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Jaffer, Moefiedah

2012-10-08
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School principals' perception of the progressive discipline of educators in Johannes burg North District schools

Moefiedah Jaffer

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, Law and Commerce, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management).

February 2012

Abstract

It is the task of school principals to ensure that educators uphold the highest standards of conduct and in the process hundreds of disciplinary hearings for educators had been conducted over the past decade for different allegations of misconduct. The primary purpose of this research was to explore school principals' perception of progressive disciplinary procedures for educators.

The study adopted a qualitative approach that used inductive data analysis techniques.

Some findings were that most principals do not apply progressive discipline consistently and were ambiguous about the effect of the process on educator conduct. Many were threatened and intimidated when using the procedure. This was aggravated by delays in completing the formal process.

Principals prefer the least adversarial approach in progressive discipline practice. They spend much time monitoring to prevent or avoid the disciplinary procedure and deviate from the procedure to cope with their anxieties and concern for relations with staff.

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Moefiedah Jaffer

26 February 2012

Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

My parents Achmat and Asa Jaffer, who have both returned to our Creator. Their deep faith, humility and profound respect for learning and knowledge had taught me to seek to surrender with engagement.

My brothers Shoukey and Naseegh and sisters Wadeedah and Lutfa Jaffer. Each one of you in ways not expressed have prepared me and contributed to this endeavour.

My sons, Naweed and Mas'ud Khan. This project is an attempt to understand an infinitesimal part of the One Reality. May your paths be opened to efforts greater than mine.

Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude to:

1. Dr. Ivor Sarakinsky, an outstanding academic to whom I extend my profound respect and admiration for the great humanity with which he gave his expert advice. He did not leave me to stew in my own fears, doubts and misgivings but strengthened my heart to deal with the real issues attached to my research.

2. My cousin and dearest friend Awaatief Daniels who was my constant companion on this research journey. Whose magnanimity and love energised and awakened me and whose words were ripples of light in the darkness. May your exit and your entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honour.

3. My husband Jaffer Khan who with loving patience gave me the time and space to complete this project. I treasure your unselfish care and humility.

4. My dear friends Fatima Noordien, Nazly Jada and Sumaya Hoosain who never turned away even when it looked as if I have.

5. The school principals of the Johannesburg North District who participated in this study. Your dedication, perseverance and devotion to your calling amidst great difficulty humbled me. May you always have the strength you need.

Code of Discipline for Educators : Schedule added to the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 that provide a reference for the application of disciplinary measures

Deputy Principal (at a school) : Assistant to School Principal in managing the school and promoting learners' education

Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 : The legislation that provides for the employment of educators by the State, for the regulation of the conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of educators and related matters.

Head of Department (at a school) : Engage in class teaching and responsible for organisation of subject area learning area or phase

Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995 : Advances social justice, labour peace and democratisation of the workplace

Progressive Discipline : A graduated system of sanctions that employers use to express dissatisfaction with employee misconduct

South African Council for Educators : Sets, maintain and protect ethical and professional standards for educators, provides for the registration and promotion of professional development of educators

South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 : Provide for a uniform system of organising, governance and funding of schools