

ABSTRACT

South African principals face very high accountability pressures from a nation-wide school evaluation system and the reporting of school outcomes to the district in response to performance measurement requirements. The South African literature suggests that schools which embrace more a collegial culture are able to disperse both leadership and accountability across the teaching staff. Participatory practices build teachers commitment and a climate of trust. In schools where hierarchical, autocratic cultures exist, associated with a managerial style of leadership, principals do not engage in participatory practices and suffer the accountability pressures alone, struggling to extend decision making within the school management team, and excluding the general teaching staff beyond the senior managers from decision-making. One can infer that for these schools, building instructional capacity, which requires collective trust and participatory practices, is very difficult. The practice of participative decision-making by teachers strengthens commitment to their work and allows them to develop accountability as professionals. It builds teacher capacity. It also democratises their workplace, the school. This is consistent with the intentions inherent in the restructuring of the South African school system to promote the democratic value of participation.

Keywords

Participative decision-making; Trust; Instructional capacity; Accountability

