial Department of Education in South Africa provided some training workshops in the various regions. This needs to be intensified in crucial areas such as the selection of senior management staff.

A proper advertisement of a post is crucial because it must embody the character and ethos of the school, the main qualities and experience required of applicants, relevant dates such as closing dates for applications, interviews etc. Those candidates who are interested in applying for the post should request details and requirements of the post from the school such as the aims, objectives, education philosophy etc. (NAGM, 1996). This may not be possible in the South African context because many schools are facing financial difficulties and would not be able to post these school documents.

However, as Emmerson and Goddard (1993:79) contend:

*The objective in advertising is to attract an adequate number of applicants who meet the criteria in the job specification, so that a choice can be made and an effective appointment secured.*

The advertisement for a post can be placed in the various media such as the department of education bulletin, local or weekly newspaper, local employment agencies, specialist editions of the daily press etc.

Gorton (1977:149) defines staff recruitment as:

*the active pursuit of potential candidates for the purpose of influencing them to apply for positions in the school district. The goal of the school staff recruitment programme should be to attract applicants from the best people available.*

Winter and Dunaway (1997) found that in actual practice, most recruitment adverts concerning principal selection were often constructed in a haphazard manner. However, administrators could improve recruitment efficiency and effectiveness by formulating job advertisements containing job attributes with maximum appeal to candidates.

Various studies (Burgess & Sofer, 1978:39; Emerson & Goddard, 1993:72; Morgan Hall & Mackay, 1984:29; Rebore, 1991:101; Waters, 1984:78) stress that a job description is necessary since it informs the applicants of their tasks on the assumption of duty. They also stress that a job description assists applicants in providing an area of their roles and responsibilities and what is basically expected of them. Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1983:59) warn that :

*In the absence of a written job description, any judgements of a candidate's fitness for a particular school vary according to how each selector perceives the needs of the school.*

The kind of person the SGB would be looking for is implicit within the job description itself. The person description compliments the job description. It describes the type of person which would perform the duties enlisted within the job description (Dean, 1987:162). The person specification must outline aspects such as qualifications, experience, qualities etc. and should distinguish between essential requirements and those

which are desirable (NAGM, 1996). Burgess et al (1978:39) emphasise that when the vacancy for headship arises, it is essential that all members of the SGB discuss the job description and the type of person the school needs so that the selection team can take the views of the entire SGB into consideration. It will be useful for SGB's to seek advice from the Local Education Authority to draw up both the job description and a person specification if these are not legislated (NAGM, 1996).

Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1984:27) state that there are two parts: a generic and specific job description. A generic job description will apply to all posts but the specific job description will be drawn up by the school selectors. School districts in America choose the right person for the job based on the job description which describes special needs and characteristics of the school. In this way selectors match the applicant's skills and leadership style with the needs of the school (Anderson, 1991:35).

It is vital that every school should conduct a needs survey to determine the areas of strengths and weaknesses in meeting the curricular and personal needs of its students. A job profile should then be drawn up for the kind of principal required to improve on the strengths and remedy the areas of weaknesses of the school programme. The site-based committees should look for candidates that best fit the needs of the school (Holman, 1995). I argue that choosing a candidate based on the needs of the school is absolutely important. This kind of choice would drive the school forward since the needs of the school would be satisfied by the principal as the head of the institution and his team of teachers.

But, in a case where a deputy principal of a secondary school wishes to apply for the principalship in a primary school is quite debatable. One could argue that the management

and leadership styles are the same within all educational institutions. On the other hand, one could elicit that primary schools have similar experiences and would require a principal with primary school experience.

Some governing bodies in Britain are unanimous that the deputy principal should be offered the post of principalship within a school. This was substantiated in a recent study conducted in Scotland (Draper & Mc Michael, 1998) showing that principals delegated many tasks to their deputies because of their competence and experience. Clearly, 90 % of their deputies in the study stated that their heads delegated aspects such as staff development, curriculum development and management, managing relationships with pupils, parents and outside agencies. The deputies argued that they also participated actively in teamwork with their heads. The major responsibilities executed by the deputies leaves us with a critical question. Are the deputies in schools within Scotland echoing the views that they are more suitable candidates for headship as compared to others such as teachers who are not so involved in the management of the school? It seems that the deputies in the above study believe in the bureaucratic structure of promotion ie. selection of principals must be made from the pool of deputies.

Applicants already in a management position such as a Head of Department should be considered for promotion as principal or deputy principal. However, internal and external candidates must be treated alike and be given equal opportunity for the post (Archimedes, 1996:122). If deputies are just offered the post in their schools it could be a good reason to declare a dispute in such an appointment since it could be seen as closing the doors to more potential candidates. All applicants must have a proven track record and be able to

fit into the existing organisation (Muse, 1991). Quite often staff selectors appoint internal candidates where they are unsure of their choice since they know a little more about internal candidates. This could be attributed to the fact that selectors may know their own staff members well (Sallis, 1996).

In most schools the head and the deputy principal work very closely and are responsible for every facet of the activities of the school. The head's advice in choosing a deputy must not be ignored (Sallis, 1996:91). The National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM, 1996) agrees with Sallis's point of view that in the case of an appointment of the deputy head, the head has a right to provide advice to the selection panel, as well as attend all meetings and interviews. The choice of the deputy does not rest on the principal but on the various interest groups of the school community (NAGM, 1996).

Inspectors are also part of the advice team in terms of checking whether the selection procedures are correctly followed. Sallis (1996) explains that advice of good candidates maybe forwarded from all quarters to the governing body but they do not have to accept it. I feel that even official advice from inspectors/superintendents must not be viewed as the final word since the final responsibility of selecting and appointing senior management staff ultimately rests on the confidence of the staff selectors. Holman (1995:67) highlighted the role of department officials from school districts. He argued that schools, under site-based decision making committees, should participate in the selection of principals. School districts (Central Office) must also be involved with the process of selecting and promoting principals. However, there were cases where selectors from school districts appointed individuals they knew.



The Selection Committee or School Councils must be aware that applicants will always try to portray the most favourable image in all their supporting documents including the interview. The applicant has to also forward a referee's name ensuring that a favourable recommendation be made on his (applicant) behalf. Everard and Morris (1986:70) contend that a telephone call to the referee can be of great help in areas of doubt. This would establish a clearer picture and a better understanding of the candidate.

NAGM (1996:5) concurs with Everard et al (1993), that references are sources of additional information which selectors could use to arrive at a stronger decision. On the other hand, Morgan, Hall & Mackay (1984:33) argue that there are some pitfalls of references since it could portray a false image of the applicant. They express the view that the only genuine reference is the one written by the person who has assessed the applicant's previous and present performances in all the tasks and responsibilities related to the post. Though candidate's reports written by previous assessors could help to establish whether the candidate is able to perform specific tasks effectively and efficiently, in South Africa it may not be practised as many teachers, Heads of Department, principals and deputy principals have never been assessed previously. Assessors were denied of their functions when teacher unions objected to teacher evaluation in 1992. This marked the end of assessment of educators and senior management staff. Promotion of teachers, Heads of Department, deputy principals and principals since 1992 was not based on objective evaluation. Rather, promotion was based more on speculation and probability which do not warrant successful implementation and effective execution of required tasks.

Some candidates want to have a favourable image in the eyes of the Selection Committee. Banfield and Fearn (1987) pointed out that a visit to the school applied for, would be



advantageous in the sense that more facts could be obtained about the school. No doubt, this kind of information will enhance the candidate's knowledge of answering questions on the post. School visits is not something prescribed by any educational sector, but it is commitment on the part of applicants to score well at the interview. Nothing, in any country, can stop any applicant from visiting schools they choose.

However, Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1984:36) confirm that in England and Wales, potential candidates visit their schools of choice informally so that they become aware of their responsibilities. Emmerson (1993), NAGM (1996) and Pigford (1995) concur with Banfield and Fearn (1987), by stating that through the process of school visits, candidates get the opportunity to meet pupils, teachers, community members, attend the school assembly or visit classrooms. I argue that a candidate should know something about the school which has been applied for. Candidates applying for all schools and not knowing something that attracted them to it may not be serious at all in respect of promotions.

When there's much interest shown by applicants, guided tours of the school are arranged. Many candidates in Britain do make a visit to the chosen school and communicate with the senior staff, teachers and pupils just before the final interviews are conducted. In this way they get a better understanding of the school environment. However, in South Africa, arranging guided tours may be a problem because of the time constraints placed by the Department of Education to complete the selection process.

I agree with Sallis's and NAGM's point of view when they strongly object to the case where the selection panel listens to any feedback from the staff's interaction with the

proposed candidate after school visits. Reason being, all senior staff will not interact for the same duration with each candidate. Furthermore, the context will be different for the various candidates. They favour that governing body members and staff should give feedback with regard to job description, person specification and interview questions only.

With regards to interviews, selectors believed that the interview process is not regarded as highly reliable for choosing the best person for the job since it relies on snap judgements (Braun, 1987:45; Clower cited in Gorton, 1977:157; Waters, 1984:83). They found that most interviews were not effective in revealing the applicant's actual potential within the school context because the process has low validity and reliability. They suggest that the interview process ought to include aspects which would predict how well the applicant can perform the tasks and responsibilities. Wendel and Breed (1988) argued that a structured interview conducted by a trained interviewer, with scored responses has increased reliability. However, Southworth (1989:17) was of the opinion that most schools used the interview process as the main technique in selecting staff. Interviews thus became a common practice.

At the interview, selectors need to take cognisance of how well the candidate can fit the job description. Everard and Morris (1986) outline the purpose of the interview as matching the shortlisted candidates to the needs of the school. Pigford (1995:34) argues that an interview process is the final platform. He emphasises the following:

*An interview is your opportunity to sell a product about which you have the most knowledge-yourself. The candidates challenge is to ensure that everything about that product conveys a powerful message.*

The interview is the most widely used and most influential selection technique. However, if used incorrectly or used as the sole basis for hiring, it is neither valid nor reliable (Anderson, 1991:41). Kahl (cited in Wendel & Breed, 1988) confirms that most selection of administrators were based solely on interviews, academic credentials and personal preferences. He argues that the selection was also based on political aspects since the process gave way to who you know and what you know. He stresses that selection teams could learn much from business and industry, where the selection process is more intensive and systematic programmes of selection are used.

Emerson and Goddard (1993) support the idea that a candidate cannot be summed up in the interview only. They stress that other assessment techniques such as those outlined below could be considered so that more evidence could be obtained from the candidates to make the final choice. Other assessment techniques could include the following:

◆ *Panel interviews*

These types of interviews are normally used for the appointment of staff. Here, there are small groups of selectors who focus their attention on different aspects such as, curriculum, budget and finance, achievements, parent-school relations etc. This type of interview allows for more selectors to be part of the selection process.

◆ *Presentations*

The candidate should be asked to make a short presentation on a particular topic or theme in education. I feel that this method is powerful because selectors could evaluate the applicant's delivery skills, sharpness in thinking, their performance under pressure and their ability to re-present the correct information to the staff selection panel.

◆ *Group discussions*

This is a useful exercise where the candidates are involved in a group discussion focussing on a current educational issue. Here, the candidates are left to decide on electing the chairperson and how they would like the discussions to be carried out. I want to point out that this is not a simple exercise because candidates have to be widely read on the various issues concerning education. However, an exercise of this nature will indicate to the selectors the candidate's leadership ability, the use of relevant previous knowledge and information, as well as their ability to work in harmony within a team.

◆ *Written tasks*

The principal of a school constantly keeps the parent community informed of all school activities via circulars. Therefore, candidates could be given written exercises which will help selectors to assess the candidate's philosophical views and communication skills. A good example would be to ask candidates how they envisage to drive the school through the process of change or on a specific theme relating to school. Anderson (1991) supports the idea of written tasks. He believes that an exercise of this nature would indicate to the panel the candidate's ability in written communication.

◆ *In-tray exercise*

I want to stress that most principals are constantly faced with complaints from parents or receive requests from the department with regard to school issues. I think that it would be a good idea if candidates are asked to perform an exercise where they will have to either respond to the department of education and/or parents on a specific issue (written or oral). By candidates completing this kind of exercise, selectors can evaluate the candidate's ability in the day-to-day running of the school.

◆ *Selection tests*

The applicants could be asked to complete a selection test depicting their attitude, character, personality, skills etc. towards managing a school. These selection tests must be carefully planned. Before using selection tests, selection panels or committees are advised to consult the Department of Education with regard to its suitability.

After the interviews and other methods of selection are completed, each candidate must be evaluated in relation to the person specification and whether the candidate measures up to the post. Sometimes, selectors are faced with the difficulty in choosing a candidate where there are more than one person equally suited to the post. In these circumstances the choice of the final candidate must be based on the candidate's overall suitability (NAGM, 1996). In an article written by Krinsky (1994), it was clear that the superintendent was chosen because he was the right person, in the right place at the right time. Furthermore, the candidate was a person of integrity, proven records and well respected in the eyes of the community.

Therefore, a lesson could be learnt from the selection process of the superintendent that if individuals need to be considered for principalship, then they must have a proven track record through the lens of the community. Thus Anderson (1991:29) argues:

*We are in a very competitive business and we must make sure, through our process (community lens), we don't miss the best candidates.*

However, in Kenya, the selection of principals are different. Here, a teacher with academic qualification and strong personality could be selected as a principal and once promoted the newly appointed principal could acquire administrative skills while in the position. But,

this view has changed due to the complexity of schools in Kenya (Walker et al, 1991). In India, Bhouraskar (cited in Walker et al, 1991:120) in his study found that many teachers who entered the profession were promoted as principals on the basis of seniority yet didn't have administrative skills. He argues that the teaching profession would experience a double loss. Firstly, a good teacher is lost from the teaching sector. Secondly, the very same teacher who has been promoted to principal actually makes a mess of the school administration.

All candidates must possess administrative skill as well as experience related to the job and not just displaying strong personality. Reason being, a person appointed on the above basis may not be able to "deliver the goods". To emphasise the importance of newly appointed principals in possessing sound administrative and managerial skills, I refer to a study conducted by the Kentucky Association of School Administration and the Appalachian Education Laboratory in America. In this study a newly appointed principal highlighted the following:

*There just doesn't seem to be enough time. I didn't anticipate the day would be so fragmented. This job is so demanding and I feel pulled from all directions (Anderson, 1991:52).*

The above study proves that selectors must assess applicants in many areas including time management, financial management, stress management etc. and not only the personality of the candidate. Spillane (1994) warns that the role of the principal has been reduced to organisational managers rather than educational leaders. She stresses that it is very important that we select leaders (principals) who could take their learning institutions forward and not be just managers of enterprises.

Therefore, selectors appointing a principal who is energetic and dynamic with sufficient classroom experience, but lacking management experience should be carefully considered. A principal with limited experience would not provide a mature type of leadership and thus his staff may respond negatively (Waters, 1983:8).

It is vital when making the final decision in selecting senior staff to confirm any doubts by asking questions in respect of the candidate's curriculum vitae. Thereafter, selectors should try their best to come to a decision via consensus. For this to happen the chairperson of the panel must allow members to express their views and ideas of the candidates. In cases where consensus cannot be reached, members should vote. The decision would then be based on majority of the members' votes. If there's a deadlock after voting, the chairperson of the panel can use his casting (second vote) to arrive at the decision. Will this decision be respected by the members of the school governing body? This may be uncertain. However, the panel's decision will have to be approved by the SGB.

However, Sallis (1996:77) felt that since the governing body has delegated the staff selection process to a selection panel, it would unlikely use its power of ratification to stop the process (Sallis, 1996:77; NAGM, 1996). The main responsibilities of the Staff Selection Committee are the following :

- to give a summary of the discussions that took place during the process.
- to outline the criteria for the selection of candidates.
- to give an overview of the recommended candidates.



Quite often governing body members would be happy with the choice of candidates by the Selection Committee and freely endorse it. However, there may be cases where the governing body members may not sanction the choices due to improper procedures used. In these cases they may call for a redo of the entire process.

On the other hand, the governing body could also ask the panel to forward another candidate for recommendation. After agreement, the applicant with the highest score should be offered the post first. However, some applicants may have accepted appointments in other schools or in some cases might have withdrawn for personal reasons. If this happens then the candidate with the next highest score should be offered the post (Rebore, 1991:102; Waters, 1983:19).

The offering of posts are slightly different in the South African context in the sense that the final interview scores are only a guide. The Staff Selection Committee could select a candidate with a lower score, provided that sound educational reasons are advanced for such a decision such as affirmative action, gender, demography, etc.

Once the candidates have been ranked by the selectors and ratified by the governing body, the question is who has the final say? Burgess and Sofer (1978:41) state that the final decision of the school governing body for an appointment is only a recommendation to the education authorities. This is similar to the South African context since governing bodies are now empowered to recommend to the Department of Education the appointment of senior management staff at their school (South African Schools Act No. 84 section 20 (i) of 1996).



The Department of Education as the employer may only deviate from such recommendations if the candidate:

- ▶ does not have the required qualifications
- ▶ has been found guilty of misconduct
- ▶ was chosen based on improper influence

(South African Schools Act No. 84, schedule 2, section 4 (3) of 1996).

Once the appointment is finalised by the school governing body, disputes may arise. Various studies (Everard & Morris, 1986:71; Gorton, 1977:158; Wragg &Partington, 1995:77) highlight their experiences in respect of the selection and appointment process. Quite often unsuccessful candidates always enquired why they were not appointed as senior managers. Therefore, it is often a “must” that comprehensive notes are kept demarcating the applicants’ success levels. This is invaluable information if there are queries, disputes or complaints regarding the selection process and especially in areas of race and gender discrimination.

However, Waters (1984:80) found that extensive note-taking during an interview would indicate to the candidate that he is not being listened to. However, some kind of record must be kept of each person for verification. It is also a useful idea to carry out a post-mortem of the shortlisting and interview process. In this way areas for improvement could be planned (Waters, 1984:87).

To conclude my literature review on the selection and appointment process, I emphasise that the entire selection process is highly subjective ie. the interpretation of the selection

policy itself, the shortlisting and the interview process. Selectors come from different walks of life and therefore each selector will differ in their views and perceptions of candidates. I therefore included the next chapter as the "Interpretation of text: a problem statement."

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE INTERPRETATION OF TEXTS: A PROBLEM STATEMENT

I decided to include this as a separate chapter to explain the selector's difficulty in choosing senior management staff for their schools. The introduction of the South African Schools Act of 1996 in respect to the role of school governing bodies in the promotion process brings in a host of complexities in interpreting the new promotion legislation. Selectors were not sufficiently workshopped on the clear understanding of the selection procedures as well as vital aspects such as a common scoring system but were left to devise methods of their own to score applicants on varying abilities levels.

Although the interview method is commonly used for selection of staff in schools it must be pointed out that selectors did not have thorough skills for this purpose yet they were entrusted to carry out this major responsibility which would eventually affect the lives of so many children. Therefore, the difficulties of selection and appointment of senior staff must be understood against the fact that parents as selectors had engaged in the selection process for the very first time and had also received very little training to cope with this enormous task.

I used the subjective model and the interpretative paradigm to offer some explanation as to why many selectors had difficulties and different perspectives with respect to the choice of candidates for their schools. Thomas Greenfield is one of the main proponents of the subjective model. He argues that the individual is at the heart of any organisation.

Subjective theorists believe that various individuals have different values and aspirations, therefore they perceive their institutions from different perspectives. The individuals would interpret the events and situations based on their background.

The central feature of the subjective model is that it focuses on individuals within their institutions rather than the total institution itself. 'Subjective models assume that organisations are the creations of the people within them. Participants are thought to interpret situations in different ways and these individual perceptions are derived from their background. Organisations have different meanings for each of their members and exist only in the experience of those members' (Bush, 1995:93). Within this model, it suggests that each individual has a subjective and selective perception of the organisation. Therefore, the various events and situations have different meanings for the various individuals within the organisation. Organisations such as educational institutions are seen as complex units which embodies and reflect the various meanings as well as the perceptions of the many individuals within it.

School governing bodies are such bodies within educational institutions. They are social constructions because they emerge from the interaction of the various stakeholders in education. The structure of any organisation is the product of the interaction and behaviour of members. For example, the structure of the school governing body or committee describes what members do as well as how they relate within the organisation. Each structure may have different meanings as interpreted by different members within the organisation.

These governing bodies are representative of the various stakeholders in education who are elected while some are co-opted. These members are legally entitled to form sub-committees such as the Staff Selection Committee. Parents serving on these sub-committees are co-opted due to their expertise in educational matters. They come from all walks of life and have various backgrounds. They perform different tasks and live different lives (Greenfield, 1980:39).

However, all members of governing bodies are responsible for setting targets, goals and accomplishing the mission for their schools. Greenfield (cited in Bush, 1995:101) contends 'that goals which appear to be those of the organisation are really the objectives of powerful individuals within the institutions.' In many cases principals and deputy principals promote their own beliefs of how an organisation should be administered and controlled.

From the above explanation it seems problematic because when senior management staff are selected, the goals of the school are borne in mind by all selectors. I strongly argue that many selectors don't really know what the schools goals are, yet they are left with the great task of choosing the most important person to lead the organisation towards the agreed goals. It is not surprising that the senior manager who is selected may have his own aims and objectives for the school. Therefore, it is absolutely important that selectors need to acquaint themselves thoroughly with a common understanding of how they would like to "move" their school to a higher level.

Nevertheless, the interpretation of the goals and mission of the school depend directly on the values, background and experience held by each member of the school governing body. The different meanings placed by individual selectors on really what the school goals are, and how they can be achieved, leads to conflict between selectors. Where the meanings are the same, individuals within the school engage in common action to pursue the goals of the school. Greenfield (cited in Bush, 1995:76) argues that conflict arises in the difference in the individual's value system. Therefore, in interpreting visual information such as interviews or even text (selection procedures) relating to the selection procedures will definitely lead to problems.

Parents were handicapped with limited knowledge of selection but had to focus on interpreting, understanding and read meanings from the selection procedure manual. The entire manual was discussed by the Department of Education in one day offering only guidelines for selection. Parents reported that the training was confusing and too complex to understand in a single day. The department then outlined dates for the completion of the selection process. Bearing in mind the time constraints, parents had to get the task of selection completed. Although parents are important role players and the fact that they come from different socio - political, economic and ethnic backgrounds (Gokar, 1998:10), each parent would invariably interpret the selection manual differently which leads to stress and anxiety amongst selectors.

The interpretative paradigm offers an explanation for the difference in the interpretation of the manual by parents. The interpretative theory outlines that since individuals come from different lifestyles, backgrounds, belief systems, etc. they would invariably think and

interpret the social actions, processes and events differently. They have within them a schema of all the experiences of their past. Therefore, parents who are selectors would most definitely differ in their views of a particular candidate. This is attributed to their past experience and the context of the situation. Derrida (cited in Preissle-Goetz & leCompte, 1991) also argues that you can never really know the meaning of a text because people precisely read and interpret differently. The same text will have different meanings to different people. The author of a text or manual is the source of its truth. You can never really know the meaning of truth. But what really changes is the interpretation of the truth during the process of selection and appointment. Guba and Lincoln (1994) also explain the theory-ladenness of facts. They state that people have something within themselves that make them see or interpret texts, situations, objects, etc. differently.

After having multiple interpretation of the manual selectors commenced with the shortlisting process. During this process the selectors read every curriculum vitae and allocated points for every applicant using the seven point scale. All applicants were rated on various characteristics such as leadership, community involvement, organisational ability etc. Such rating of categories required agreement by the various selectors. The selection criteria instrument which was used to quantify the applicant's responses and the interpretation of the curriculum vitae of all applicants are very subjective (Rebore, 1991:107).

The aspect of subjectivity was also expressed by Colin Morgan (as cited in Hoyle and Mchahon, 1986:156) that selectors could use a positive statement for a candidate whilst another selector could use the same statement for the same candidate and express it in a

different way which would have a negative effect on the candidate. For example, a candidate may have worked very hard in his school and transformed it to higher levels (positive) or the applicant could be interpreted as having very limited experience in one school (negative). Therefore, selector's interpretation of a candidate's worth and capacity will vary.

After completing the subjective shortlisting stage applicants are called for an interview. A major implication of the Merritt's study (cited in Gorton, 1977) reveals that an interviewer's attitude is very powerful in that it can to a great extent influence the evaluation of a candidate. This means that a highly qualified candidate could be rejected (based on perception which is different from that of the selectors) or in favour of one who is less qualified (due to the applicant's attitude about education being similar to those of the selectors).

The issue of subjectiveness deals with the individual's interpretation of behaviour rather than the situation and behaviour itself. 'The problem in the judgement of behaviour during the interview is that it is rarely realistic, typical or natural and is therefore a poor sample of behaviour' (Decker, 1981:72). Within the subjective perspective, it is assumed that individuals would have varied interpretations of the same event. Silverman (cited in Bush, 1995:95) asserts that 'the same individual may even, at different times or in different situations, assign varying meanings to what appears to an observer to be the same act'.

Quite often there are different interpretations among the chairperson and all the selectors of a single selection event. This difference in divergent meanings result because each



individual sees reality differently. Reason being, each of their own perspective has its own legitimacy. 'All observations are filtered through one's worldviews, values and perspectives. Reality is not an objective entity, rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality' (Merriam, 1988:39). Observation is theory-laden. If selectors are observing applicant's behaviour and their manner of answering questions, then each selector will observe and interpret the applicant and situation differently. This is due to the fact that all selectors have something within themselves which has an effect on interpreting and making sense of their observation. Therefore, observation of any text is never neutral.

The selector who is observing, actually uses past experiences in the context of that situation to make the best judgement. All selectors have stored in memory a schema for each of the experiences of their past. Therefore, prior learning and experiences will direct them to observe and interpret behaviour, verbal communication, situations, etc. differently. There will be no objectivity. As Decker (1981:72) argues:

*No one has produced conclusive evidence that is possible to accurately judge complex personality traits or behavioural inclinations of human beings by observing their behaviour in an employment interview, or in any face to face contact which remotely resembles it.*

One would also find that the subjective model also places less emphasis on the external environment and its influences on the organisation and its committees. I believe that since the assumptions that human behaviour emanates from personal interpretations of events, one has to look at the source of meanings. Personal interpretations depend on the selector's profession, the ethos of their institutions, the interaction of the selectors with prominent members of the community, their family background, whether they are members of

professional bodies or clubs etc. These are some of the sources that may lead to selectors having differences in their interpretations.

After the completion of the subjective interview stage, selectors determined the final rank order of the candidates. This is the most crucial stage of the selection process. Selectors display their dynamism, experiences and belief systems during their debates, discussions and finalisation of the most suitable candidates. The most dominant view or standpoint would ultimately force a certain decision. Staff selectors themselves have their own vision for their school based on their own experiences.

Each selector may claim that their vision of the school is the most ideal one based on their own thinking. Two staff selectors were questioned in an interview on the type of principal they were looking for. One explained that he was looking for 'a principal who can take the school into the new millennium, with a greater vision' (Selector 3, Interview: 19 March 1999) while the other wanted 'a principal to take the school to greater heights' (Selector 4, Interview: 20 March 1999). The interpretation of both selectors in respect of the type of principal they are looking for would be very subjective.

Once senior managers are appointed they bring their own values, meanings and goals to their schools. Many school leaders lead their institutions based on their own vision and interest. Most often senior managers because of their position, impose their interpretations of events on the rest of the staff of the school. However, there are many people who hold high ranking positions on paper but in practice are unable to perform their duties satisfactorily. Therefore, choosing a leader for a school is very subjective because it is a

product of how selectors interpret applicant's CV's, academic qualifications, personal qualities and the skills needed for performing the job. I conclude that all selectors will always have multiple interpretations of a situation, events or behaviour of people. However, in practice, the multiple interpretations and meanings perceived by selectors does cluster into certain patterns of "common interpretations" which enable selectors or observers to make some generalisations about the situation, event or behaviour of people.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PLOTTING THE METHODOLOGICAL COURSE

#### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the design of my study. I used both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting data to capture the full picture of the staff selection and appointment process.

#### 4.2 Two levels of data collection

To answer the two critical questions, two levels of data collection had been completed. A comprehensive questionnaire and an in-depth case study has elicited sufficient data to answer the critical questions. This study answered the following critical questions:

- What do school governing bodies perceive as the strengths and advantages of the new staff selection and appointment process?
  
- What do school governing bodies identify as the limits and weaknesses of the new staff selection and appointment process?

##### 4.2.1 First level of data collection

A comprehensive questionnaire was sent to all schools where promotion posts were available in the largest region ie. the North Durban Region. This level of data collection revealed a broader spectrum of the views, perceptions and experiences of school governing body members with regard to the selection process.

#### 4.2.2 Second level of data collection

I conducted a case study of one school in which there was a serious dispute. This case study school has been chosen as a reputational sample. It represents a slice of the staff selection and appointment process within a single school setting. More importantly it must be noted that this additional "close-up" data will give depth, context, content and nuance to the survey questionnaire data.

I used the case study method not to provide a simple description of the data during the selection process but more to explore how the five selectors engaged and dealt with the selection process thus exposing the strengths and weaknesses of the selection process itself. The decision to use the case study method was considered by me as the ideal method of data collection, because it allowed me to delve deeper into the various stages of selection.

Bell (1989) and Merriam (1988) support the use of case study method as a data collection technique. They explain that this approach is absolutely appropriate for researchers since it gives an opportunity for a single aspect of a problem to be investigated in some depth within limited time. A study of this nature makes it possible to probe deeply and analyse intensely the issues that are being investigated (Cohen & Manion, 1985; Yin, 1981).

All methods of gathering information had been used in my case study. I made use of triangulation. This is the use of multiple methods of collecting data. It combines dissimilar methods such as interviews, observations and physical evidence to study the same unit. Fraenkel and Wallen (cited in Joseph, 1998:34) highlight that 'observations are a primary

source of data collection in doing case study research. Data collected from observing phenomena, listening to people talk and interact is very useful.'

The reason for using different techniques in data collection is that the flaws of one method are often the strengths of the other, and by combining these methods, I would be able to achieve the best of each method (Merriam, 1988:69). I obtained all letters, memoranda, minutes of meetings etc. of the selection process. In addition to these primary sources, interviews were also conducted with the five selectors to strengthen my case study.

I have been sensitive to the interviewees' views and opinions and the nature of the data itself. I was aware of my own personal biases and how they may influence the data collection process. However, it must be pointed out that while scrutinizing the interview transcripts, minutes of meetings, letters, memorandums etc. with a critical lens I reminded myself of objectivity at all times. My aim was to engage in a telescopic view inside a single school selection and appointment process.

Once all the interviews were conducted, transcripts completed and documents collected, I then started to carefully organise them in a structured way following the sequence of the selection process. This was done in order to journey through the "humps and bumps" of the selection process. I ensured that what was to be presented to the audience was the closest to the actual selection process. This was done by presenting the draft report of the case study back to the selectors, making sure that the data was plausible and it represented the correct meanings and intentions of the selectors.

The extent to which my case study is credible (resonance validity) with the five selectors can be noted by the actual comments made by them after a few amendments were made:

*This case study has been checked and verified as excellent, very objective and an actual reflection of the selection process (Selectors, Correspondence, 19 April 1999).*

Guba and Lincoln (cited in Merriam, 1988:169) argue that validating data through case studies increases the internal validity of the case study. Taking a neutral stance when synchronising all the views and opinions was not easy, but a real challenge.

#### 4.3 Target population

The population for this study consists of all schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) with senior management promotion posts. There are eight educational regions in KZN, each with school based promotions. The eight regions are Durban South, Empangeni, Ladysmith, North Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Port Shepstone, Ulundi and Vryheid . I confidently chose the North Durban Region as my focus because (a) I have been teaching in this region for 12 years which made accessibility easier and (b) that this was the largest of the eight regions. A target population is defined as all subjects on a clearly defined list. One of the great difficulties is that there must be a list available for the target group on which the researcher intends to conduct his research. It is vital that the list be accurate and up-to-date for it to have utility. For my research the target group was extracted from a booklet (available to all schools) outlining the various senior management posts available in Kwa Zulu Natal. A list of all the schools having promotion posts of senior managers in the North Durban Region was then compiled. The target population was 295 schools.

## 4.4 Sampling

In this section I discussed sampling of schools for the survey and the case study.

### 4.4.1 Sampling of schools for the survey

Initially, I extracted a sample from the target population. In my study I assumed that since Indian, African, Coloured and White Schools have different political origins and different educational administrative levels under apartheid, today they are even more likely to experience different kinds of problems with respect to staff selection and the appointment of senior managers. The varied experiences of the participants were quite legitimate aspects in determining my sample size. There were 23 whites schools, 15 Coloured schools, 150 Indian schools and 107 African schools (both inclusive of primary and secondary schools) which equalled 295 (target population) in North Durban Region.

Due to the small number of White and Coloured schools, these schools had been selected as part of my sample. Since there were many Indian and African schools, I decided to conduct a selective random sample in these two categories. The sample in the Indian and African schools had to be chosen in such a way that each school from the population had an equal opportunity of being selected (Anderson, 1993:198; Best & Kahn, 1986:12; Cohen & Manion, 1985:98; Slavin, 1984:99). From the 107 African schools I randomly selected 21 primary schools and 26 high schools (47). Thereafter, from the 150 Indian schools I randomly selected 21 primary schools and 24 high schools (45). I believed that a sample size of 130 (44%) altogether was adequate to represent the target population. Furthermore, the choice of 130 subjects was based on the availability of finance at that point in time.



The following schematic representation illustrates the composition of the sample after the combination of selective and random sample of schools were made:

Former Departments of Education	Primary	High	Total number of schools	Make up of Sample
House of Delegates	21	24	45	Indians
Dept. of Education&Training (DET), Kwa-Zulu Natal (DEC)	21	26	47	Africans
House of Representatives	11	4	15	Coloureds
House of Assembly	16	7	23	Whites

Total Sample size                      130 (44% of 295)

I decided to mail the questionnaires to the 130 schools in the sample. The comprehensive questionnaire contained a covering letter which outlined the topic, the reason for choice of the topic, the usefulness of the study, anonymity, confidentiality as well as instruction as to who must fill in the questionnaire. A self-addressed stamped envelope was provided. This was done so that the respondent will not have the burden of any finance and that hopefully it would increase the data on the views and perceptions of school governing body members. The questionnaire was designed in such a manner that it did not require too much of the respondent's time.

Later, I realized that this method of data collection did not guarantee a good return rate and would affect the kind of data I am looking for. I made every effort to make it easy for participants to return the questionnaires. Surprisingly enough, the return rate was absolutely low. As a researcher, I had to think of ways and means to deal with the problem at hand.

Being concerned about this I decided to send questionnaires to the rest of the target group (295) with the hope of obtaining more views and perceptions of the staff selection and appointment process. The increased sample size from 130 to 295 had proved to be extremely beneficial because the return of questionnaire increased from 35 to 90. After all, the initial idea was to reach as many schools as possible, since the process was carried out for the very first time and that school governing body members would have had much to talk about.

#### 4.4.2 Sampling of school for the case study

I decided to compile a case study of a single school where there was a dispute over the selection and appointment of a principal. 'One selects a case study approach because one wishes to understand the particular issue in depth, not because one wants to know what is generally true of the many' (Merriam, 1988: 173). How many and how small the case study are less important. 'Numbers are really not conclusive in merit and it is hoped that the sample school would present a window to forgotten realms that beckon urgent attention' (Joseph, 1998:13). Since one case study was undertaken I am guarded about making generalisations from it.

## 4.5 Instruments

I used questionnaires and a single case study as research instruments. The combination of these instruments are really powerful in my research study. The choice of the case study was more to yield rich “close up” data from the selection process and more especially to put flesh on the bones of the survey questionnaire responses.

### 4.5.1 Survey questionnaire

The above research tool was used as a data gathering device. It consisted of three sections namely :

- Section A : Biographic data
- Section B : Scaled responses
- Section C : Open ended questions

A Likert type of scale as indicated below, was used in drawing up section B of the questionnaire.

Statement	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
Some members had little knowledge about the selection process					

I was confident that this type of scale was excellent in capturing the perceptions, opinions or attitudes of respondents. Further, it is easier to respond and analysis is not so difficult. The most commonly experienced problems by school governing bodies with respect to the selection process were carefully

listed in the form of statements one below the other. These problems were gathered from conversations with SGB members, staff, principals and readings from the newspapers. According to Best and Kahn (1986:181) 'the correctness of the statements are not important as long as they express opinions held by a substantial number of people'. The statements were balanced with positive and negative ones. The Likert Scale was used in order to register the extent to which the respondents agree or disagree with a particular statement of the selection process.

The open-ended questions required the respondent's personal experiences and opinions on a particular aspect of the selection process. These questions gave respondents the freedom to express more deeply the aspects relating to strengths and weaknesses of the selection process.

#### 4.5.2 Case study

This research instrument was most valuable since I was able to zoom into the staff selection and appointment process within a single school setting. To present a case of staff selection I used documentary evidence and interviews. The semi-structured interview method was used to have flexibility and freedom of asking immediate "burning follow up questions". The interview was a highly purposeful method in a sense that it goes far beyond a conversation. The reason for the choice of this method of data collection was that it allows for in-depth probing and thus seeking more complete answers for the two critical questions. The depth and quality of responses were achieved through the

interview process and not so easily by other means. This method made it easier for me to probe into more crucial and sensitive aspects as well as to get “beneath the surface” of the topic at hand (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992:104).

The “comment on and elaborate type of questions” (refer to appendix A) allowed me to delve into the process of selection in more depth and also to clear up some misunderstanding of the selection policy itself. These open-ended questions also allowed the respondents to openly and freely express their thoughts on the selection process itself. The interview was taped and carefully transcribed. The various stages of the selection process had been observed by five selectors. It was very interesting to merge the different perspectives of five selectors. While drawing up the draft report, I could actually feel the “vibes” of the selection process.

#### 4.6 Pilot testing the questionnaire and interview schedules

I conducted a pilot test of the questionnaire and interview schedules. The main purpose of this exercise was to sharpen the research instruments (Bell, 1989:65; Best & Kahn, 1986:168; Slavin, 1984:91; Tuckman, 1988:233). The pilot testing assisted me by identifying ambiguities in the various statements and questions. This process also helped to clarify the wording of questions and also indicated omissions. The pilot test permitted reactions from a few staff and school governing body members. Slavin (1984:133) supported the idea of pilot testing research instruments. However, he argues that it is very difficult to construct a perfect interview protocol but it is always wise to pilot the instruments so that weaknesses can be detected and corrected.

#### 4.7 Validity

There are various methods of validity checks such as pilot tests, expert review rating of draft reports by participants etc. I used pilot testing, returned draft reports to selectors for accuracy checks and considered rival explanation for the same issue of staff selection. The pilot testing conducted increased the internal validity of the data from the questionnaires and interviews. Reason being, it increased the degree of truthfulness of responses and assured the accuracy of data collected. The resonance validity of my case study had been increased. This was done by presenting a draft report back to all the selectors to make sure that the data was rid of incorrect statements and facts or omissions from selection documents during the interview process. The validity of my case study had been further strengthened since I presented the contrasting views of the selectors especially during the re-convened ratification meeting.

#### 4.8 The issue of ethics

I must state at this point that I gained permission from each and every member of the Selection Committee including the principal who was in dispute. I had the support of all my respondents. They granted me permission in writing with the following words:

*We granted the researcher permission to use and publish any aspect pertaining to the interviews held with us and other documents that emanated from the selection process. All references to the name of the school, place, person and scores to be fictitious to retain anonymity and to ensure confidentiality (Selectors, Letter, 19 April 1999).*

I did gain access into the selection process in a very cautious manner. I must state that it was sensitive in nature because the process was still under dispute and that tensions among

members were “running high”. However, I found it very comfortable to work with the five selectors since each one of them felt that a study of this nature was highly recommended and would prove helpful to many audiences. Although the various selectors had different opinions of the selection process they were absolutely helpful in the sense that they read the draft report several times. They were also deeply involved in my research, especially in ensuring that their actual views and experiences of the selection process were carefully reported.

I conformed to ethical issues such as keeping the data in strict confidence and making sure that the identity of the respondents are protected at all times (Anderson, 1993:24; Best & Kahn, 1986:45 ; Slavin, 1984:135; Tuckman, 1988:15).

The respondents of the questionnaires were reminded that the information which they provided will be treated with total confidentiality and further it would be used for research purposes only. The anonymity of the various respondents was stressed with the hope of eliciting objective and honest responses.

## 4.9 Data Analysis

### 4.9.1 Analysis of questionnaires

I used the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programme to analyse the data from the questionnaires. For section A and B of the questionnaire the following were assigned: variable names, variable labels, values and value labels to each statement. A spread sheet was created to capture the coded data from 90 questionnaires. The coded data from the questionnaires were then “punched” onto the spreadsheet.

I then performed computerized frequency tables in order to ascertain statistically the relationship between two or more variables. I also performed frequencies and cross-tabulations for the various respondents, as well as in each of the Ex-Departments. I examined the data checking for relationships, similarities and differences. Graphs, tables and figures were used to best represent the data and to improve the quality of explanations of the responses. All the questionnaires were carefully numbered so that it could be referred to later when the need arises. Section B responses were coded from 1-5 indicating the level of agreement or disagreement as follows :

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> 3		

For the open ended questions in section C, the responses were classified into different areas of strengths and weaknesses of the selection process. This was done manually. Some “burning issues” and “powerful voices” had been quoted in the analysis as supporting evidence to preserve the richness of the qualitative data.

#### 4.9.2 Analysis of Case Study

I transcribed the 5 interviews and read through them several times. I then looked at common views, patterns and trends of the selection process as implemented by the Selection Committee of Valakim Primary School. I completed a document analysis by analytically reading through the contents of



all minutes, letters, memoranda in relation to my observations and interviews with my respondents. There was an instance where I had to go back to one of my respondents to correctly interpret what was being stated. Therefore, during my analysis stage I did bounce to my respondents to make sure that I analysed the information properly. This helped me to triangulate the data obtained from all the data sources.

#### 4.10 Limitations

The data is limited in that I had chosen only the views of the Staff Selection Committee members of the North Durban Region. Since my target population was based from only one out of eight regions, generalizations cannot be made across all public schools throughout the country. According to Anderson (1993) the fundamental principle in sampling is that one cannot generalize from the sample to anything other than the population from which the sample was drawn. However, Tuckman (1988:4) acknowledges that any study will have external validity if the results collected would apply in the real world and to similar situations.

Although the respondents in the research had full rights not to participate in the research study, the reluctance of respondents to fill in the questionnaire could be attributed to the fact that the Selection Committee members filled in a form of confidentiality and they were not prepared to divulge any information to me as a researcher inspite of assuring anonymity and confidentiality.

#### 4.11 Conclusion

The Selection Committee members had this enormous task of selecting senior management staff for their schools for the very first time. Selection Committee members ought to realize that they are now empowered by the South African Schools Act of 1996 and that they are equal partners in shaping education. Their contribution to the study would really be useful to themselves and the various sectors as pointed out in chapter one of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LINKING THE CHAINS OF EVIDENCE

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I carefully translated all the data from a survey of stakeholders involved in the staff selection process into a narrative account. This chapter reveals the analysis of the views, opinions and experiences of selectors in implementing the new selection and appointment legislation. The questionnaires were administered to 295 selectors in 188 primary schools and 107 secondary schools drawn from four racially divided Departments of Education. "Selectors" are all those people who have been elected, nominated or entrusted the task of selecting staff.

The questionnaire data included statistical summary information analysed on SPSS and open ended sections subjected to qualitative analysis. This chapter offers insight into the real dilemmas of democratisation of the selection process for senior managers in South African schools after apartheid.

#### 5.2 Moving from data into narrative

It is important to begin by presenting the percentage of selectors who participated from the primary and secondary schools respectively, as demonstrated in table 5.1. Clearly, the data reflects a high percentage of selectors who responded from primary schools. The most important reason for this high percentage is that I made personal visits to many primary schools which were near my place of work. I also knew many primary school teachers who assisted me to distribute and collect the questionnaires. Therefore, based on the unequal data from primary and secondary schools I am guarded about making generalizations about all public schools in South Africa.

LEVEL OF SCHOOL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOLS	27	33%
PRIMARY SCHOOL	54	67%
TOTAL	81	100%
DID NOT INDICATE	9	10%
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	90	

Table 5.1 : The level of respondents

It is also very important to present the demographic distribution of the stakeholder respondents in this study, as demonstrated in Table 5.2. "Stakeholder" (at school level) means specifically the various groupings of people, for example the parents, teachers, principals etc. who participate in the decision making process within a school. Clearly, table 5.2 shows that majority of parents did participate in the selection and appointment process. This can be supported by the fact that the power of the selection process is now vested in the 'hands of the parents.' I see the participation of parents increasing in the future because they are now beginning to realise the importance of their role functions and how it impacts on their own children. However, it must be noted that senior managers ie. principals and deputy principals played an equally participative role. It simply shows that senior managers within schools still have a major input in the selection process.

Stakeholders	Teachers	Parents	Senior Managers	
			Principals	Deputy Principals
Percentage	27%	37%	22%	14%
Frequency	22	30	18	11

Table 5.2 : The demographic distribution of stakeholders

The stakeholders belong to the various racially divided Departments of Education (Ex-Departments). The racially divided Departments of Education which are discussed are Ex-HOD which represents the former Indian Education Department, Ex-HOR which represents the former Coloured Department, Ex-HOA and Ex-Model C schools which represent the former White Education Department and finally the Ex-DET and Ex-DEC which represent the Black Education Department.

It is clear in figure 5.1 that majority of the selectors responded from the Ex-HOD schools. This is true because I made personal visits to surrounding schools which predominantly belonged to the former Ex-HOD Department. It is evident that there is a poor response from selectors in the Ex-DET, Ex-DEC (Kzn), Ex-Model C and Ex-HOR schools.

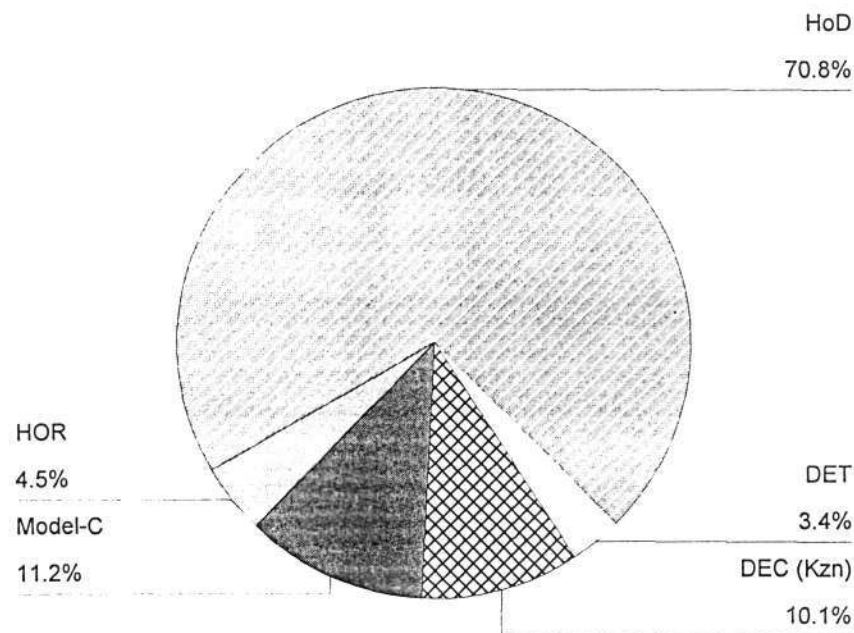


Figure 5.1: Respondents from the Ex-Departments

Nevertheless, the percentage of respondents from the other racially divided Departments of Education were absolutely vital. Reason being, the various schools in the Ex-Departments are assumed to have varied experiences of the selection and appointment process given the legacy of their past. Therefore, linking the chains of evidence would be really worthwhile.

It is also important to include the distribution of stakeholder respondents within the various Ex-departments, as demonstrated in table 5.3. This is due to the teachers, parents, principals and deputy principals from the racially divided Education Departments having different experiences. Thus their views, opinions and perceptions on the selection process would differ. It is quite interesting to note that a very high percentage of principals and deputy principals have still been involved in the selection and appointment of senior managers within each of the Ex-departments, especially, in Ex-DET, Ex-DEC and Ex-HOR schools. Sooner or later, the dominance of senior management staff in most Ex-DET, Ex-DEC and Ex-HOR schools will decrease. All parents are now beginning to realise their powers and would participate actively in the near future.

Stakeholders	HOD	DET	DEC	MODEL C	HOR
Teacher	32% (19)		14% (1)	25% (2)	
Parent	40% (24)		29% (2)	37.5% (3)	25% (1)
Principal	28% (17)	100% (2)	57% (4)	37.5% (3)	75% (3)
Deputy Principal					

Table 5.3: Spread of stakeholders within each Ex-Department

My study also examines the ratio of males and females who participated in the selection process. On assessing the gender-based responses (refer to figure 5.2) it is quite clear that majority of males (75%) participated in my study, as compared to 25% of the female responses. One of the main reasons for many females keeping out of the process is that the shortlisting was conducted well after working hours which extended late into the night, weekends as well as holidays. This had a severe impact on their safety at night, household chores and immediate family responsibilities. However, the composition of the Staff Selection Committee should be balanced in respect of gender. Both males and females must be involved in the discussions, selection and appointment of staff. Therefore, by having consensus on the suitability of the selection process days, dates etc. there would be an increase in the participation of females.

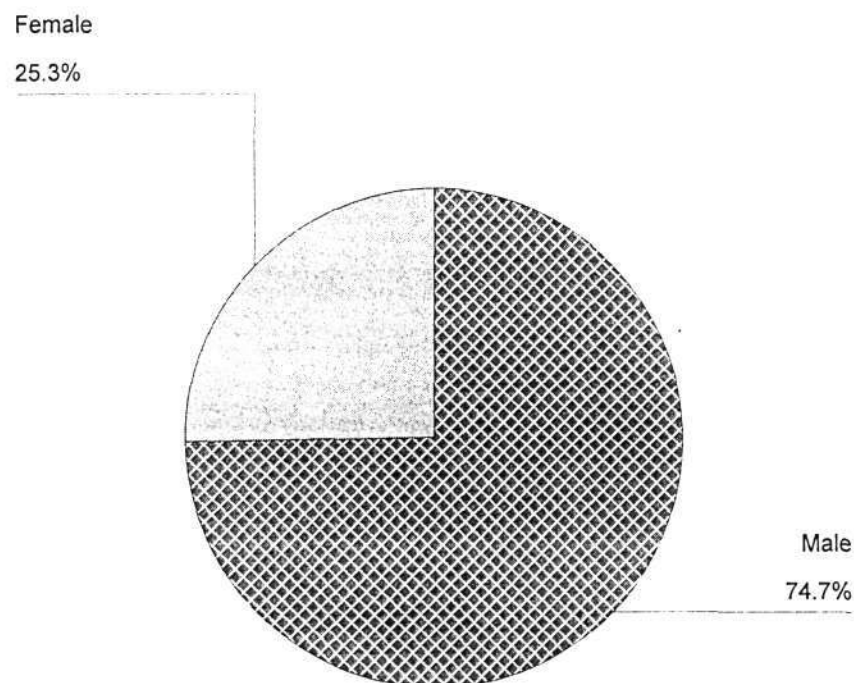


Figure 5.2: % of males & females who participated in the study

Stakeholders (both males and females) were given the opportunity for the very first time to select leaders for their schools, as demonstrated in table 5.4. Clearly, a large percentage of the stakeholders viz. 73% of teachers, 60% of parents, 59% of principals and 64% of deputy principals agreed that they were involved in the selection process for the first time.

STAKEHOLDERS	% AGREED	FREQUENCY
TEACHERS	73%	16
PARENTS	60%	18
PRINCIPALS	59%	10
DEPUTY PRINCIPALS	64%	7

Table 5.4 : Stakeholders participated in the process for the first time

A male deputy principal as a selector in one of the Ex-HOD schools stated that since they were involved in the process for the very first time they encountered great difficulties. Nevertheless, they benefited from the selection process. He stressed the following viewpoint:

*Selectors gained tremendously in terms of their experience in the selection process. This first experience would help them in their future appointment of staff.*

On the other hand, some selectors believed that the selection process was nothing new since they were involved in selection previously. This can be substantiated by the fact that 60% of the selectors (n=10) in Model C schools, indicated that they did have some knowledge in selection and were previously involved in the process.



The majority of selectors gained insights of the selection process either from their own experience or via the training provided by the Department of Education. The Department of Education via their regional and district structures provided guidelines to selectors of all school governing bodies in respect of the selection and appointment process. In spite of the one day training received by the selectors, it is clear, as demonstrated in figure 5.3, that 52% of the selectors argue that the “training programme” was too short (one day) and did not prepare them adequately to select senior management staff for their schools. The training programme comprised procedures to be followed during receipt of the application of candidates, shortlisting, interview, final rank order and ratification of candidates by governing body members.

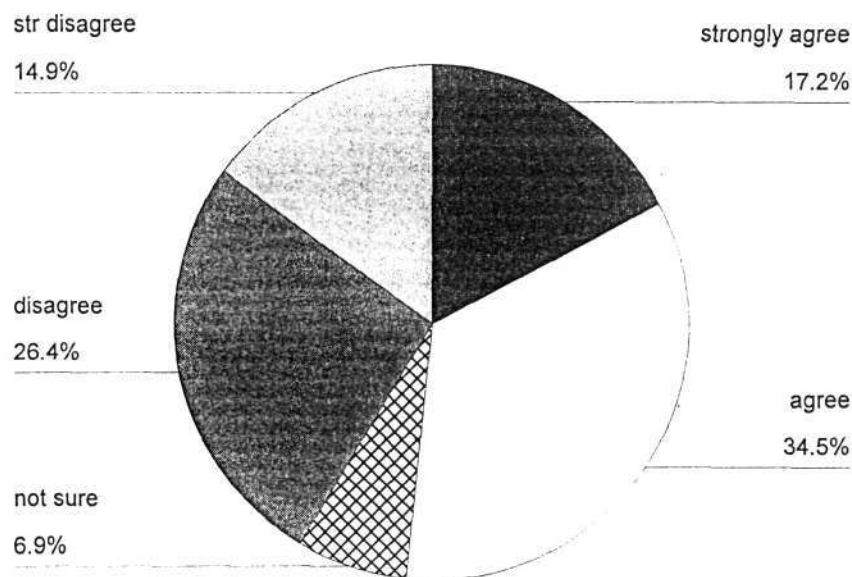


Figure 5.3: Short training programme did not prepare selectors for the process

School governing body members were not provided with sufficient training. Therefore, the time for assimilation of what was required in the selection process was limited.

Furthermore, very little guidance was forthcoming from the Department of Education. Selectors complained that telephone calls were not returned and department officials were never available. From the many queries that selectors had they believed that the training programme did not prepare them adequately to appoint good leaders. Greater capacity building programmes would therefore be required in the area of selection. This was highlighted by a female principal in one of the Ex-HOD schools. She complained:

*Members did not clearly understand the process. All members should be well trained in the selection process.*

In some instances, Selection Committee members were not given any training at all. One could imagine what kind of selection process was undertaken and the type of leader chosen. From this information there would definitely be a “weak” appointment and thus this would impact on the growth of the school. Nevertheless, this is reality. The lack of training was highlighted by a male principal from one of the House of Representative schools who reported that “there was a total lack of training”. This was further confirmed by another male selector in one of the Ex-HOD schools who also expressed a similar viewpoint:

*There were three members in the selection panel. Only one member was adequately prepared for the process. The other two did not have any training and experience prior to the selection process.*

But on the contrary, it is also clear that a relatively high number of selectors (41%) indicated that although the training programme was short, it did assist them to implement the selection process satisfactorily. The statistics from the Ex-Model C schools (n=10) 80% confirmed that the training programme did help them to carry out the process adequately.

However, it is also important to highlight, as demonstrated in figure 5.4, that majority of selectors (67%) agreed that they also had little knowledge of the selection process.

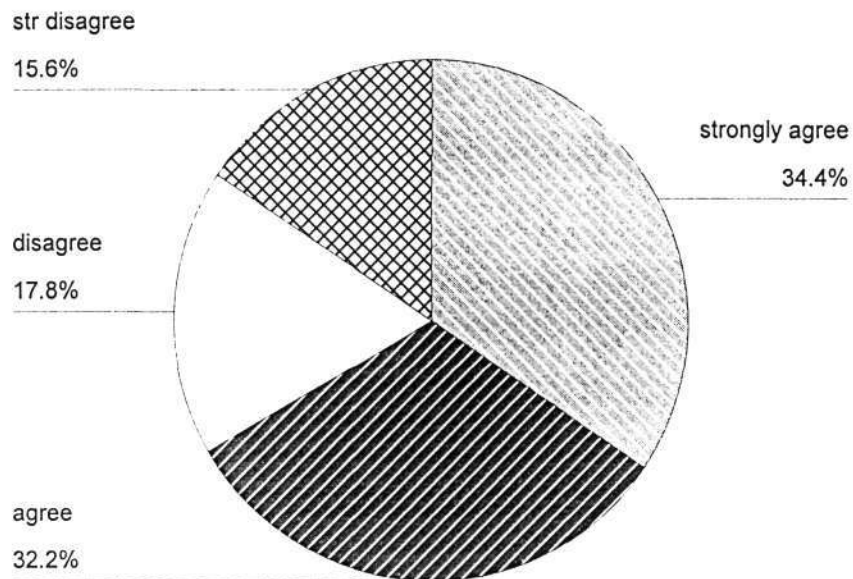


Figure 5.4: Some members had little knowledge about the selection process

The lack of adequate knowledge was substantiated by one of the male selectors who expressed the following view:

*In some instances housewives without even a high school education conducted the affairs of the Selection Committee. These members were not experienced to be on the Committee.*

The lack of knowledge and experience was also confirmed by other selectors. They expressed similar views by arguing that non-educators on the panel had little or no idea on how to make decisions in respect of the selection of candidates. They didn't even have an idea of the type of person they were looking for who would actually fulfil the

educational and professional needs of their institutions. However, 100% (n=10) of the Ex-Model C schools held the opposite view and indicated that they were already knowledgeable in the selection and appointment process.

Adding difficulties to the lack of knowledge and experience of the selection process, other problems arose such as members dropping out during the selection process. A relatively high percentage of selectors (47%), as demonstrated in figure 5.5, indicated that members dropping out during the process caused major problems.

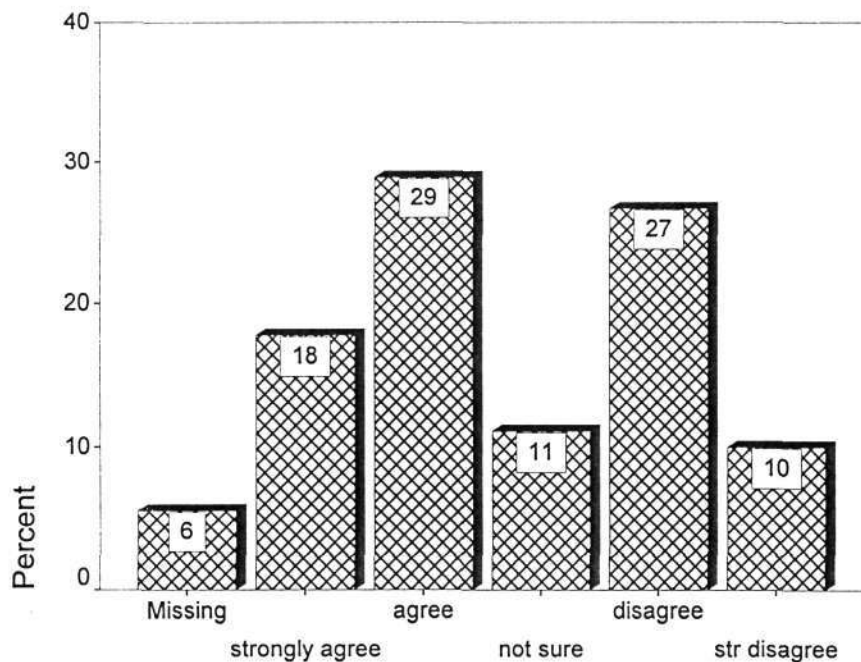


Figure 5.5: Members dropping off caused major problems

The problem of dropping out of members was emphasised by a selector from one of the Ex-DEC (KZN) schools. He was unhappy and argued that although selectors were made

aware of their duties and agreed to be part of the Selection Committee they later on dropped off during the process which left members stranded. He further stated that at times the continuity of the shortlisting process was broken due to members of the Selection Committee having to deal with other personal commitments. Some selectors were even involved in religious work while others were involved in business activities. This was further confirmed by a female selector from one of the Ex-HOD schools, who argued that members dropping off the Committee did impact negatively on the selection process. She complained:

*At times the continuity of the shortlisting process was broken due to members having to deal with other commitments. The selection process was indeed a long drawn labourious and daunting task.*

On the contrary, as demonstrated in figure 5.5, a substantial percentage (37%) of the selectors held the opposite view. They believed that members dropping off during the selection process did not cause major problems. It is clear, as demonstrated in table 5.5, that a high percentage of selectors within the racially divided Departments of Education, especially Ex-Model C schools expressed the opinion that dropping out during the process did not cause major problems.

EX-DEPARTMENTS	HOD	DET	DEC	MODEL C	HOR
PERCENTAGE	38%	-	-	78%	50%
FREQUENCY	23			7	2

Table 5.5 : Dropping out of members

Although 78% of the selectors in the Ex-Model C schools indicated that members dropping off was not a major problem, but there were problems in this regard. This was confirmed by a female selector in one of the Model C schools who presented her experience when one member was sick.

*It was time consuming especially when one selector was ill. The selection meeting had to be re-scheduled in respect to venues, notifying unions of the change etc.*

Apart from members dropping off during the selection process, inexperience in selection also made their task a difficult one. The aspect of experience could have been increased by school governing bodies having “mock sessions” of a typical selection process. Many of the selectors, as demonstrated in figure 5.6, indicated that most members were not experienced in the selection process.

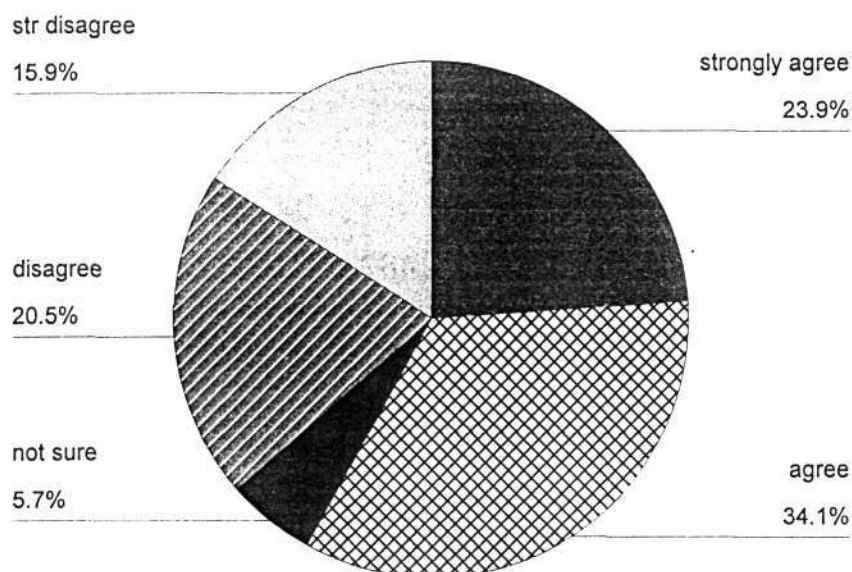


Figure 5.6: Most members were not experienced in the selection process

On the contrary, a high number of selectors (36%) indicated that it was not the first time they were involved in the process of selection. This was confirmed in the Ex-Model C schools (n=10) where 80% of the selectors believed that most of their members were experienced in the implementation of the selection process. It is unsurprising these selectors are highly experienced while other selectors from the other Ex-Departments had little or no experience at all. This reflects the wide gap created by the Apartheid laws. For example, selectors from historically disadvantaged schools like Ex-DET, Ex-DEC and Ex-HOD never had prior experience of being involved in the selection process.

It would have been obvious that since (a) selectors had a short training programme, (b) were involved in the process for the first time and (c) lacked experienced, they would not be confident in the choice of candidates. Surprisingly enough, the opposite is true. The confidence displayed by selectors in choosing the best candidate is demonstrated in figure 5.7 below.

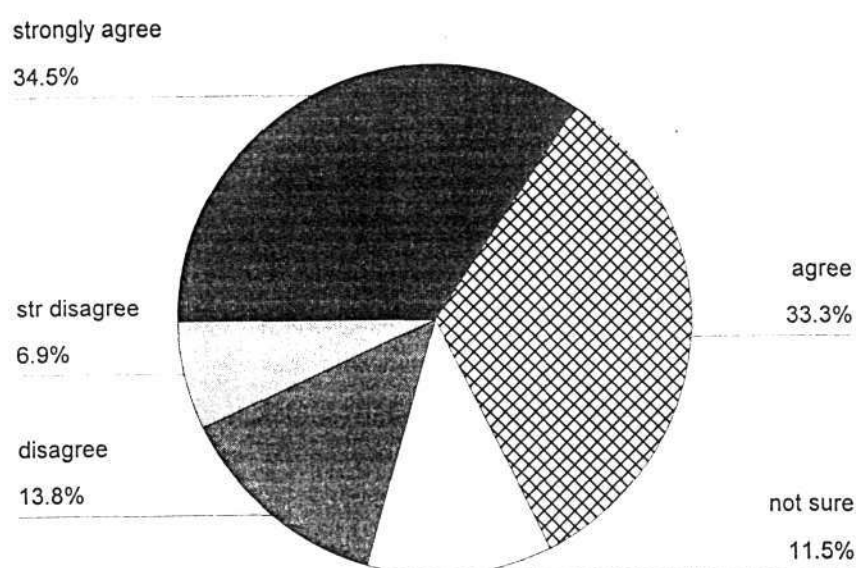


Figure 5.7: Selectors were confident in their choice of candidates



In spite of all the difficulties such as insufficient training, lack of experience and time constraints, 68% of the selectors were confident in their choice of senior management staff. The confidence displayed by selectors is highlighted by a female parent selector who was positive with the choice of her principal. She boasted:

*I am confident that we were able to appoint a candidate whom we think had the necessary credentials, the 'know how' to bring stability to our school and to steer it to great heights.*

I would also like to sketch out the confidence displayed by selectors within each racially divided Departments of Education in respect of the selection process. Clearly, as demonstrated in table 5.6, that 100% of the Ex-Model C school selectors were absolutely confident in selecting the leader for their school. This can be substantiated by the fact that in the past and even up to now, Ex-Model C schools are in a fortunate position because they employ additional staff to their establishment due to their strong financial status. Therefore, it is not surprising that 100% of their selectors were confident in their selection and appointment of senior managers.

EX-DEPARTMENTS.	HOD	DET	DEC	MODEL C	HOR
PERCENTAGE	65%	67%	71%	100%	50%
FREQUENCY	40	2	5	10	2

Table 5.6: Confidence of selectors in the Ex-Departments

From the confidence displayed by the various stakeholders in the selection process, it is clear, as demonstrated in table 5.7, that the majority of parents (80%) indicated they were confident as compared to the other stakeholders when they had to choose the leader for their own school. However, it must be noted that all other selectors did display confidence



during the selection process. The confidence displayed is a positive sign because it was the first time that the various stakeholders engaged in such an enormous task of selection.

STAKEHOLDERS	TEACHER	PARENT	PRINCIPAL	DEP.PRINCIPAL
PERCENTAGE	57%	80%	53%	73%
FREQUENCY	12	24	9	8

Table 5.7: Percentage of stakeholders who were confident in their selection

It must be highlighted that selectors, especially parents, reacted positively to the selection process. There were numerous views of selectors in respect of their positive attitude and empowerment. A few examples are cited. A male parent selector in one of the Ex-DET schools expressed the following view:

*The process empowered me to participate in matters pertaining to my children's education.*

This was also reaffirmed by another female selector from the same Ex-Department who believed that she could now appoint the leader they want depending on the needs of the school. All the factors of empowerment built confidence among selectors. It is interesting to note that not only were selectors confident, but 67% of the selectors were of the belief that none of them dominated the process. Everyone had equal influence during the selection process, as demonstrated in Table 5.8.

STAKEHOLDERS	PARENTS	SENIOR MANAGERS	
		PRINCIPALS	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
% AGREED	87%	55%	73%
FREQUENCY	26	10	8

Table 5.8 : Everyone had equal influence in the selection process

It is clear as demonstrated in table 5.8 that majority of parents and senior managers believed that no one selector had dominated the selection process. This is a positive sign for the policy makers. Reason being, parents were given the power in recommending staff for their schools for the very first time, yet the greater majority of selectors really did not dominate the process. However, there were few cases where selectors did dominate the process. This is confirmed by an angry selector who retorted:

*Two members dominated the selection process. They thought it was a one man's show.*

The aspect of domination by a member or members within the Selection Committee was also highlighted by another male teacher selector from one of the Ex-HOD schools. He indicated that in one Selection Committee, inexperienced selectors were influenced by one member in choosing the principal.

However, inspite of the commendable qualities of the new process of staff selection and appointment such as broad stakeholder representation and participation, the process has also generated other problems. Besides personal influence and domination by selectors, nepotism and selectors having personal preferences seemed to have been evident in the choices of candidates.

However, as demonstrated in figure 5.8, it is found that 52% of the selectors indicated that the selection was not vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity and personal preferences. But at the same time a relatively high number of selectors (42%) believed that the process of selection and appointment was not carried out fairly.

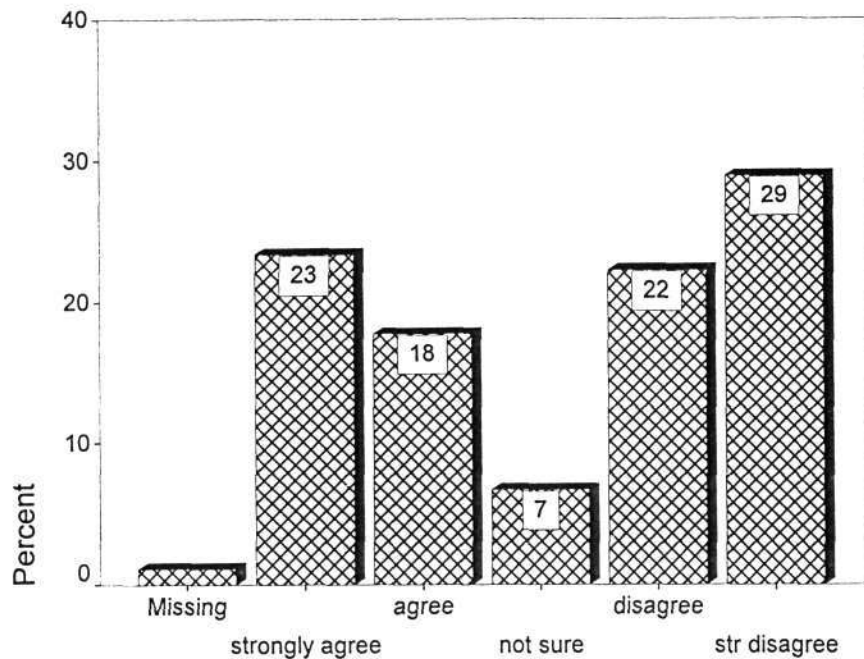


Figure 5.8: Selection was vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity & personal preferences

On the other hand, if one had to examine the views and perceptions from the various groups of stakeholders who participated in the process of selection, it was revealed that 59% of the teacher component (n=22), 50% of the principals and 36% of the deputy principals had the opposite view. They strongly agreed that the entire process was actually vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity and personal preferences.

The various views and opinions as indicated below were expressed by selectors emphasising the subjectiveness and favouritism of the selection process. A female deputy principal from one of the House of Representatives schools supporting this argument echoed the following viewpoint:

*Selections were based on a "buddy system". In many instances the successful candidate had been earmarked for a particular post and the whole selection process was merely a formality to give credibility to the process. Nepotism, favouritism and unfairness still exists.*

A male selector also confirmed that nepotism and subjectivity was a major cause for concern. He highlighted the following:

*It was discovered that in most cases candidates that qualified had been related in some way or the other to a particular member on the Selection Committee.*

Another female teacher selector from one of the Ex-HOD schools supported the above arguments and stressed that the process of selection was highly subjective as most applicants had either relatives or friends on the school governing body.

Given the fact that each of the selectors come from different backgrounds, political, religious affiliations as well as different ethnic groupings it was perceived that the selection of candidates would be influenced along similar lines. Clearly, a large number of parent selectors (83%, n=29), 82% of deputy principals (n=11) and 56% of principals (n=18) indicated that the selection process was not based on political, religious and ethnic groupings of candidates.

However, there were differing views in respect of the commitment displayed by selectors during the process. About 48% of them indicated that members were personally involved in choosing the right person for the job. A male parent selector from one of the Ex-HOD schools was really committed in choosing the right person for the job. He strongly believed that candidates' personal files should have been made available to the Staff Selection Committee. He argued that personal files would give selectors information which CV's would omit. He emphasised the following:

*Personal files will give the Committee an insight to the candidates standing in respect of attendance, insubordination, misdemeanours etc. which the candidate may be guilty of.*

Comparing the commitment displayed by selectors in the selection process within the former racially divided Departments of Education, it is clear, that 90% of the Ex-Model C schools (n=10) indicated that their selectors were committed in choosing a leader for their school as compared to 43% in Ex-HOD, 67% in Ex-DET, 33% in Ex-DEC and 50% in Ex-HOR schools. This reveals that selectors in the Ex-Model C schools realise the importance of their roles and responsibilities and how their choice of leader would impact directly on their children. This kind of realisation would definitely lead to sacrifice and commitment towards staff selection and appointment. Thus the commitment from selectors in the other Ex-Departments would be increased with time.

The commitment and interest of selectors in choosing a school principal is crucial because the head who is selected would either create a positive or negative school environment. Therefore, the interest displayed by all stakeholders, apart from factors such as their commitment to their children's education, determines the kind of headship selection that would take place. As demonstrated in figure 5.9, it is clear that 58% of the selectors were interested in selecting a strong leader.

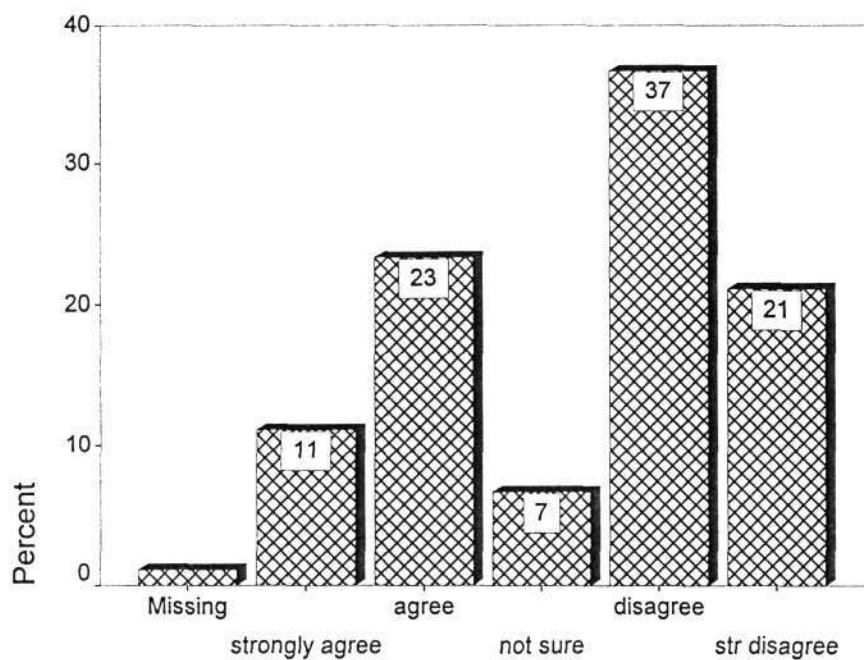


Figure 5.9: Some members were not interested in the selection process

When considering the voice of parents in respect of the selection process, clearly the majority of them echoed the view that members were interested in the selection process. But when selectors were examined within the racially divided Departments of Education, it was found that 100% of the Ex-ModelC school (n=10) selectors were committed to the process of selection.

On the other hand, if one had to look at the percentage of selectors who were not interested in the process, it is alarming. As demonstrated in figure 5.9, it is worrying that 34% of selectors agreed that some selectors were not interested in the process of selection. The issue of interest and commitment was emphasised by one of the female selectors in one of the Ex-HOD schools. She explained her disappointment:

*Some of the selectors were not committed to the selection process. They could not keep to deadlines. They took two years and the process is still incomplete. All members were not responding well.*

There was conflict between commitment of selectors to the selection process and to their daily jobs. From the comments of selectors it was found that many had to sacrifice weekends whilst others had to take a few days off from work. Clearly, many of them were inconvenienced and had to also sacrifice their weekends. But, there were differing views as to whether shortlisting and interviews were conducted at odd hours or not.

On sketching out the responses differentiated on the basis of gender, as demonstrated in Table 5.9 below, in respect of the hours of shortlisting and interviews, it is found that 52% of the males (n=62) indicated that the shortlisting and interviews process was not carried out during odd hours.

GENDER RESPONSES	AGREE	NOT SURE	DISAGREE
MALES	48% ( 30)		52% (32)
FEMALES	47% (10)	10% (2)	43% (9)

Table 5.9: Shortlisting & interviews were conducted at odd hours

However, there was a complain from a male principals from one of the Ex-HOD schools.

He was unhappy and remarked:

*There were far too many CV's. Little time was found. However, the Selection Committee worked during public holidays and weekends to meet deadlines.*

While on the contrary, it is found that 47% of the female (n=21) selectors believed that they were inconvenienced by the selection process which infringed on their personal time.

There is a very strong indication as seen in figure 5.10, that majority (89%) of the selectors indicated that the entire selection process did require members personal time and money.

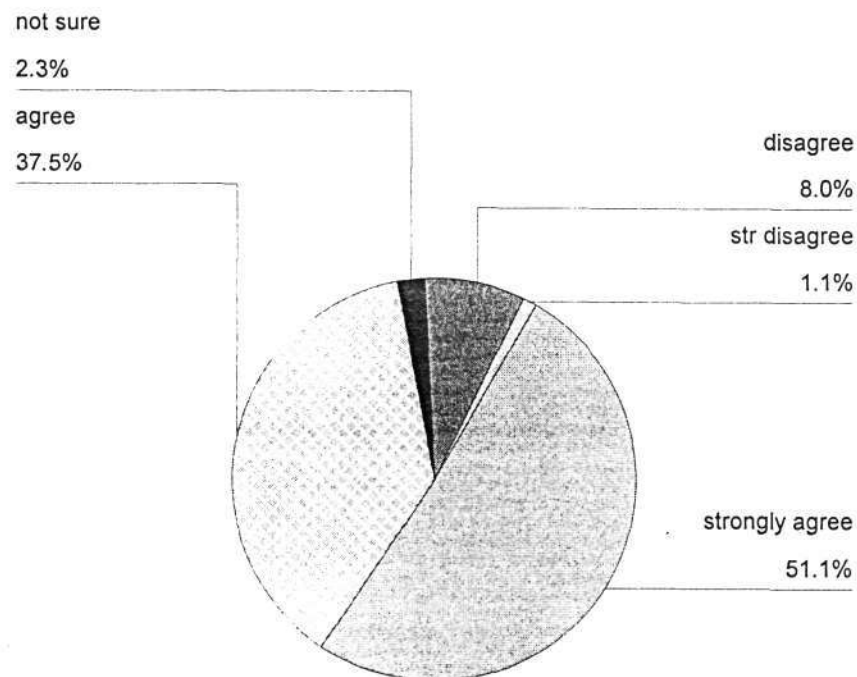


Figure 5.10: The selection process required personal time and money

It is also important to focus on the views of the various groups of selectors, in respect of the time and money required as demonstrated in Table 5.10. Clearly, the views of the



majority within each group of selectors indicated that the selection process did require time and money.

STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY	AGREE
Teacher	19	86%
Parent	26	87%
Principal	16	94%
Deputy Principal	9	82%

Table 5.10 : The selection process required time and money

A general perception by selectors was that the time allocated to complete the selection process was not adequate. A male principal selector believed that time constraints resulted in poor decision making. He expressed the following:

*We were given deadlines and this resulted in hasty decisions and I feel to the detriment of really deserving applicants. More time should be allowed. The shortlisting of 470 applicants for one post was an irksome and time consuming undertaking. I felt that some members simply wanted to complete the task at hand and therefore asked fewer questions.*

Another male principal selector also reported that the selection process affected their salary at work. The principle of “no work no pay” applied when they had taken leave to complete the selection and appointment process. He concluded the following:

*The process took long to take off from the ground because some selectors were reluctant to continue. Furthermore, the meeting schedules was infringing with their personal time. Selectors had to take time-off from work because of the task they had to honour.*

*Consequently they were granted leave without pay from their respective work places.*

Another female principal selector complained that time constraints resulted in selectors working after hours. She confirmed some of the problems experienced by her Selection Committee:

*A major problem experienced with the selection process was the time constraints. Due to the number of applicants who applied for the post of principals and deputy principals much time was invested in the process. As there were deadlines to be met, the Selection Committee had to work late into the night, during weekends and holidays. Personal time was sacrificed and life for me had to come to a standstill. It was too taxing and exhausting.*

In spite of limited time, financial implications and personal sacrifices, selectors did evaluate each CV fairly. This can be seen in figure 5.11. It is found that 53% of the selectors indicated that all candidates were afforded equal opportunity of being selected since all CV's were given the same time for evaluation.

However, 38% of the selectors had the opposite view and indicated that some of the CV's were not given equal attention because there were too many applicants, some of them were not well presented and applicants did not keep to the aspects required in the CV. Too many applications received for one post made the selection process tiresome, monotonous, time-consuming and a major task.

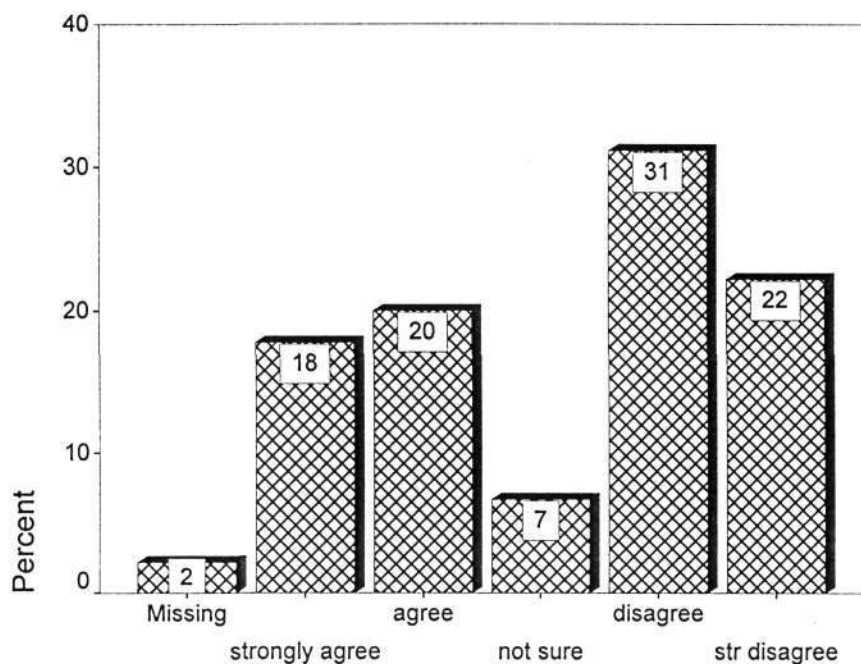


Figure 5.11: All CV's were not given equal evaluation

On sketching the views of parent selector, it was found that 73% of them (n=30) indicated that all CV's were given equal time for evaluation even though there were serious time constraints placed on them. However, they pointed out that the entire exercise of reading CV's was time consuming. A principal as selector seemed furious. He remarked:

*It was indeed a frustrating exercise to be reading through the hundreds of CV's and thereby shortlisting them.*

Many of the Ex-Model C schools (70%, n=10) were of the same opinion that the process of evaluating each CV was time consuming. This can be substantiated by the fact that a male principal selector from one of the Model C schools confirmed that there were too many applicants and that the time period given by the Department of Education to

complete the process was too short. He pointed out the following:

*The vast number of applicants resulted in weak evaluations.*

However, on assessing the vast number of CV's, it was found that many of them did make endeavours to have their CV's professionally written. The general perception among the various stakeholders reflects that it was difficult to assess whether CV's were original or professionally written. This is evident in table 5.11 below:

STAKEHOLDERS	Frequency	% Agreed
TEACHERS	15	68%
PARENTS	18	60%
PRINCIPALS	11	64%
DEPUTY PRINCIPALS	7	64%

Table 5.11 : Difficulties in assessing CV's

One of the selectors was concerned about the way CV's were written and believed that when a CV is done by a professional person, it lacks the true reflection of the person's ability. One of the male principal selectors from an Ex-DET school was really worried about the way CV's were presented. He was unhappy with the following:

*Some CV's were so accurately and beautifully arranged but the candidate appeared to be totally opposite of it. Therefore, to select using CV's is a big problem.*

Another major cause of concern is noted in figure 5.12 below. Here, it is revealed that 57% of the selectors did not verify the information in the CV when in doubt.

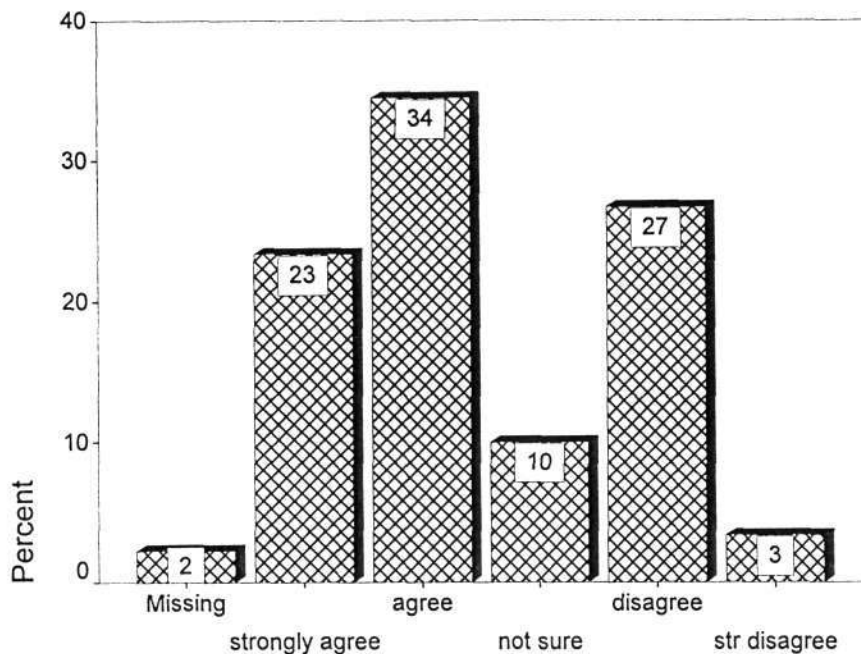


Figure 5.12: All information in the CV's were not verified when in doubt

The absence of verification was due to reasons such as time constraints, a high number of CV's received, was a too costly effort etc. One of the male deputy principal selectors from one of the Ex-HOD schools expressed his view on the verification of information in each CV:

*The inability to verify the contents of CV's was due to the enormity of the task as a result of an overwhelming number of applicants.*

Another male selector being a principal in one of the Model C schools also expressed his inability to verify information on the CV. However, a relatively large number of selectors

(37%) made sure that those aspects of the CV which were ambiguous or needed more clarity, received attention through the verification process.

The verification of information in each CV was a very complex process. But not many of the selectors engaged in such a process. However, selectors had to shortlist candidates according to a criteria based on aspects such as leadership qualities, the candidate's professional and organisational experience etc. The assessment for each of the aspects are based on a 7 point rating. Clearly, Figure 5.13 indicates that 65% of the selectors agreed that the shortlisting criteria were always objective and fair.

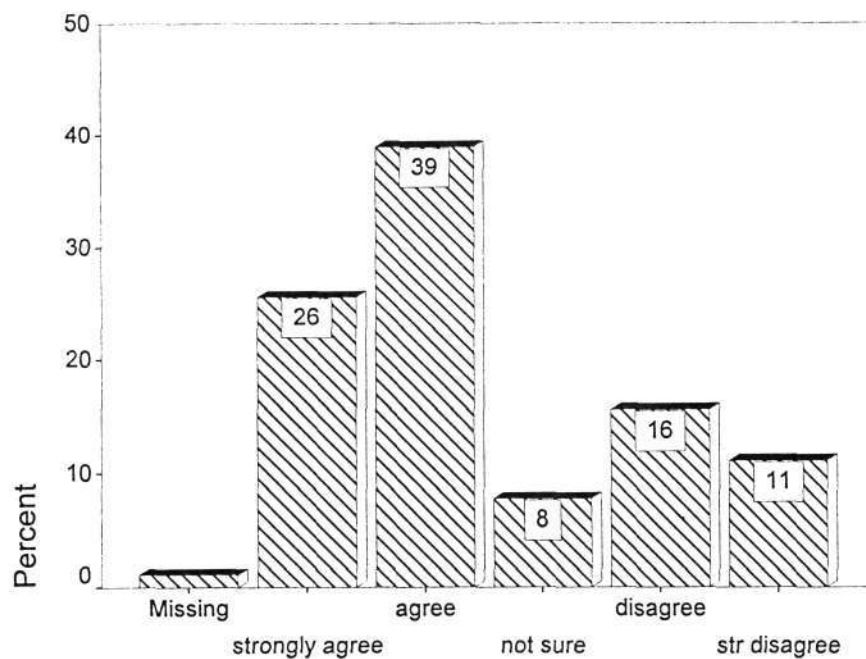


Figure 5.13: The shortlisting criteria were always objective and fair

It is interesting to note that 83% of the parents were of the same opinion. At the same time 100% of the selectors in the Ex-Model C schools (n=10) also believed that the criteria was objective and fair. However, there were a few differing views on the shortlisting criteria such as the views of a male principal from one of the Ex-HOD schools. He expressed his concern:

*There needs to be a more objective and accurate method of arriving at a final shortlist.*

Gender is an important issue during the preliminary and final shortlisting process. One needs to consider at what stage must gender (female) be given preference. If females are given preference against the process of merit, then are we trying to promote just the interest of one sector of gender. While it is true that females had been severely disadvantaged in the past, are selectors going to then choose good females against other outstanding males? As demonstrated in Table 5.12 gender balance was always given preference.

Gender based responses	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Males	57% (53)	10% (6)	33% (20)
Females	50% (10)	10% (2)	40% (8)

Table 5.12 : Gender balance was always given preferences

Well, 57% of all the male respondents (n=61) and 50% of the female respondents (n=20) revealed that gender balance was always given preference. On examining the views of selectors within each Ex-Department it is found that all Ex-DET schools 100% (n=3) indicated that gender was always given preference. Similarly, parent selectors (76%, n=29)

did agree that the issue of gender was always given preference. On the other hand a relatively high percentage (34%) of selectors were of the opposite view.

Still on the issue of preference, should applicants from one's own school be given preference due to the fact that they are potential leaders on the spot and are also aware of the dynamics of the immediate school setting? A female selector described that the Staff Selection Committees have a tendency to shortlist applicants whom they know for example from their own teaching staff ie. the acting principal, deputy principal as well as their own governing body members (educator representatives). She also explained that selectors felt obliged to shortlist staff members sometimes as token gestures or because of working relationships they shared. Being committed to a transparent promotion process she was disheartened and stated the following:

*This is grossly unfair because of the limited number of promotion posts available. This practice seriously disadvantages applicants with true management potential. Staff Selection Committee members feel 'safe' in selecting people they know because they lack the experience in rating CV's and they doubt the validity of information in the CV's especially since a large number of applicants omitted referees.*

Another female selector from the Ex-HOD schools confirmed that nepotism and ethnicity were employed. She further supported the above argument and remarked:

*A known member of the school was preferred although there were far better candidates taking into consideration the criteria such as years of experience, academic qualification, community work and proper management skills.*



However, it is not surprising that 70% of the various stakeholder selectors believed that applicants from their own school were not given preference. It is clear that 90% of the parent selectors treated applicants from their own school and external applicants equally. One selector concurred with the above parent respondents and stated that each applicant must be treated in their own merits. He supported his argument by stating the following:

*If you are a strong leader whether as an internal or external applicant you must be able to adapt, adjust and handle your duties gracefully. I believe that only in a case where there is a tie between an applicant from the school and an outside applicant, preference should be given to the applicant from the same school.*

Clearly, as demonstrated in Table 5.13, that 73% of the parent selectors (n=30), 82% of the deputy principals (n=11), 67% of the principals (n=15) and 64% of the teacher selectors broke the barriers of promotion in the sense that all educators irrespective on which level they were, had been afforded an equal opportunity of being eligible for promotion as a senior manager.

Stakeholder responses	Frequency	% Disagreed
Teachers	14	64%
Parents	22	73%
Principals	10	67%
Deputy Principals	9	82%

Table 5.13 : Only HOD's were considered for principalship

A selector in one of the Ex-HOD schools also emphasised that all educators be given the opportunity of applying for a senior management post. He remarked:

*The process has an advantage in that everyone from M+3 upwards has the opportunity to apply for the post and if administered properly, it could prove a good system.*

The idea of preference for level 2 educators (Heads of Department and Deputy Principals) being eligible for promotion has been discarded. This was also supported by a male parent selector who stated that the choice of candidates are solely the responsibility of the Selection Committee and that recognition would be given to those that have ability. He expressed his view with regard to the choice of applicants:

*Applicants with skills irrespective of their levels were allowed to rise to managerial positions at school.*

On the contrary, some selectors (28%) did indicate that only level 2 educators were considered for the post of principalship. There were some concerns expressed by a male selector in this regard. He believed that there should have been a cut-off point for the post of principalship. He further explained that many candidates applied without having the appropriate management experience. This was totally unfair as in some cases applicants with little or no management skills outshone experienced managers who were not even shortlisted for their many years of service in promotion posts.

However, once all CV's were evaluated, a manageable number of candidates had to be then shortlisted to an interview. There are differing views on whether interviews are the best method of selecting good leaders for the school. It is important to also sketch out the gender-based responses, in respect of the effectiveness of interviews. This is demonstrated in Table 5.14.

Gender based responses	Agreed	Not sure	Disagreed
MALES	48% (29)	3% (2)	49% (30)
FEMALES	60% (12)	10% (2)	30% (6)

Table 5.14 : Interviews were not effective in selecting the best candidate

It is evident from the statistics in table 5.14, that 60% of the female selectors agreed that interviews were not effective in revealing the actual management potential of applicants whereas 49% of the males believed otherwise. The ineffectiveness of interviews are highlighted by one of the Ex-Model C female selectors who remarked:

*Applicants were allowed an interview but the opinion of the applicant on the CV often differed after the applicant was interviewed.*

It must be pointed out that in one school all ten candidates were interviewed and it was found that they had high qualifications. Their experience in teaching also spanned many years. In this particular case the selection of the ideal candidate during the interview process was really difficult.

The scoring of candidates during the interview of such candidates is the most vital task. Whether selectors were thoroughly trained specifically in respect of how to score

candidates is not revealed. However, Figure 5.14 reveals that 61% of the selectors agreed that the whole system of scoring was an objective one whilst only 25% of them had an opposite view.

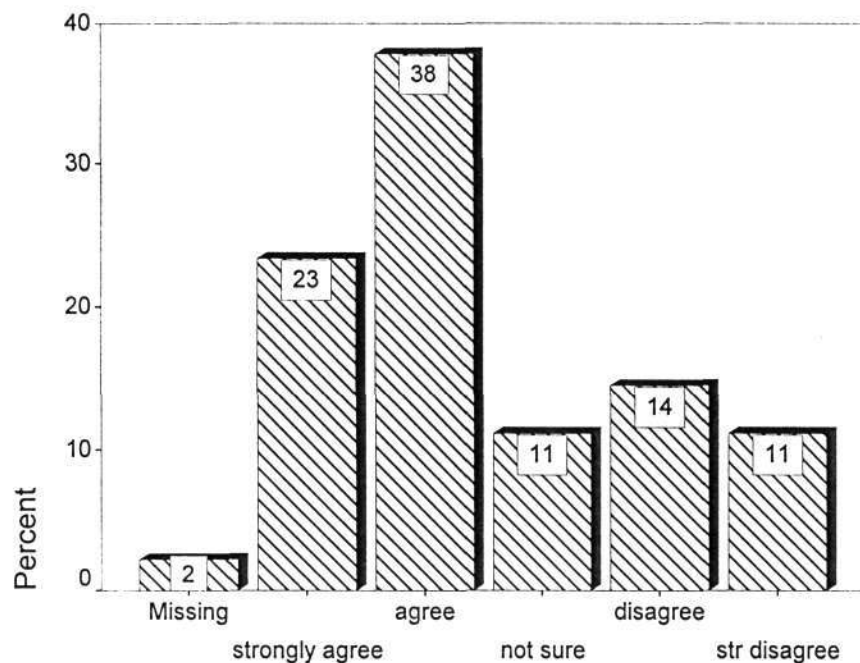


Figure 5.14: The scoring system was very objective

One male parent from one of the Kwa-Zulu Natal schools was upset with the way selectors scored. He complained of the following :

*On the interview day, the 'old ladies' (selectors) gave an applicant totals in most parts of their score sheets. They further unanimously recommended his appointment to the post. A complaint was secretly lodged against his recommendation and up to now the post has not been filled.*

Another male selector from one of the Ex-HOD schools also confirmed the way scoring of candidates was done. He expressed the following:

*The CV's were not scored professionally and objectively since the selectors did not understand the organisational and leadership abilities involved in a particular position for example being the chairperson of AMESA.*

The scoring process does assist in screening the best person for the job. Clearly, as demonstrated in figure 5.15, that 61% of the selectors indicated that it was difficult to differentiate between the strengths of applicants having the same experience.

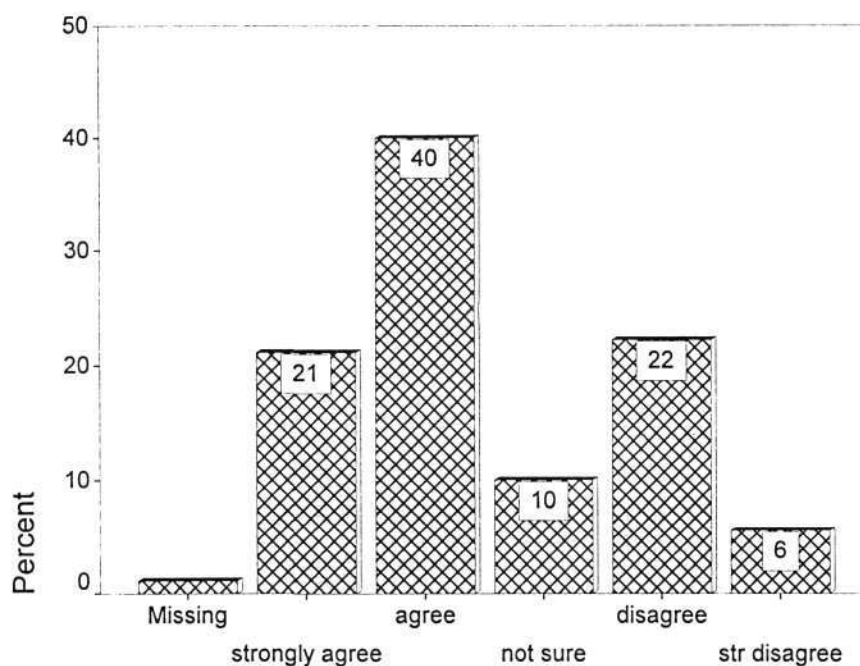


Figure 5.15: It was difficult to differentiate between the strengths of applicants

In all the Ex-HOR schools (n=4), selectors found it difficult to differentiate between applicants having the same strengths. With reference to strengths of applicants, selectors felt differently about the kind of qualities and abilities the applicants should possess. For example, one selector felt that a candidate should be a good sports person while the other felt that having a good personality was more important.

On the contrary, only 28% of the selectors revealed that they were able to differentiate between the quality in leadership the candidates possessed. It seemed that these selectors had some kind of criteria set to accomplish this task. Whether the validity of this criteria is widely accepted would be highly questioned.

During the shortlisting and interview stage observers form an important component in the selection process. According to the observer's role and responsibilities their function is to ensure that the new legislation is properly implemented. However, as demonstrated in figure 5.16, selectors were divided on the role of observers.

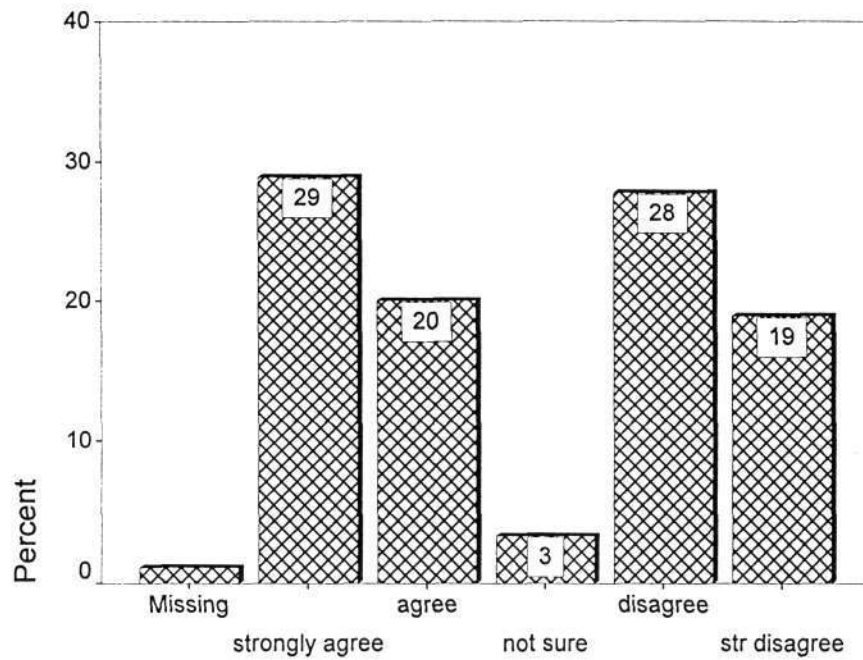


Figure 5.16: Observers were always present during the entire selection process

While 49% of the selectors agreed that the observers were present during the selection process, it was still riddled with problems. It was evident that 47% of the selectors were not happy with the role of the observers because some of them did not report timeously or were not present for the entire duration of the selection process. Nevertheless, the role of the union officials was essential. One selector pointed out that union representatives do have a monitoring voice in the process thus ensuring transparency and more especially that its membership is adequately protected. The presence of union officials was a way of reducing nepotism and corruption.

There has been clear indication from the selectors, as demonstrated in table 5.15, that there should have also been an education officer with experience to provide assistance to selectors.

VARIOUS STAKEHOLDER RESPONDENTS				
Stakeholders	Teachers	Parents	Principal	D/Principal
% Agreed	77%	70%	69%	73%
Frequency	17	21	11	8

Table: 5.15 : A need for an education officer with selection experience

The above stakeholders believed that the presence of an educational officer with selection experience would have helped the selectors tremendously. For example, if there was a query in respect of the implementation or procedures of selection, it could have been immediately explained by the educational officer present. There were problems with regard to the role of educational officers. A male deputy principal from one of the Ex-HOD schools was disappointed that neither the Department official nor the union representative had adequate experience to be on the selection panel. He expressed the following discontentment:

*There was lack of professional guidance neither by the unions nor the Department. We had to use our own initiative and ingenuity in doing the selection.*



On examining the views of selectors within each of the former racially divided Departments of Education, as demonstrated in table 5.16, it is found that a very high percentage of selectors found it necessary for an education officer to be present during the selection process. However, selectors in the Ex-Model C schools did not seem to depend on the guidance and advice of education officers.

RESPONSES OF SELECTORS FROM THE RACIALLY DIVIDED EX-DEPARTMENTS					
Ex-Departments	HOD	DET	DEC	Model C	HOR
% Agreed	78%	67%	75%	22%	100%
Frequency	49	2	6	2	4

Table 5.16 A need for an education officer with selection experience

One selector stated that Department representatives in most cases did not have experience on the management of the selection process. However, it is also known that some Superintendents did interfere and also influenced selectors in the choice of candidates. It was evident in one of the Ex-KZN schools where a male principal selector reported the following case:

*It was learnt before the actual interview that a senior Superintendent had telephonically suggested to the Chairperson of the Selection Committee that the candidate from the same school be recommended for the principalship post.*

A similar viewpoint was highlighted by a male principal selector in another Ex-KZN school. He complained of the following:

*In rural areas where illiteracy rate is high, the less literate members of the Staff Selection Committee were manipulated by Department officials and by the candidates themselves.*

There is a finger pointing at the role and responsibilities of Superintendents yet some of them are actively involved in the selection process. The role of Superintendents need to be drastically increased in respect of the selection process. If Superintendents want schools in their circuit or district to operate smoothly with a good teaching and learning environment, this is an avenue for them to provide advice on how or what selectors should look for in school leaders. One selector advised that the selection of candidates be conducted by an independent Staff Selection Committee.

It is absolutely important to explain how decisions were reached during the selection process, as reflected in Figure 5.17. Clearly, 82% of selectors indicated that decisions were reached through consensus rather than a vote as compared to 10% of the selectors who did not reach consensus and thus had to vote during the selection process.

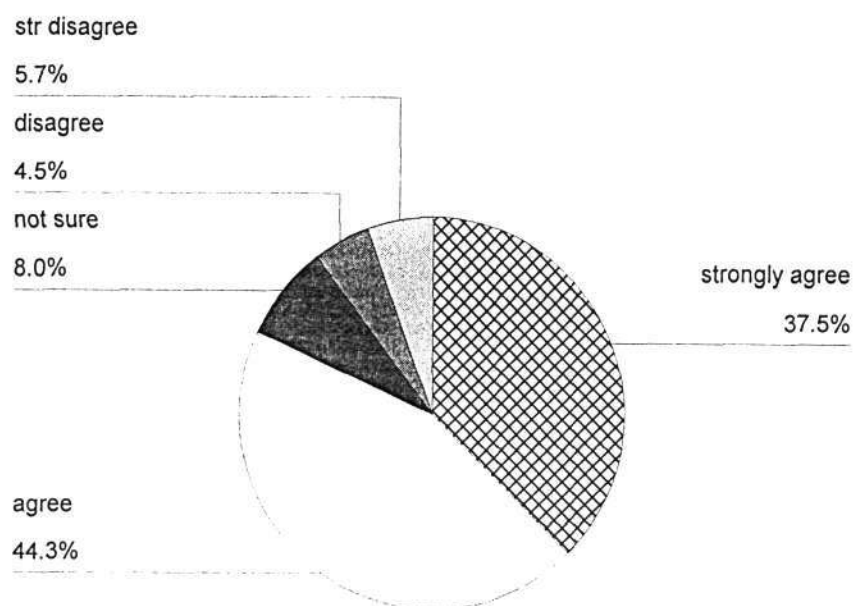


Figure 5.17: Decisions were reached through consensus rather than a vote

On sketching out the views of the stakeholders it was found that 87% were parents, 82% were principals and 82% were deputy principals who concluded their decisions through consensus. On the other hand, on examining the issue of consensus within each of the former racially divided Departments of Education it was found that 81% of the Ex-HOD selectors (n=63), 100% of the Ex-DET selectors (n=3), 71% of the Ex-DEC selectors (n=7), 90% of the Model C selectors (n=10) and 75% of the Ex-HOR selectors (n=4) indicated that decisions were reached through consensus rather than a vote.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The introduction of the new selection policy seems to be accepted by majority of the selectors. The general perception of selectors is that it is a more democratic process as compared to previous promotion procedures. It empowers the immediate parent component of the school governing body to select the most suitable management leader or personnel to satisfy the school needs effectively. It is believed that such a leadership would bring positive and relevant benefit to uplift the educational growth of the children and parents of the community it serves. This was supported by a male parent selector who stated the following:

*The involvement and empowerment of stakeholders especially parents is a giant step in the right direction and it gives the community the opportunity to choose the right candidate.*

They believed that the Selection Committee members were empowered to select candidates of their choice. Selectors choosing candidates whom they believe would best suit the school needs was seen in a positive light. This type of selection was favoured as compared to the period when the Department of Education had total control and authority over the selection and appointment process. The selection process conducted by the Department was seen as unilateral since no stakeholders were involved in the entire process of selection.

The new selection process allows for Selection Committee members to appoint a candidate who will have the same goals of the staff, pupils and parents. A male deputy principal in one of the Ex-HOD schools believes that school governing bodies have direct impact on

the whole school environment. He remarked:

*With the emphasis being on community participation, schools are now community based. The school governing body ought to represent the views of the community. If the right people are elected the school will reflect the culture and ethos of the community.*

Those selectors who are knowledgeable and committed to the education of their children were able to take full advantage of the process and recommend candidates who were able to take their learning institutions forward. The selectors looked at the selection policy in a positive light. From a gender perspective 51% of the males and 37% of the females revealed that the policy was fair and adequate. They believed that the process was fair. One of the male parent selectors from one of the Ex-Model C schools felt really positive about the selection policy since it gave selectors the opportunity to select a leader for their school. He believed that the process was very systematic and did not allow for any deviations. He concluded the following views:

*It is democratic and there is openness. Selectors are able to appoint persons whom they consider capable of fitting into the ethos, culture and social environment of the school.*

Another selector was quite stern about selection of their principal. This selector summed up the following about the new policy:

*Parents who have selected candidates are now accountable for their effective functioning and vice-versa. We will now be able to find out whether the person we have appointed is worth the salt.*

However, it cannot be ignored that 40% of the selectors believed that the policy was unfair and really a subjective one. One of the male selectors was really upset and remarked:

*There is absolutely nothing positive to comment on. The process stinks.*

Nevertheless, one principal selector stated:

*Although the governing bodies are here to stay, members do not seem to understand the importance and professionalism in their duty. The initial process will be rid with problems. However, with time the members will understand the process better and choose the best leader for their school.*

## CHAPTER SIX

### A SINGLE SCHOOL CASE STUDY

#### “A DISPUTE OVER THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL”

##### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This case study represents an in-depth account of the administrative, legal, educational and political process unfolding inside a single school setting as it attempted to implement a new government policy on staff selection and appointment.

Valakim Primary is a former Ex-HOD school consisting of twenty four permanent educators including management staff before right sizing, one full-time clerk/secretary, one part-time library clerk, 4 cleaners, four specialist language teachers and an enrolment of about 720 pupils. It is located in a rapidly developing community in between a large industrial area and a commercial centre in the North Durban Region of Kwa-Zulu Natal province. Some parents of learners at the school are described as articulate, concerned and supportive while many seem to distance themselves from the affairs of the school.

The school governing body comprise five elected parents, five co-opted members, acting principal, two teacher representatives and one non-educator. This school had 7 to 8 principals during the 13 years of its existence. There were no permanent management staff during the past 4 years. It was managed by the Acting Principal, Mr Kirin Govindsamy.

On examining the school mission and philosophy it portrayed that all the teachers and parents of this school believed in developing a pleasant, disciplined and orderly

environment in which pupils from diverse backgrounds will be encouraged to reach their maximum individual potential in terms of skills, knowledge and insight thus enabling them to meet the challenges of our changing society. Their philosophy was that all children, irrespective of race, colour or creed are their total responsibility, therefore they shall teach them with love and understanding. It is believed that every child's talent can be expanded to their fullest potential. The development of sound knowledge and life-long learning skills in their pupils are vital, so that they will be self-confident and good decision-makers to improve the quality of their lives and aspire to higher levels. They believe that pupils need to develop a balanced life not only in gaining academic knowledge, but in participating in sports and cultural activities.

In 1997 the post of principalship at Valakim Primary was advertised in a Departmental list consisting of all the promotion posts in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The task of selecting the school's principal was difficult because the applicant had to match the mission, philosophy and needs of the school. The school was then required to follow guidelines according to the SA Schools Act No 84, schedule 2, section 4(3) of 1996, which stipulated that the school governing bodies must form a Staff Selection Committee (SSC) to execute the task of selecting a principal for Valakim Primary School before 1 July 1998.

The Department of Education was totally responsible for the selection and appointment of staff prior to the S.A Schools Act of 1996. The selection of senior managers were conducted by Superintendents who made a snap judgement of the applicant's performance. This evaluation included checking of applicant's record books, making classroom visits and was concluded by an interview. However, the establishment of the Schools Act of



1996 led to greater participation from the various stakeholders. Governing bodies are now allowed to set up a Selection Committee so that recommendations can be made to the Department of Education in respect of suitable candidates. The Staff Selection Committee had to consist of parents, a principal or deputy principal, union observers, members from the community with specialised expertise and Department officials.

For the purpose of selection and appointment of the most suitable candidate, a Staff Selection Committee consisting of three members which later extended to five, was formed. The Committee was extended because two members were unavailable at times. According to all selectors, one of the major strengths of this process was that it gave parents the opportunity to participate in school governance. Parents now had the chance to be actively involved in the running of their schools. Parents, being on Staff Selection Committees, are able to choose the best candidate for their schools.

One of the co-opted selectors was dissatisfied with the manner in which the Department of Education advertised senior manager posts since very little details were given for the type of candidate required. Only the following details were provided for the post viz.

NAME OF SCHOOL	ENROLMENT	POST LEVEL
Valakim Primary	720	P 4

He argued the need for a proper job description.

*The school should be run like a business. Any business when advertising its post, will give you a brief job description. In the same light we need to*

*describe briefly what the position entails. The principal's post at our school must be advertised accordingly. When we are selecting the person, we need to tell applicants, this is what we are looking for* (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).

Due to guidelines from the Department only parents were allowed to be selectors on the Staff Selection Committee (SSC). The Chairman of the SSC in an interview argued that members on this committee should have been screened before executing the task of selection. He strongly believed that parents who do not have some prior relevant experience and expertise in recruitment and selection at a higher or professional level, should not have been on the committee. The effectiveness and efficiency of the selectors were considered very important. One of the co-opted members remarked:

*Five selectors seem to be the correct number, three could also be a good number. I am saying that three can also do the job of five. You can have three people who can read fast and assess accurately, or on the other hand you could have five people who may read slowly and assess poorly. So the quality of people sitting on the committee is very important* (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).

All members agreed that having only parents on the SSC was not ideal. They argued that having educators on the SSC would be of major assistance. The Chairman of the SSC expressed concern for educators to be serving on the SSC. He was happy to report that a teacher from the neighbouring school was also a parent on the committee. This teacher made vital inputs which helped the committee tremendously. All selectors agreed that educator representation on the SSC was important to guide the parents, more especially because some of them required knowledge on school management.

While it was unanimously accepted that educators on the SSC would have played a key role, the teacher-parent representative warned that not any educator would do. He expressed the following point of view:

*At this school we were fortunate in the sense that I am from an educator background. However, there's still a problem with that because whilst I am an educator, I am still not working with the teaching staff at this school. So, I still don't know what the needs of this school are and what profile of person is required for the position. Whose best? Somebody from this school should be on the committee ( Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

The Chairman of the SSC also believed that educators should be included as one of the stakeholders, not necessarily as an observer, but to participate actively in the selection process.

All selectors felt that Departmental participation in the selection process should have been increased. The Departmental official was partially involved in the selection process. One of the co-opted members expressed discontentment and said:

*Supplying me with the written guide and giving a days training is simply not sufficient. We could have been making a mistake, which could have been rectified at the early stages before we went through the whole process (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).*

The SSC members were left to perform the task on their own and they only referred to the department official in the event of a problem or to seek clarity on certain issues.

## 6.2 TRAINING RECEIVED BY SELECTORS

All members were disgruntled with the type of capacity building programme which was provided by the Department of Education. All the selectors argued that one of the major weaknesses of the selection process was that parents were not given proper training. The opportunity to select without providing the knowledge, expertise and a lack of mock training sessions is a futile exercise. The chairman of the SGB stated that it was evident selectors lacked the relevant knowledge and insight in the selection process, because he had to constantly intervene to explain the proper procedures of the process.

Strange enough, the Provincial Ministry places high value on the role of district managers to provide effective training to all SGB's, since they are the closest to public schools. 'Capacity building programmes for SGB's are needed, since a large number of members will be performing their roles for the very first time' (Education White Paper 2, Notice 130 of 1996:26). In spite of what was clearly outlined in the Education White Paper 2, there was virtually no proper training besides the one day workshop which was complex and too difficult for parents to understand. Although the main aim of the workshop, according to the Department of Education, was to empower selectors, but it didn't seem to be achieved. Only one member of the SSC attended a one day workshop on the procedures and practices of staff selection, which was provided by the Department of Education. The member then conducted a similar workshop on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1998 with the rest of the members. He tried to conduct the workshop in a simplified manner so that members grasp the correct procedures.

All selectors agreed that the training for senior staff selection was rather limited, because a single workshop to guide the parents in conducting such a crucial job was really a

mammoth task. One of the co-opted members felt that the information regarding the selection procedures should have been cascaded from National government to school governing bodies, via the various provincial and district structures. At the same time, he argued that once the selection information is disseminated to all schools, then every SGB member must attend such capacity building programmes. Such programmes would assist during unforeseen circumstances. Sometimes, additional members from the SGB are required to serve on the SSC when members are ill or unavailable. 'Luckily,' said one of the co-opted members, 'I am here because one of the members was unavailable and I had to fill in. I have done hundreds of interviews in selection committees. With my experience I was able to fit in.'

### 6.3 EXPERIENCE

It was surprising that all of the five members of the SSC when interviewed separately, agreed that members lacked the relevant knowledge and expertise against the fact that 4 of them indicated they had experience in selection. The chairman of the SSC reported the following:

*With regard to experience, we failed miserably as parents. I carried the committee during the shortlisting process (Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).*

Before every session, members were asked to state their difficulties encountered while selecting. These difficulties were then discussed and debated. The chairman of the SSC constantly directed the members and shared his experience and expertise as to what each process entailed. He also updated selectors on the latest issues and presented more information on the format of selection as required by the department.

## 6.4 COMMITMENT OF SELECTORS

For the first two weeks the commitment was great and members were enthusiastic. The attendance was 100%. This was more a status position. After two weeks there was no real commitment. Selectors were unavailable at times due to personal problems such as, work commitments and ill-health. The secretary came in for only 2 days and thereafter never attended. These problems led to two members being co-opted onto the SSC. One of the co-opted members was worried and mentioned that:

*A member had the flu and it went on for a month (Selector 2, Interview, 12 March 1999).*

The SSC was held back and let down because selectors had other commitments and couldn't attend selection meetings. However, at each sitting there was a minimum of three selectors for scoring purposes.

Some selectors felt that other members on the SSC were "biting of more than they could chew." The chairman of the SSC was disappointed with the level of commitment displayed by some of the selectors.

He acknowledged reasons for members dropping off during the process:

*As the 'going got tough' the members saw what the task was all about and slowly started to drop off. I think some of the reasons given were frivolous because they felt that they did not want to commit their time to the process of selection (Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).*

There were also discussions on remuneration for the time spent during the entire selection process. These discussions emanated due to the many hours spent in the selection process and the fact that it was not financially rewarding. A co-opted member felt that although this was voluntary work, spending hours and sacrificing his business time needed to be considered. He pointed out that some selectors showed little commitment because they were actually making money doing their own work instead of participating in the selection process.

## 6.5 USE OF TIME

The use of time was a major problem because selectors utilised most of their personal time. They served after hours and sometimes this extended into the early hours of the morning. In an interview all members complained about the time taken during the shortlisting process which resulted in certain members abstaining from attending further selection meetings. However, the process continued due to members sacrificing their nights, weekends and weekdays. Members were upset because they didn't have a good family life during the process of selection. This was highlighted by one of the co-opted members.

*It was unbelievable! When I got home at night at certain times, my family members were fast asleep, I had to just get myself in (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).*

Other major weakness of the selection process were deadlines and time constraints to complete the various stages of the selection process. In actual fact, the SSC could not complete the entire process by the first cut of date (1<sup>st</sup> July 1998). This placed much stress and pressure on the selectors to complete the process by the second cut of date (1<sup>st</sup> August 1998). Because of the volume of the task, some selectors felt that they should look at ways



to fast-track the process. However, the chairman of the SSC ruled that the process should not be governed by the first cut of date and the process should continue without haste if the best leader is to be selected. In the interview he did acknowledge the following with regard to time:

*Even with the second cut of date, we had to really push for time* (Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).

One of the weaknesses of the committee as expressed by the chairman of the SSC, is that too much of time was spent on looking at the process itself. This resulted in less time for the actual selection process. Time would have been put to better use if all the members had been adequately workshopped and trained in advance.

## 6.6 NEPOTISM AND PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Nepotism and personal preferences were rife in the selection process. In an interview with all the selectors (five) it was indicated that they had some interest in the candidates. The views and opinions as expressed by them, highlighted the weaknesses of the selection process which links up with the critical questions of my dissertation. The five selectors presented their views on the manner in which the selection process was conducted. Selector 1 strongly believed that candidates must be selected on merit. He was disgruntled by the automatic shortlisting of candidates from the school. He remarked:

*There were definitely signs of nepotism and personal preferences. During the shortlisting, selectors were able to identify names and put a face to the name, eg. teachers from the same school could be identified. A glaring example was the automatic shortlisting of the Acting Principal and another teacher.*

*Preferences were given to candidates of the school, even to the extent that some of the members knew their friends who had applied. In the shortlisting*



*itself, there were cases where members had telephonic conversations prior to the shortlisting at their homes. We tried to eliminate this from the process, however, it did have an influence. There was also a case where a member knew that the candidate had certain qualifications, but such qualifications were not stated in the CV. This information was then presented to the committee and the candidate had to be shortlisted ( Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).*

Selector 2 was unhappy with regard to the role played by the observer and the other selectors. He angrily retorted:

*Yes!, there were signs of nepotism and personal preferences especially with this school by the observer and 3 other selectors. When it came to the 'tie', these selectors wanted to choose their own candidate, ie. an outside applicant (Selector 2, Interview, 12 March 1999).*

Selector 3 was astounded by the way one selector scored a candidate. He stated that there was no consistency with this selector because he found that the score for the four selectors were consistent whereas one score was really high. This was ascertained when all selectors had to verify the average of the scores. He argued the following:

*Definitely, there were personal choices. If you look at the scoring of certain candidates by certain members, 4 out of 5 had similar scores, whereas the person who knew the candidate scored higher. This was purely nepotism and personal preferences (Selector 3. Interview, 19 March 1999).*

Selector 4 believed that candidates had to be really good to be selected. He stressed that any selection process must be conducted according to procedures. Furthermore, every aspect of the selection process must be conducted "above board". He remarked:

*I think that nepotism was already present during the shortlisting process, and I was not there. I will quote an example . A CV of a candidate known to the SSC was pulled out and rated first. Now straight away it's a sign of nepotism.*

*This goes to show that it was irregular. However, it was overlooked in the sense that the candidate was of a very high calibre. Personal preferences were also evident (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

Selector 5 believed that the sifting process was conducted fairly and that every applicant's CV was afforded an equal chance to be selected. He stated that since each CV was adequately discussed and evaluated selectors should not interfere with the scores at a later stage. This would be unfair to all the other candidates. He stated the following:

*A major problem was that members did have personal preferences, and nepotism was rife. For example, it was observed that a member had changed the scores of one of the candidates. Apparently the applicants score was increased by 1 through consensus. Although one co-opted member said that the applicant possessed a Doctorate in education, it would be very embarrassing if he was left out.*

*My point is that all CV's were looked at carefully and if you didn't make the required cut-off points, that's it, you were simply left out. The applicant's score which was raised by this selector, in consultation with others, was well known to the selector himself. I think that this selector was supportive of this applicant because they were friends and had known each other at various forums (Selector 5, Interview, 29 March 1999).*

## 6.7 THE SHORTLISTING PROCESS

The members of the SSC sat for long hours, sacrificed their time and social responsibilities in order to shortlist the required number of applicants for interviews. The actual task of selection began and selectors "got into gear". There were too many CV's to handle. The SSC received about 350 applications for the position of principal. The selectors discussed how the scoring had to be done.

The minimum requirements for the post was that applicants must possess M+3 qualification. All selectors were unhappy with this requirement for the post. They felt that this was also another major weakness of the selection policy because it was found that majority of educators with M+3 qualification “took a chance” for the position and many of them didn't have the relevant experience. They strongly advise that the department increase the pre-requisite for the post since it was a senior managers post. Two of the co-opted members stressed that the applicant should be a substantive post holder ie. Heads of Department, deputies or acting principals. One of them expressed the following view:

*Age is not the criteria. The thing is you got to have experience of being in school management. I would have felt that a person who was a Head of Department for a couple of years, a deputy principal or an acting principal for a few years were suitable. These are the people who should apply for the job (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).*

Some of the selectors argued that applicants must be in a position of leadership. This would have saved much time, instead of reading CV's of many level one educators who really took a chance. One of the selectors defended his position on level one educators by arguing that:

*I am not saying that level one educators should not apply for the position but affording them to compete with people who are substantive post holders is actually a waste of time (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

The shortlisting process continued. Selectors received CV's of different formats. CV's were handwritten, computer printed, small and large sized prints. There were applicants from different fields and also an instance where an applicant put his photograph on the CV itself. All CV's were scored on the basis of their face value and none of them were actually cross-referenced or verified. Verification was done during the interview stage.

## 6.8 THE SCORING DILEMMA

Selectors met after work and continued with the selection process between 18:00 to well after midnight. Scoring was done by three selectors and was one of the most difficult tasks. Some of the CV's were very long while others were too short. However, in some cases it was observed that the applicant who handed a short CV had more qualification and experience and was more inclined for the job than the person with a longer CV. It didn't really mean that a short CV was not good enough. The selectors acknowledge that they spent much time drawing on the relevant aspects from the CV. The entire CV was read in order to do justice to it.

Although scoring was done separately, selectors had to confer about the strengths and usefulness of certain qualification with regard to management. All the selectors agreed that they were fortunate in the sense that there was a parent-educator on the SSC. This parent-educator was able to enlighten the committee on certain aspects of educator qualifications. One of the co-opted selectors remarked:

*We were lucky to have an educator on the panel who helped us in understanding the importance of certain qualifications which we parents were not too sure of. I would say, being ordinary parents we could have been "hood-winked" (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).*

One of the co-opted selectors made his point clear from the beginning. He was vociferous and not impressed with jargon or the beautiful form of the CV. He expressed that the following applicants also received equal attention:

*If the person had written in the simplest of words, to my mind if he has been a leader, has managed his duties well and has management skills then the person will also be considered favourably (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

All selectors found it difficult to differentiate whether the CV were written by the applicants or a professional person. However, there was much indication that majority of the CV's were professionally written since most of them had a standard format. In the case of professional CV's, it was very generic in most applicants. The chairman of the SSC retorted that these CV's caused confusion and he expressed the following view about them:

*I would say it was a "laddie-da" CV and not actually what the person was made up of (Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).*

There were about 10- 15 % of females who applied for the position of principalship. The chairman of the SSC questioned the Superintendent of Education on the aspect of gender, but it was not one of the main criteria. Two selectors stressed that they evaluated CV's on the basis of merit. One of the co-opted selectors justified his position on gender by expressing the following viewpoint:

*If a female did come in, she had to be good because I was looking for the best principal for my school. If the best applicant was a male or a female, they would receive an equally high rating (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

The chairman of the SSC reported that there were some inconsistencies in the scoring of candidates although three selectors were present at any one time. The chairman of the SSC found that some selectors didn't have adequate experience and because of personal opinions and preferences, there were big differences in the scores. The major weakness was that some selectors did not look at qualification and experience but were more interested in community involvement. This resulted in a debate by the selectors with regard to whether a candidate serving on many organisations, be allocated a higher score as compared to a person who was just a chairperson on one committee. The chairman of the

SSC argued this point and on the contrary felt that an applicant could not give more value if he or she was on too many organisations or committees, whereas an applicant sitting on one committee could have added more value to that committee.

One of the co-opted selectors when questioned in an interview as to how he scored candidates in a particular category, for example community involvement, had said that his main focus was more on the **OUTPUTS** of the applicants irrespective on how many organisations he or she served. The following example was used by the selector:

*Assuming the score was 10 for that category and the applicant served on 5 organisations, then such an applicant actually met the requirements. When I look at the person serving 8 organisations, I am actually placed in a position where I ask myself, are these applicants going around, being elected and not serving on these organisations? Serving on one organisation takes a lot of time. A person on 8 organisations is not necessarily the best person for our school. That person could just be on the body and not even serving the needs of that body. So a person serving on 5 organisations will be rated a maximum mark, provided the person is doing a very good job. The **OUTPUT** of the person on the 5 or on the 8 organisations is more important and **NOT** on how many organisations the applicant has served (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

However, more points were allocated to applicants serving as executive members such as chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, secretaries or treasurers.

One of the main weaknesses of applicants was that they did not express themselves clearly.

One of the co-opted members was disgusted that some applicants didn't substantiate what they were saying yet were applying for a senior management post.



He angrily remarked :

*We had to "scratch around" a little in the CV to find out what they (applicants) were trying to tell us (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).*

The Chairman of the SSC was questioned during an interview session as to why the acting principal of the school was automatically shortlisted. He explained that it was common practice to shortlist an applicant who was the current acting principal in the school. One of the selectors opposed the view and argued that there must be cut-off points to meet the post requirements. He pointed out the following very clearly :

*The principal of the school is entitled to apply and not necessarily be automatically shortlisted. However, during the shortlisting, the SSC must be consistent and treat the person like an outside applicant. You need to be cold when reading CV's and during the interview process. The internal applicant is most welcome to apply but the SSC must be fair to all applicants (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

## 6.9 THE LUCKY CANDIDATES THAT MADE THE SHORTLIST

The number of candidates and the scores they received for interviews are set out in table 6.1 below:

No of candidates	Score received	Total score
7	134	142
3	135	142
3	136	142
2	138	142
1	139	142

Table 6.1 : No of applicants and scores received

After completing this daunting task the selectors had to shortlist a manageable number of applicants for interviews. It was unanimously agreed to choose the nine applicants who had scores above 135. The date for the interview was scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1998. Candidates were informed both telephonically and by fax to attend the interview. Of the nine candidates, two had declined as they had been nominated at other schools. One other applicant didn't turn up for the interview and declined telephonically after he was contacted by the chairman of the SSC.

#### 6.10 THE INTERVIEW STAGE

Before the start of the interview proper, the chairman of the SSC made it very clear what selectors should be looking for. Selectors had a list of attributes that displayed the type of person they wanted in terms of character, personality, experience, qualification etc. The interviewing of candidates by the 5 selectors in presence of the observer was conducted during sessions in the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1998. The SSC welcomed each applicant to the interview. Each interview lasted approximately half an hour, total interviewing constituting the mornings work.

Three selectors argued that there was not much objectivity with the interview method itself. They expressed the subjective aspect of interviews:

#### SELECTOR 1

*The interview method we used was very subjective. When we had to make the final choice at the end of the day, it was really subjective (Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).*



### SELECTOR 3

*To be absolutely sure of giving the correct score was difficult. There are no right or wrong answers. You could give so many different answers to one question, in so many ways, but it must meet the requirement of the question. Which is the 100% answer is difficult to say* (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).

### SELECTOR 4

*I agree that the interview is not the best method for choosing a candidate. Definitely, the interview only gives the opportunity to the best talker. The real crux of the matter comes when you are on the job* (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).

Two selectors stressed that in order to get the best person for the job, interviews combined with other methods would prove to be useful, as implemented in the UK and USA. Other methods could include candidate's presentation to the panel, group discussion by applicants displaying their communication skills, a written exercise such as a letter communicating to the Department of Education or parents. Selectors need to draw on ideas from overseas methods of selection. There being no other alternatives offered in the South African context, interviews seem to be the only suitable method at this point in time.

The chairman of the SSC announced that in his opinion the interview at Valakim Primary School was conducted fairly and consistently. There were 5 questions which were formulated with the help of the Superintendent of Education Management (SEM) and the SSC members. One of the co-opted selectors had a problem with this type of question planning. Many SEM's were guiding Staff Selection Committee's on similar lines and it was problematic because some applicants had been to previous interviews and they knew

what type of questions were asked. Thus, they were able to plan ahead for their next interviews. Many of the applicants at this interview knew exactly what they were going to be asked.

A member of one union was present during the entire interview proceedings. Three selectors believed that the observer was quite good. His main task during the interview was to make sure that every applicant had a fair and unbiased interview, that everyone was treated equally and that the same questions were asked to all candidates. The three selectors were content with the fact that the observer didn't interfere in the interview process while two other selectors had a totally different view. According to them the observer didn't observe or monitor the interview process but did make inputs to the discussions of the selection process. The chairman of the SSC remarked that having one observer was subjective. He wondered whether two or more observers would have made a difference.

One of the co-opted members stated that the observer served as a very good guide and he didn't hesitate to tell us where we went wrong. The observer was quite helpful and aware of the proceedings since the selectors were executing their duties for the very first time.

After all the hard days work, the 5 selectors totalled the scores and found an average at the end of the interview process. Thereafter, the candidates had to be placed in their final rank order and submitted to the SGB for ratification. Table 6.2 indicates the applicants and their scores during the interview process.

No. Of candidates	Score received
<i>Kirin</i>	<i>145</i>
<i>Lanette</i>	<i>145</i>
<i>Morgan</i>	<i>144</i>
Visvan	143
Kenneth	142
Hemraj	138

Table 6.2: Applicants and their scores during the interview

#### 6.11 THE FINAL RANK ORDER BY THE STAFF SELECTION COMMITTEE

According to the Department of Education after the completion of all interviews the selectors must rank the applicants for each post. The filling of the post must be finalised taking into consideration suitability of the applicant, specialised qualifications, relevance of experience, expertise in school management and overall impression utilising the interview scores only as a guide. The “drama” started when CONSENSUS could not be reached among the SSC members with regard to the final rank order. Deliberations commenced at 16:45 and continued until 21:00 on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1998 in order to decide on the final rank order. Then the selectors looked at clause 20.1 of the selection procedures and practices ie. suitability, expertise and other criteria and debated all six candidates. When they debated they found that only the first three applicants were most suitable for the position of principalship. It was agreed that the first three applicants (Kirin, Lanette and Morgan) having the scores of 145,145,144 respectively be written on the board. Then the selectors had a major problem as to who should be placed number one. After “heated” discussions they still found themselves in a deadlock. They could not reach consensus.

Thereafter, two members motivated for Morgan, two for Lanette and one for Kirin. Further discussions ensued and the chairman of the SSC asked selectors to motivate over and above reasons as to why they chose their candidates. Once again consensus could not be reached. The SSC exploited all avenues and decided to ask the observer for a way forward. One of the co-opted selectors reported:

*We needed a bit of the observer's help and he was there. He assisted us whenever we were 'stuck'. At no time did the observer tell us which candidate should be placed first and at no stage did he try to influence our way of thinking (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).*

It was getting late and the observer made a telephone call to one of the union sources to obtain further direction. After the call he advised the SSC to have a secret ballot voting. One of the selectors objected to the voting process stating that there had to be consensus among all the selectors. However, the voting continued. Lanette was eliminated, so she was placed as number three. The voting proceeded between Kirin and Morgan. Three selectors voted for Morgan and the other two voted for Kirin. So the final ranking was Morgan as number one followed by Kirin and then Lanette.

#### 6.12 RATIFICATION OF FINAL ORDER BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

The SGB ratification meeting was held on the evening of 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998. The chairman of the SSC explained to the SGB members as to how the final rank order was determined. The chairman of the SGB and other members of the SGB were not in agreement with the manner in which the voting process was carried out by the SSC during the final rank order. The members of the SSC agreed that the voting process was unprocedural according to

Departmental guidelines. A decision was taken by the SGB that the discussion with regard to the final rank order be started all over again following the interview process. All the members of the SGB agreed to draw up a new final rank order of candidates. In the interest of transparency and with a view to greater participation in the decision making process all the members of the SGB discussed and debated on the issue of who should be placed first.

At the commencement of the ratification meeting, it was unanimously agreed by all the selectors that in the event of consensus not being reached with regard to the final rank order, then they will resort to voting. It was also further agreed that the outcome of voting (if any) will be accepted by all as the consensual and binding position of the entire SGB.

A member of the SGB asked to read Kirin, Lanette and Morgan's CV's, since they will not be able to make any substantial inputs if this was not done. There were no objections from any of the SGB members. Then selectors were asked to motivate for their candidate.

#### CANDIDATE 1

Selector 5 (Chairman of the School Governing Body) motivated for Kirin.

#### CANDIDATE 2

Selector 1 (Chairman of the SSC) motivated for Lanette.

#### CANDIDATE 3

Selector 4 (One of the co-opted selectors) motivated for Morgan.

After further discussions and deliberations there was still no consensus. The seven members of the SGB decided to vote as per agreement. The results of the vote is indicated in table 6.3 below:

Name of candidates	No. of votes
Kirin	3
Lanette	3
Morgan	1

Table 6.3 : Results of votes

There was a “tie” between Kirin and Lanette, both having three votes each. The chairman of the SGB made all members aware that he had a deliberate and a casting vote in the case where there was a “tie” in the voting process. As matters transpired, the discussions were moving in circles. The chairman of the SGB sternly expressed the following:

*Constitutionally, as a chairman of the SGB, I have the capacity to break the deadlock by using my deliberate and casting vote (Selector 5, Memorandum, 8 October 1998).*

Members were unhappy with the chairman’s explanation. However, due to the concerns raised by all members, the meeting was suspended until such time that clarification about the process and procedures were obtained from the Department of Education with regard to the following three issues:

- the voting process
- the casting vote
- the vote on gender

It was agreed by all members that once clarity was obtained from the Department, the ratification meeting would be re-convened to finalize the unfinished business. Since the scores were not erased from the chalkboard, the staff saw the scores which revealed a deadlock between Kirin and Lanette and quickly drafted a letter of support for Kirin to the SGB. They believed that being major stakeholders in education, their contributions should receive serious consideration.

Co-incidentally, the two candidates Kirin and Lanette who were in the "tie" during the ratification meeting held by the SGB had also tied during the interview process as determined by the SSC.

#### 6.13 MEETING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The members of the SSC, the Superintendent and the observer met on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1998 at 18:00 to discuss the three issues as indicated above. At this meeting it was noted that the voting which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1998 by the SSC and on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 by the SGB was out of order. There was real chaos. Surprisingly enough, the voting process was also carried out at this meeting with the Department as well. The Superintendent tried his best to resolve the matter. Unfortunately it was 00:45 the next morning and consensus could not be reached. A decision was taken to refer the matter to the Dispute Resolution Committee for jurisdiction.

#### 6.14 AT THE RE-CONVENED RATIFICATION MEETING

The Chairman of the SGB re-convened the ratification meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1998 at 18:30. The Chairman of the SGB presented a report back of the clarification held with

the Superintendent on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1998. The following extract encapsulates the report back:

*The Superintendent was approached for advice. With regard to gender, the advice was that the selection process should be sensitive to gender issues. With regard to the voting process, the advice was that finding consensus was always preferable to voting but that the voting was an instrument that could be used where consensus could not be reached. With regard to the use of deliberate and casting vote, the advice was that the chairman of the SGB has the right to use a deliberate vote as well as a casting vote (Selector 5, Memorandum, 8 October 1998).*

In a memorandum, the chairman of the SSC was horrified and stated that the report back was slanted. Refer to the version presented by the chairman of the SSC.

*At the meeting with the Superintendent 4 out of 5 agreed to place Lanette as the first candidate, followed by Kirin and Morgan. But the chairman of the SGB refused to move his position. At this stage it must be noted that members have moved positions in 'leaps and bounds' to accommodate the chairman of the SGB. Trying to convince the chairman of the SGB was very difficult. The dispute was referred to the Department (Selector 1, Memorandum, Undated).*

The chairman of the SGB stated that it was his right to use his deliberate and casting vote when there was a "deadlock or tie" between applicants. He then informed the members of the SGB that the voting process would resume. Thereafter, he exercised his vote after having considered the following factors:

- management experience
- expertise
- gender
- overall experience



The outcome BEFORE the re-convened meeting is indicated in table 6.4 below:

Name of applicants	No. Of votes	Applicant's relation to the school
Kirin	3	internal
Lanette	3	external
Morgan	1	external

Table 6.4 : Outcome of votes before the re-convened meeting

One of the co-opted selectors was asked during an interview session what his view was with regard to a situation where there was a "tie" between an internal and external candidate. He said that it was a difficult question to answer. Nevertheless, he offered the following explanation:

*If in your school, you have a person who is a top person and meets the profile of the person required - by all means we will appoint the person. But if such an applicant cannot be found within the school then we need to get somebody who best serves the need of the school and our children. If the school has someone, I will never consider someone from the outside. The time has come to recognise the people from within.*

*If you afford someone to come for an interview and you find the outside applicant is better than the inside applicant, you have no choice but to appoint the applicant. It would be better to appoint the outside applicant. If there is a 'tie' between an outside and inside applicant I would appoint the internal applicant since the applicant is au fait with the human relations of the school already (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

The outcome AFTER the CASTING VOTE is indicated in table 6.5 below:

Name of applicants	No. Of votes
Kirin	4
Lanette	3
Morgan	1

Table 6.5 : Outcome of votes after the casting vote

### 6.15 SELECTORS AT WAR!

After the casting vote, three members refused to sign the EC 6 form which indicated the final choice of all selectors. This form could not be sent to the department due to the absence of certain selectors. The three selectors were upset with the manner in which the Chairman of the SGB abruptly and very quickly cast his vote. The Chairman of the SGB was questioned about his actions. He was firm and retorted that three selector's lack of reasoning and understanding is what actually caused the dispute. He explained further :

*I must agree that all applicants were equally good . But there was a clear indication that Kirin was more suitable. I would like to give you a little scenario . All the applicants satisfied the basic academic qualification. How can selectors say that it is difficult to choose between Lanette with 3-4 yrs of management experience as compared to Kirin with 20 years of active management experience. He served so many schools having varied management skills. He was brought to Valakim Primary School, bearing in mind that there was severe conflict between the staff, one of the previous principals and some community members. Since his inception there was stability. It is simply a "clear cut" case. It seems that some members just motivated for Lanette and Morgan on the assumption that miracles can be done. It doesn't work like that (Selector 5, Interview, 29 March 1999).*

The Chairman of the SGB said that he couldn't understand this case and handed the matter to the department. At a later stage the three selectors who didn't sign the EC6 form were interviewed and they were quite upset with the way the process ended. They said that they were looking for a principal to take Valakim primary School into the new millennium, with a bigger and greater vision. The three selectors who opposed signing of the EC6 form, strongly believed that the chairman had a personal preference which actually caused the dispute. They expressed the following view:

#### SELECTOR 1

*I think it was the SGB chairman who caused the dispute. It was nepotism from one person of the SGB. The process was fine until the very end of the interview. Thereafter, the process 'fell down the way side'. There was no confidentiality and this became problematic. One person of the SGB was accused and he agreed that he had taken some Selection Committee documents ( CV's, the final procedures, telephone numbers of candidates etc.) home. The staff of the school intervened and signed a so called "petition" which was sent to the Department stating why they wanted Kirin the Acting Principal as Principal for the school. I feel that this was interference. The process could not continue (Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).*

#### SELECTOR 3

*One selector had a candidate in mind from the beginning (Selector 3, Interview, 19 March 1999).*

#### SELECTOR 4

*When one looks at the calibre of the candidates, there would never have been a dispute if nepotism was left out. If we went purely by the quality of deliverance during the interview process, we would have had no disputes at all. The disputes came in because of nepotism and personal preferences. The dispute emanated from one person not compromising ie. not being prepared to move positions. He had a person in mind and therefore did not change (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

## 6.16 THE AFTERMATH

One of the co-opted selectors handed a detailed letter to the chairman of the SGB on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1998 entitled, "Motion of no confidence". The letter was tabled at the next SGB meeting, on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 1998, and the Chairman of the SGB responded in a memorandum.

The co-opted member outlined in his letter that the Chairman acted unilaterally on many occasions. His handling of "high pressured" meetings had been poor and he had limited understanding of terminology during the selection process. He was also instrumental in splitting the SGB, as well as stalling the promotion process with the hope that Lanette and Morgan are accepted in other schools.

In the interest of transparency the chairman of the SGB responded to the letter, "Motion of no confidence".

*The letter was replete with distortions, misrepresentations and untruths. The allegations contained therein are slanderous and vilifying in extreme. The allegations are of an abusive nature. They constitute a scurrilously and defamatory attack on my person, dignity and character. I have sought legal advice and I reserve my right to litigation to damages from the author of this letter (Selector 5, Memorandum, 8 October 1999).*

The vote of no confidence was not accepted due to some technical procedures. On the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1998 the said co-opted member handed a detailed letter of resignation from the SGB, outlining that he had several problems with the Chairman of the SGB. Soon afterwards 3 out of 5 selectors resigned from the SSC.

## 6.17 WHY VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE?

*The Chairperson had done a lot of damages, I was of the opinion that he deserves to resign from the position and out of the SGB. Therefore, I moved a vote of no confidence. I hoped that would have carried weight and actually have him removed from office. I would be able to sort out the damage. The entire SSC was split.*

*If we had the vote of no confidence carried out, then the Chairman would have been removed and we would have actually come in, the process would have continued. It did not mean that our candidate would come in because we had Departmental intervention at that time. So, it was out of our hands. If the Department appointed Kirin, it would have been accepted. We would have still been there and be supportive of him as the principal (Selector 4, Interview, 20 March 1999).*

## 6.18 AT LAST!

The Department after many months of dissecting the volume of selection documents, made the final decision that Mr Kirin Govindsamy will serve as the newly appointed principal of Valakim Primary School. The principal received a letter from the Department of Education during December 1998. The following is an extract thereof:

*This is to confirm your appointment to the post as principal with effect from 01/01/99, subject to validation by the personnel section of the Department. Further it should be noted that a promotion may be withdrawn if it is established that the promotion was effected on incorrect information or the requirements for promotion are not met. I congratulate you on your new work environment.*

*Yours faithfully  
Regional Chief Director*

*(Departmental correspondence, 23 December 1998).*

In an interview, the chairman of the SSC reported:

*The Department has failed dismally in handling the dispute. They didn't respond to correspondence and telephone calls made by the SSC. In my opinion they didn't handle the dispute adequately. The appointment has been made. I don't want to interfere in the process, it was the person's job and his life is at stake as well. This is his career and I feel that I don't want to interfere now!* (Selector 1, Interview, 7 March 1999).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### EVALUATING THE CASE OF VALAKIM PRIMARY SCHOOL: FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS

The birth of new policies in South Africa after 1994 such as the staff selection policy claims to instil democracy within schools like Valakim Primary. The change from National control to local selection of principals gave rise to the formation of structures such as school governing bodies where greater collaboration and participation have been incorporated into the decision making process at school level.

But as Watkins (1991) concludes 'While the local selection of principals is a step along the path towards more collaborative and participatory structures, where the school community has a more direct involvement in choosing the principal of the school, a number of tensions can still be seen to exist' (p.35). The local selection of principals by school governing bodies as documented in the Valakim case study reflects both strengths and weaknesses of the selection and appointment process.

The principle of democracy needs to be increasingly reflected in all levels of the education system through consultation of the various stakeholders, interest groups and other role players. The big question is, is democracy in the eyes of the public being practised in the same way at school level? One needs to look at the micro-politics of how democracy works within school governing bodies. Factors such as ethnicity, racial and religious groupings of members of the governing body affect the way decisions are taken. There are also cases

where the selection and appointment of senior staff at school is determined by the politics of the area. Therefore, these decisions are not fair in the context of democracy bearing in mind the micro-politics and political influence in the decision making process.

There is a considerable gap between policy ideals and implementation practice with respect to the selection and appointment of senior staff under new, post-apartheid legislation. The new legislation with regard to the selection and appointment of senior managers is an example of an educational reform process in theory which makes it possible for school based promotions and the broadening of the decision making process through greater stakeholder participation. It is well and good to have a sophisticated staff selection policy yet implementation is highly fragmented in practice. There is scope for further research in this regard.

There are policy-practice gaps in respect of the selection policy of senior managers because the implementation is complex and lengthy. The mechanism involved in moving policy smoothly from paper to practice is not seriously explored. The problem is compounded by the practical lack of communication between educational authorities and the implementing agencies- the school governing bodies. The ultimate ends of policy are not shared by both policy makers and school governing bodies. The policy makers must obtain school governing inputs on senior staff selection before designing policies. They must enquire about how the policies such as the staff selection policy would work at all schools bearing in mind the manner in which schools in the various Ex-Departments have been administered. The policy ignores the fact that different factors such as conservative governing bodies and schools with no idea of how governing bodies operate do actually exist.



All school governing bodies need considerable training and capacity building to implement new legislation effectively. There's too much of time wasted. These programmes are essential in most of the schools because members of the various school governing bodies are performing their tasks for the very first time. The National government ought to have consulted with legal people in drawing up such staff selection policies. Unfortunately the legal implication of certain decisions did not filter to the school governing bodies in the form of intensive capacity building programmes. The lack of such programmes resulted in uninformed governing body members who were unable to execute their tasks correctly. This then resulted in the poor handling of the selection and appointment process. There are many disputes as a result of the decisions taken by members of school governing bodies due to insufficient capacity training.

However, one must realize that community participation is vital to bring about organisational democracy. If over a period of time the road towards democracy at school level is closed then the legitimacy of the school governing bodies will be highly questioned. If the process of capacity building can take place then the ideals of the government in respect of community participation at school level would be realised.

Schools, given their different racial, gendered (and religious) histories cannot always be expected to implement progressive (non-racial, non-sexist) appointment policies as intended. There are still huge disparities among all the school contexts in South Africa such as vast differences in the allocation of resources, absence of proper management skills in some cases, varying abilities of parental involvement in school governance etc. Parents in many rural schools are not familiar with the concept of school governing bodies. However,

parents are being made aware of the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies. Therefore, these parents with little knowledge of school governance and the absence of capacity building programmes will find it extremely difficult to implement the process of selecting and appointing senior management staff in the context of new legislation.

In the Education White Paper 2 (1996:19) it is clearly stated that 'there is every reason to believe that schools which have never experienced representative governance structures with real decision-making power should start more modestly than schools with a successful tradition of responsible governance, whatever previous department they belonged to in the old racial and ethnic organisation of schools'.

There is nothing inherently progressive about the democratisation of decision-making at school level unless senior managers and all governing body members understand their functions in a much broader context and that they are able to perform effectively and competently. Localised, conserving forces can undermine progressive intentions. The powerful elite of a particular community can restore their ideologies via their participation in school governing bodies. In this way these ideologies are represented within the democratic school structures which contributes to the legacy of the past in South Africa.

The historic patterns of school governance had been autocratic based on 'top down' approach. While I find that the selection of a principal has been placed in the hands of governing bodies which is seen as stakeholder participation, the Department of Education still has the firm grip on the selection process either through Regional, Provincial or at National level. There is still a hierarchical control where the Department has the real power

in the running of schools through legislation because governing bodies only have the power to make recommendations to the Department. Similarly all other functions such as resourcing, staffing and financing of schools are still embedded within the existing bureaucratic structures of our Department of Education. In respect of the selection process the Department transferred the administrative structures of selection to governing bodies. However, the Department of Education still has the ultimate authority in the decision making process.

*The role of parents must be intensified.* If one looks at the previous racially divided Departments of Education and how they were administered it is evident that there has been vast differences in respect of the role of parents on governing bodies. There are many rural schools in South Africa that have been disadvantaged due to their past administration and financial allocation. Their past educational experiences to an extent may have limited vision of the attributes of a "strong principal". Given the legacy of the past, all school policies need to empower parents particularly in poorer communities, to be co-partners in the school environment and also ensure that the schools are managed in a way which includes greater stakeholder participation.

Teachers should be considered as important role players in education. One of the other findings in Valakim Primary was that the participation of teachers in the staff selection process was absent. Teachers should be included in the selection process since they are familiar with their school environment and the type of school leader they desire. They could make inputs in respect of the type of principal that would fit the ethos of the school. It is also important for teachers to be part of the Selection Committee to provide selectors

with information such as interpretation of qualifications and administrations skills required for a senior manager at school level.

The role of the principal at official level conflicts with that at school level. The principal who has been selected and appointed at Valakim Primary would interact with the Department of Education and its bureaucratic structures. At the same time this principal will also be expected to consult and participate with the various role players within his school governing body. Therefore, the principal will still be in conflict with the bureaucratic structures of the Department of Education and the participatory structures of the school governing bodies.

The “vanishing” criteria of seniority did not improve the system of promotion. The Department’s idea of getting rid of seniority and replacing it with the minimum criteria of matric plus three years of professional qualification did not really assist the selectors. It left room for jobs for pals. The minimum criteria for principals and deputy principals should be seriously looked at. Schools need strong leaders. Therefore, the selection criteria for recruiting senior leaders with sound character, personality, skills and qualification in management should be increased.

Since there is much evidence that schools have transformed the demographic profile of their pupils, it therefore calls for a redress in the staff of such schools, especially senior managers. Although many African and Indian pupils are in Model C schools they seem to be administered within “white management structures”. Each governing body should try to ensure that they select staff and managers of the school to reflect the pupil population and more especially to take cognisance of the needs of all pupils.

There is definitely an absence of an employment equity-redress policy to address the historical legacy of an almost all Indian, White, Coloured and African teaching staff. Schools should be fully integrated in terms of staff. Each governing body could have an employment equity-redress policy which actually commit themselves to advertising their posts and searching for good equity- based candidates. There are excellent senior teachers of all race groups with effective management skills and many who are producing outstanding academic results in difficult circumstances. Governing bodies need to go out and find them.

Women are still discriminated in terms of promotion practices. Therefore, the problem of domination of Selection Committees as in Valakim Primary by five male members to the detriment of female applicants must be noted. It is vital to take note of gender politics when selecting staff. The ratio of members on the selection panels need to be fairly balanced in respect of gender. The problem of making the school communities aware to recognise the skills and capabilities of women are still prevalent. All school communities must realise that there are many women who hold senior managers positions such as principals, deputy principals and chairpersons of school governing bodies or school boards.

There is a lack of open channels of communication between Departmental officials and all school governing bodies. Progressive Departments should think of a “help or advice centre” for a certain period of time where members of governing bodies could liaise immediately to resolve issues such as disputes, problems, conflicts, interpretation of circulars etc. This was not the case at Valakim Primary School. An effective “help centre” will capacitate members of governing bodies in the interest of good public education.

The latest Voluntary Severance Package caused havoc in schools such as Valakim Primary where the senior manager (principal) left the profession. This had placed much pressure on school governing bodies to select and appoint leaders for schools within a short period determined by the Department of Education. I am fundamentally against the idea of these packages because of the loss of millions of rands and in some cases severe pressure on governing bodies to select an entire new management. This kind of expenditure doesn't contribute to furthering the goals of equity and redress in education.

There is much evidence at Valakim Primary School that Departmental officials played a minimal role in the selection process. There must be mechanisms whereby Superintendents as State employees are meeting their instructional and managerial obligations.

When an appointment such as a senior manager is made, an induction day and a series of management programmes should follow. Vanderlip (cited in Gorton, 1977:159) defines staff induction as 'a process whereby recently employed individuals are helped to become oriented to their new environment, which includes the community, the school system, the teaching position and the people with whom they will be working'. Rebores (1991:136) also supports the idea of the induction process and concludes that it acquaints newly employed individuals with the whole school community.

While there were many problems that emanated during the selection process concerning the role of parents, teachers, principals and Superintendents Watkins (1991) asserts :

*While the initial steps along the path towards more participatory structures may be fraught with hazards and difficulties, they are still worth the effort (p.36).*

After investigating the case of Valakim Primary School, it was evident that there were also positive findings in respect of the selection and appointment process. The power of school governing bodies to select and appoint senior managers is the start of democracy at school level where a pool of ideas, experiences, views and perception contribute to the participative decision making process which was absent before 1994 in South Africa.

It has been seen as a more democratic process as compared to previous promotion procedures. The involvement of various stakeholders especially parents is a step in the right direction and moreover it gives the community the opportunity to choose the right candidate who will further the goals of their schools.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 8.1 SUMMARY OF MY RESEARCH

Parents were empowered after the enactment of the S.A. Schools Act of 1996. It has been legislated that parents should play a vital role in the administration of their schools. Thus parents as selectors were elected onto the Staff Selection Committees. They were involved in the selection process for the very first time.

In spite of the difficulties, such as limited knowledge of the selection process, parents took upon this daunting task of selecting senior management staff. Clearly, selectors complained about the inadequate training provided by the Department of Education. They believed that the training programme was limited and ineffective. Thus, it did not prepare them adequately for the selection of principals. Quite interestingly, with the little knowledge they acquired 80% of the parents were confident in the choice of leaders for their schools. School governing bodies seemed to relish their empowerment and carried out their duties in a positive way. It was found that 100% of the EX-Model C schools were already knowledgeable in the selection process. It is not surprising that these schools were involved in selection previously since they have sufficient finance to employ additional educators to their schools.

Members dropping off during the process caused stress among selectors and also slowed the selection process. Selectors were not totally committed because it was not a paid job. Majority of the parent selectors (87%) indicated that none of their selectors dominated the



selection process. However, it was found that 52% of the selectors confirmed that the selection process was not vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity and personal preferences. At the same time it must be pointed out that a relatively high number of selectors (42%) believe the process of selection was not carried out fairly. It was based on a “buddy system”.

Selectors also complained about the shortlisting and interview hours. They were inconvenienced because they had to make personal sacrifices. Furthermore, 88% of the selectors felt that they were also being financially burdened.

It was interesting to note that majority of the parents indicated that all CV's were allocated equal time for evaluation although there were serious time constraints. An extremely important point is that 87% parents, 82% principals and 82% deputy principals, indicated that their decisions were reached through active involvement by all selectors. Their decisions were reached through consensus.

Selectors believed that the role of the unions and Department official should have been increased. Selectors required professional advice during the selection and appointment process. Nevertheless, 80% of the parents were confident when they chose leaders for their schools.

## 8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Just not any selector has the ability to do the job well. All selectors must be screened to qualify as members of the Staff Selection Committee. The governing body members must formulate a set of criteria to choose selectors with experience.
- ▶ Selection Committees must comprise all stakeholders and not only parents. Teachers were left out of the selection policy. However, in some schools teachers were involved. Teachers must play a complimentary role in the selection process. They must be part of the process except in the case where members of their own staff are applicants or applicants whom they have vested interest in. Teachers understand more fully the working of school in terms of its administration and the type of principal that is required. The inclusion of other stakeholders will increase the legitimacy of the entire selection process ie. the process will be transparent in the eyes of all stakeholders.
- ▶ The ratio of the Selection Committee members must be looked into. There should be an equal representation from the various stakeholders. One sector should not be over represented. All the stakeholders play an equally important role in the selection process. Furthermore, the ratio of males is to females should be balanced. Thus, the Selection Committees should not be exclusively male or female dominated.
- ▶ The Department must intensify their capacity building workshops during the course of the year. These programmes must include a “mock selection process” to strengthen selectors' abilities to choose the best candidates for their schools.

- ▶ The Department should have an “advice desk” at the various Teacher’s Centres to provide assistance to selectors or school governing body members on issues concerning selection and appointment of senior managers. This decreases the number of disputes by communicating with Superintendents from the Advice Desk.
  
- ▶ Potential applicants must clearly know whether the post advertised in a particular school is more or less the one they wish to apply for. The vacancies in the manual does not indicate any information about the character and personality of the principal required for the school. It is assumed that all schools have the same working environments. It must be borne in mind that some schools are unique and require really “tough leaders” due to the unstable nature of the school environment. Therefore, school governing bodies must submit a simple clear job description to the Department for processing. Thus applicants will choose their post in accordance with their character, personality and ability.
  
- ▶ Although the interview is the most common way of selecting candidates even in industry, a range of assessment techniques should be included to strengthen the quality of leadership required. Department officials must investigate a host of other methods involving candidates such as group discussions, in-tray exercises and individual presentations. These methods could be intensively workshopped with selectors. Selectors will then use the interview method coupled with another assessment technique which will ensure the best candidate for the school.
  
- ▶ The ability of all selectors to make finer judgements of the applicant’s performance must be looked into. Selectors found it difficult to differentiate between the

strengths of applicants having the same experience. Therefore, selectors should master the technique of scoring candidates by having meetings, debating and discussing the issue of scoring before the selection process. The effectiveness and efficiency in making judgements would improve if selectors have a “mock pre-selection” ie. before the real selection and appointment process.

- ▶ In the case where the selectors cannot choose a candidate via consensus they should conduct a second round of interviews with other techniques for assessments or call for the educator’s personal file which would reveal aspects such as attendance of the applicant and then arrive at common decisions. Failure to this, selectors could submit the entire final list to the governing body for finality. If selectors entrust the final decision making to the school governing body then selectors must accept the decision as binding.
- ▶ The verification of information in each CV is important. Superintendents should verify the content of the application and CV of candidates especially their qualifications, category classification etc. before sending them to governing bodies. Any information on the contrary must be engaged with the applicant before it reaches the governing body.
- ▶ Another concern is that a high percentage of principals have left the profession due to their early retirement/severance packages. More senior managers are still planning to leave the profession. A survey must be carried out on the number of principals between the ages of 45-55. This will help to prepare Superintendents in planning intensive workshops for school selectors.

- ▶ An estimated average time invested in the selection process by all the stakeholders must be equated to some kind of remuneration in spite of the fact that selectors ought to show commitment and loyalty to their school. If parents want the best leader for their schools then selectors should be paid. A non-paid job in most cases does not yield good job performance. Even a fixed rate of payment for selectors would contribute to their commitment and will avoid dropping out of selectors. Selectors would thus perform the selection process diligently and conscientiously.
  
- ▶ The Department of Education should negotiate with Universities and Technikons to provide certificates, diplomas or degrees in school management where there is more emphasis on practice than on theory of management. Tertiary institutions must make qualifications more meaningful and useful to school managers. The existing management programmes offered are not credible in the eyes of selectors because some of its content or subject emphasis are outdated or based on routine information.
  
- ▶ There must be an induction programme set in place for the newly appointed principals and deputy principals by the SGB. In addition, special skills building programmes must be presented to new appointees by Superintendents in areas of school leadership in the changing and dynamic school environment.
  
- ▶ It has been noticed that many educators once appointed as principals or deputy principals give up their studies and decrease their attendance to outside meetings. It is strongly advised that principals, selectors of school governing bodies and other personnel attend seminars, workshops and meetings of an educational nature for

which points must be awarded through the South African Council of Educators. These points must be recorded by the Council. Candidates wishing to be promoted as principals must produce their credit rating. At least it is a starting point to involve educators and other leaders like principals to keep abreast with the latest trends in education.

- ▶ Monitor how the policy on selection and appointment of principals is implemented in practice. This can be done by conducting surveys in all schools and evaluating the last promotion process. Inputs from these schools could be examined and new inputs could be built into the policy. This allows for a shared policy between the policy makers and school governing bodies.
  
- ▶ The selection policy document must be reviewed and critiqued periodically by women administrators, unions, governing body members and other stakeholders. This will eliminate discrimination against females in the form of barriers to senior management posts. The review could also include new thinking in aspects such as age restriction, race, ethnicity etc. My view is that every new policy must be allowed for review and improvement based on feedback from the various stakeholders if the implementation of the policy is to be effective and credible in the eyes of the public.

### 8.3 CONCLUSION

On assessing my two critical questions I conclude that there are numerous weaknesses or limitations as compared to the strengths of the new staff selection and appointment process. However, one major advantage of the selection process is that it empowered parents and opened up the avenue for other community participation.

The formation of school governing bodies is a local form of accountability. It is hoped that school governing bodies legitimise the democracy within our public schools. The whole concept of decentralisation and devolution of educational power needs to be foisted in the hands of various stakeholders especially that of parents. If parents are paying for their children's education and are the major role players then they must be afforded the opportunity to make the final say in the decision making process. The emphasis of greater participation by all stakeholders is paramount to ensure transparency.

With time and upon realisation of the importance of selecting a strong principal in relation to how it impacts on their children's education, the issue of nepotism and personal preferences would be reduced. The many limits of the selection policy brings scope for positive inputs. Most of the weaknesses can be translated into strengths following the above recommendations.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackroyd, S & Hughes, J.A. 1992. *Data Collection in Context*. Second Edition. London: Longman.
- Anderson, G.1993. *Fundamentals of Educational Research*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Anderson, M.E. 1991. *Principals: How to train, recruit, select, induct and evaluate leaders for American schools*. ERIC reports. Clearinghouse on educational management. ED 337843.
- Archimedes. 1996. *Management guide for Heads and Senior Staff*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Banfield, J. & Fearn, E. 1987. *Nine by Two: guidelines for job applicants and for selectors of staff in schools and similar educational organisations*. *School Organisation*. 7(1) :107-111.
- Bell, J. 1989. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. Philadelphia: Open University Press. Milton Keynes.
- Best, J.W. &Kahn, J.V. 1986. *Research in Education*. Fifth Edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Braun, J.A. 1987. A survey of hiring practices in selected school districts. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 38(2):45-49.
- ✓ Burgess, T. & Sofer, A. 1978. *The school governors' & managers' handbook & training guide*. Great Britain: Kogan Page.



Bush, T. 1995. *Theories of Educational Management*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Cohen, L & Manion, L. 1980. *Research Methods in Education*. London: Croom Helm.

Cohen, L & Manion, L. 1985. *Research Methods in Education*. Second Edition. London: Croom Helm.

Cowan, B.J. & Dominguez, S.P. 1996. At the Crossroads: the development of thinking about the role, appointment and training of headteachers in Spain. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. 19(1):65-82.

Dean, J. 1987. *Managing the Primary School*. London: Croom Helm.

✓ Decker, R.L. 1981. The employment interview. *Personnel Administrator*. 26(11): 71-73.

Department of National Education. 1996. *Education White Paper 2 : The Organisation , Governance and Funding of Schools*, No.16987. Pretoria: Government Printers.

✓ Department of Education. 1997. *Understanding the SA Schools Act. What Public School Governors Need to Know*. Pretoria:

Draper, J. & Mc Michael, P. 1998. Preparing a profile: Likely applicants for Primary School Headship. *Educational management and administration*, 26 (2): 161 - 172.

Dyer, J.R. 1979. *Understanding and Evaluating Educational Research*. London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

- ✓ Emerson, C. & Goddard, I. 1993. *Managing staff in schools*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. London: A division of Heinemann Publishers.
- ✓ Eratuuli, M & Leino, J. 1996. School principal as pedagogical leader, *European Journal of Teacher Education*. 19(1):83-90.
- 2 Esp, D. & Saran, R. 1995. *Effective governors for effective schools*. Great Britain: Pitman Publishing.
- 3 Everard, K.B. & Morris, G. 1986. *Effective school management*. London: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Fraenkel, J & Wallen, N.E. 1993. *How to design and evaluate research in Education*. (Interviewing techniques)
- 4 Gokar, K.K. 1998. *The Attitudes of Secondary School Teachers towards Parental Involvement in School Governance*. M.Ed. thesis (unpublished), University of Durban Westville, Durban.
- ✓ Gips, C.T. & Bredeson, P.V. 1984. *The selection of Teachers and Principals : A model for Faculty participation in personnel selection decisions in Public Schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. April 23-27. ED251974.
- Gorton, R. A. 1977. *School administration*. W.C. Brown Dubuque, Iowa: Company Publishers.
- Gronn, P.C. 1986. Choosing a Deputy Head: The Rhetoric and Reality of Administrative selection. *Australian Journal of Education*, 30(1):1-22.
- Greenfield, T.B. 1980. The man who comes back through the door in the wall: Discovering Truth, Discovering Self, Discovering Organisations. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 16(3):26-59.

Guba, E.G & Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

5 Holman, L.J. 1995. Should Site-Based Committees Be Involved in the Campus Staffing Process ? *NASSP Bulletin*. 79(569) :65-69.

Hoyle, E. & McMahon A. 1986. *The Management of Schools*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Ihle, R. 1987. Defining the Big Principal - What Schools and Teachers Want in Their Leaders. *NASSP Bulletin*. 71(500) : 94-98.

6 Johnson, D. , Packwood, T. & Whitaker, T. 1984. *School Governing Bodies*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Joseph, N. 1998. A comparative study of Management strategies in three Secondary Schools. M.Ed. Thesis (unpublished), University of Durban Westville, Durban.

Krinsky, I.W. 1994. Getting Down to Business. *The American School Board Journal*. 181(4) :26-30.

Landsheere, G.D. 1982. *Empirical research in education*. France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

7 Lindle, J.C. & Shrock, J. School - Based Decision - Making Councils and Hiring Process. *NASSP Bulletin*. 77(551) :71-76.

Merriam, S.B. 1988. *Case Study Research in Education*. San Francisco : Jossey-Bass.

Morgan, C., Hall, V. & Mackay, H. 1983. *The selection of Secondary School Headteachers*. England: Open University Press. Milton Keynes.

Morgan, C., Hall, V. & Mackay, H. 1984. *A Handbook on Selecting Senior Staff for Schools*. Philadelphia: Open University Press. Milton Keynes.

Muse, I.D. 1991. The thinning ranks of rural school administration: The principalship in trouble. *Rural Educator*. 13(1):8-12.

National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM) 1996. *Selecting heads and deputy heads*. Paper no. 50

Pigford, A.B. 1995. The interview: What Candidates for Administrative Positions Should Know and Do . *NASSP Bulletin* . 79(569):54-59.

Preissle-Goetz, J & leCompte, M.D. 1991. *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning*. New York: Mac Millan.

Rebore, R.W. 1991. *Personnel Administration in Education-A Management Approach*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. . London: Allyn and Bacon.

8 Sallis, J. 1996. *School governors: A question and answer guide*. Great Britain: Butterworth - Heinemann.

9 Slavin, R.E. 1984. *Research Methods in Education: A Practical Guide*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Smith, R. 1995. *Successful School Management* . London: Cassell.

10 South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. *Government Gazette* . Pretoria: 1996.

11 Stiggins, R.J. & Duke, D.L. Evaluating the performance of Principals: A descriptive study. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 21(4):71-98.

12 Stoner, A.J. et al . 1995. *Management*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. USA: Hall International.

- Southworth, G. 1989. *Readings in Primary School Management*. London: The Falmer Press.
- 17 Spillane, R. 1994. Mind Over Management. *American School Board Journal*. 181(4):30-31
- Tuckman, B.W. 1988. *Conducting Educational Research*. Third Edition. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers.
- 12 Vithal, R & Jansen, J.D. 1997. *Designing your first research proposal: A manual for researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. Juta & Co, Ltd.
- ✓ Walker, W. et al. 1991. *Advancing education: School leadership in action*. London: The Falmer Press.
- ✓ Waters, D. 1983. *Responsibility and promotion in the Primary School*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- ✓ Waters, D. 1984. *Management and headship in the primary school*. London: Ward Lock Educational Co.
- 13 Watkins, P. 1991. Devolving Educational Administration in Victoria: Tensions in the role and selection of Principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 29(1):22-38.
- ✓ Wendel, F.C. & Breed, R.D. 1988. Improving the Selection of Principals :An Analysis of the Approaches. *NASSP Bulletin*. 72(508) :35-38.
- Winter, P.A & Dunaway, D. M. 1997. Reactions Of Teachers, As Applicants, To Principal Recruitment Practices In A Reform Environment: The Effects Of Job Attributes, Job Information Source, And School Level. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*.30(3):144-153.

14 Wragg, E.C & Partington, J.A. 1995. The school governor's handbook ,3<sup>rd</sup> edition.  
London: Routledge Publishers.

Yin, R.K. 1981. Case Study Research : Design and Methods. Beverly Hills : Sage.

Yin, R. K. 1993. Applications of Case study research. London: International Ed. And  
Professional Publisher.

## APPENDIX A

Dear colleagues

I am a M.Ed student specializing in Education Management at the University of Durban-Westville. I am presently engaged in my research project.

Despite the commendable qualities of the new staff selection and appointment process, such as broad stakeholder representation, some people argued that this process has generated other problems and concerns in its actual implementation. In the light of the perceived problems in the new staff selection/ appointment process, I decided to research the views and assess the experiences of School Governing Bodies on the process of selecting and appointing senior management staff in public schools. I believe that more input from Governing Bodies could improve the selection policy.

I have randomly selected schools in the North Durban Region and will be happy to obtain the responses from Governing Bodies. Please take note that a summary of the findings will be posted to your school on request. I am sure that this will be of some assistance to the new thinking of the selection and appointment process.

I realise your time is very precious, but I humbly appeal to you to be so kind enough to complete and return the attached questionnaire to me by the end of November 1998. Please be assured that your responses will be strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

B. GOUNDEN

TO THE PRINCIPAL

THE PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON :

THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES WITH RESPECT TO THE PROCESSES OF SELECTING AND APPOINTING SENIOR MANAGEMENT STAFF IN SCHOOLS.

PLEASE HAND THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO ONE OF THE STAFF SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF YOUR SCHOOL. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE WILL BE TREATED WITH TOTAL CONFIDENTIALITY AND WILL BE USED FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.

AT ALL TIMES THE ANONYMITY OF THE SCHOOL WILL BE PROTECTED.

SHOULD YOUR SCHOOL SO REQUEST, I WILL MAKE AVAILABLE THE SUMMARY RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH FOR YOUR INSTITUTION.

*I CAN BE CONTACTED AT NAME : B. GOUNDEN*

*TELEPHONE: 0322-333607*

*FAX NO. : 031-597765*



**FILL AND RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE ONLY**  
**SECTION A : BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**

1. Name of school : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Ex-HoD , Ex-DET , Ex-Kwa-Zulu , Ex-Model C ,  
 Ex-HOA , Ex- HOR
3. I am a teacher , parent , teacher & parent , principal ,  
 deputy principal  on the above governing body.
4. Male  Female

**SECTION B :COMMON OR REPEATED PROBLEMS RAISED BY  
 DIFFERENT GROUPS ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS.**

For each of the following statements indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement by ticking the relevant block on the scale below.

Statements	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
1. Some members had little knowledge about the selection process					
2. None of the members dominated the shortlisting process; everybody had equal influence.					
3. Selection was vulnerable to nepotism, subjectivity & personal preferences					
4. Selection was based on political , religious , ethnic groupings of candidates					
5. Shortlisting and interviews were conducted at odd hours					
6. All CVs were not allocated equal time due to time constraints					
7. Some members were not personally committed in choosing the right person for the job					

Statements	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
8. The shortlisting criteria were always objective and fair.					
9. Some members were not interested in the selection process					
10. The scoring system was very objective					
11. All information in the CVs were not verified when in doubt					
12. It was not easy to differentiate between the strengths of the applicants having the same experience					
13. Gender balance was always given preference					
14. The applicants from my own school were given preference					
15. Interviews were not effective in revealing the applicants actual management potential					
16. Observers were always present during the entire selection process					
17. There should have been an education officer with selection experience to provide assistance from time to time.					
18. All members were involved in the selection process for the first time					
19. It was difficult to assess whether CV's were original or professionally written					
20. Only level 2 educators were considered for principalship (level 3/4)					

Statements	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
21. Union representatives were always present during the entire process					
22. It was still difficult to score candidates after contact with referees since they always portrayed a favourable image of the applicant					
23. The short training programme I received did not prepare me adequately for the selection process					
24. The selection policy is fair and adequate					
25. The entire selection process required members personal time and money					
26. Members dropping out during the process caused major problems					
27. All CVs were not given equal evaluation					
28. Decisions were reached through consensus rather than a vote					
29. Most members were not experienced in the selection process					
30. Selectors were confident in their choices of candidates					



## APPENDIX B

### SEMI - STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: CASE STUDY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. COMPOSITION OF THE STAFF SELECTION COMMITTEE

Comment on the composition of the Staff Selection Committee.

What's your view on other stakeholder participation such as teachers on the Committee, since the senior management staff selected will have to work with teachers?

#### 2. TRAINING RECEIVED

What can you say about the training received by your Staff Selection Committee members and the type of job that was required?

#### 3. EXPERIENCE

How did the Committee members manage bearing in mind that the members were involved in the process for the first time?

#### 4. PARTICIPATION

4.1 Elaborate on the problems during the entire process.

4.2 Who do you think were the cause of such problems?

#### 5. RELATIONSHIPS

Were there any signs of nepotism and personal preferences with regard to the choice of candidates ? How were candidates chosen? Do you think there were any preferences? Why?

## 6. USE OF TIME

Management of time is absolutely vital during the process. Comment on the use of time during the selection process.

## 7. COMMITMENT OF SELECTORS

What can you say about the level of commitment by the members?

## 8. SHORTLISTING AND INTERVIEW PROCESS

What were some of the problems experienced during the shortlisting and interview process ?

## 9. OBSERVERS

Comment on the role played by the observer.

## 10. FINAL RANK ORDER OF CANDIDATES

Comment on how the members arrived at consensus to determine the final rank order which had to be submitted to the SGB.

## 11. RATIFICATION BY SGB

In your opinion why was the final rank order not ratified by the SGB?

## 12. DISPUTE

What actually caused the dispute?

## 13. THE SELECTION POLICY

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the selection process?