

MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER SUPERVISION THROUGH  
PRINCIPALS 'CONTROL OF PUNCTUALITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
MOPANI DISTRICT

B. V. MBALATI

MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER SUPERVISION THROUGH PRINCIPALS'  
CONTROL OF PUNCTUALITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MOPANI  
DISTRICT

*by*

BASANI VIOLET MBALATI

THESIS

*Submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of*

MASTER OF EDUCATION

*In the*

Department of Education Management, School of Education,  
Faculty of Humanities

*At the*

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO  
Private Bag X1106  
SOVENGA  
0727

SOUTH AFRICA

NOVEMBER 2006

SUPERVISOR: DR L. E. MATSAUNG

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the most important  
people in my life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to many people who encouraged and helped me in this study. Some of these people need special mention.

My supervisor, Dr L.E Matsaung for his invaluable guidance, encouragements, suggestions and ideas that led to the development of this thesis. It was a long and hard walk travelling from the gravel road to the tarred road. It was really a God's blessing to have him as my supervisor. Furthermore, I wish to thank Professor S Maile (Co-Supervisor) for the useful suggestions offered to improve this thesis.

Special thanks are due to Katekani Nadine and Dimitri Risuna Mbalati for their expertise and effort committed to the typing and arrangement of this thesis. Also, failure to mention the expertise of Mr M.D Zwane who edited this document could render my acknowledgements incomplete.

The principals, educators and learners of primary schools in the Mopani District who voluntarily participated in this study, I am very thankful.

In innumerable ways my dear husband and children who were a constant source of help and encouragement while I was working on this research study and to them I am indebted.

Above all, I glorify the Almighty God for the strength, health and wisdom He accorded me to complete this study

iv

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of the North for the degree of Master of Education has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other University, that is my own work in design and execution and that all the sources have been duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

-----

B V MBALATI

-----

DATE

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study on the management of learner supervision through principals' control of punctuality in primary schools in the Mopani District. The study investigated the ways in which primary school principals manage learner supervision through control of punctuality.

The investigation has brought to the light what is happening in schools regarding the management of learner supervision through control of punctuality.

The literature review highlighted why learner supervision is essential in schools. Particular areas in the school and activities which require supervision were discussed. The relevance of theory to the management of learner supervision was also highlighted. The study also attempted to look at policy initiative with regard to the implementation of management of learner supervision. An attempt was made to integrate some educational policies, laws and regulations with regard to the implementation of learner supervision.

The empirical research was done by the questionnaires distributed to the randomly selected schools in Mopani District and the results were discussed. The questionnaires were analysed through tables. The aim was to find out how learner supervision is managed through control of punctuality by principals from learners, educators and principals.

Finally, the researcher gave general recommendations for improving the management of learner supervision through control of punctuality.

## CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DECLARATION	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF TABLES	xvi
ACRONYMS	xix
CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY	
1.1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.2. EXPLANATION OF BASIC CONCEPTS	3
1.2.1. Management	3
1.2.2. Learner Supervision	6
1.2.3. Principals control of punctuality	7
1.2.4. Primary Schools	8
1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT	9
1.3.1. Research question	11
1.3.2. Sub questions	11
1.4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	12
1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	12
1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY	13
1.7. RESEARCH PROGRAMME	13

	Page
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER SUPERVISION</b>	
2.1. INTRODUCTION	14
2.2. UNDERSTANDING LEARNER SUPERVISION	18
2.2.1. Learner supervision before and after school	20
2.2.2. Areas where greater learner supervision is needed	20
2.2.2.1. Playgrounds and school breaks	21
2.2.2.2. Physical education	21
2.2.2.3. Classroom supervision	22
2.2.2.4. Dangerous objects	23
2.2.2.5. Release from school	23
2.2.2.6. School sport	24
2.2.2.7. School journeys	24
2.2.2.8. School transport	25
2.3. WHAT LEARNER SUPERVISION IS ALL ABOUT	25
2.3.1. Some theories about learner supervision	28
2.3.1.1. The theory of qualities	29
2.3.1.2. The situational theory	29
2.3.1.3. The group functions theory	29
2.4. DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNER SUPERVISION	30
2.4.1. Supervision before execution	30
2.4.2. Steering supervision	30



2.4.3. Supervision after execution	31
------------------------------------	----

	Page
2.5. THE POWER OF PRINCIPALS IN LEARNER SUPERVISION	32
2.5.1. Rightful power	32
2.5.2. Power of reward or punishment	32
2.5.3. Expert power	33
2.5.4. Referent power	33
2.6. CONCLUSION	34
CHAPTER 3: POLICY INITIATIVES WITH REGARD TO LEARNER SUPERVISION	35
3.1. INTRODUCTION	36
3.2. EDUCATION POLICIES ADDRESSING MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER SUPERVISION	36
3.2.1. Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998	36
3.2.2. National Education Policy Act No.27 of 1996	36
3.2.3. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996	36
3.2.4. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996	37
3.3. PRINCIPLES OF LEARNER SUPERVISION	38
3.4. SCHOOL POLICY AND LEARNER SUPERVISION	39
3.4.1. From policy to rules and regulations	40
3.4.1.1. School rules and procedures	40
3.4.1.2. Seeing the school from the learners perspective	41
3.4.1.3. Supervising learner behaviour and dealing with	41

problems

x

	Page
3.4.1.4. Drawing up and becoming familiar with a school policy	41
<b>3.5. LEARNER SUPERVISION IN LEGAL PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>42</b>
3.5.1 Constitutional Law	42
3.5.2. Legislation	43
3.5.3. Common Law	43
3.5.4. Case Law	44
<b>3.6. THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL</b>	<b>44</b>
3.6.1. The authoritative position of the principal in learner supervision	44
3.6.2. Powers and duties of the school principal	45
3.6.3. Delegation of powers and duties by the principal	45
3.6.3.1. Directives	47
3.6.3.2. Decentralization	47
3.6.4. Requirements for valid delegation in learner supervision	47
<b>3.7. THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE LEARNER</b>	<b>48</b>
3.7.1. The school acts through its governing body	48
3.7.2. Legally sound learner supervision	49
<b>3.8. THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE LEARNER</b>	<b>49</b>
3.8.1. Children's rights	50
3.8.2. The right to education	50
3.8.3. Religious freedom	51
3.8.4. Freedom of speech and expression	51
3.8.5. Corporal punishment	52

3.9. CONCLUSION	52
-----------------	----

x

	Page
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	54
4.1. INTRODUCTION	54
4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN	54
4.3. RESEARCH APPROACH	55
4.4. METHOD	57
4.4.1. Setting	57
4.4.2. Permission	57
4.4.3. Subjects: population and sample	57
4.4.4. Data collection methods	59
4.4.5. Ethical considerations	61
4.5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	61
4.5.1. Questionnaires	62
4.5.2. Types of questionnaires	63
4.5.2.1. Mailed questionnaires	63
4.5.2.2. Telephonic questionnaires	64
4.5.2.3. Personal questionnaires	64
4.5.2.4. Questionnaires delivered by hand	65
4.5.2.5. Group administered questionnaires	65
4.5.3. Pilot testing the questionnaires	66
4.5.4. Types of questions used in the questionnaires	66
4.5.4.1. Open-ended questions	66
4.5.4.2. Closed-ended questions	67
4.5.4.3. Scaled questions	67
4.5.5. Administration of the questionnaires	68
4.6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	68

4.7. CONCLUSION	69
-----------------	----

	Page
CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	70
5.1. INTRODUCTIONS	70
5.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS	70
5.2.1. Principal's gender	70
5.2.2. Principals ages	71
5.2.3. Learners enrolment	71
5.2.4. Percentages of learners who attended school on the days of the week before completing the questionnaires	72
5.2.5. The availability of mission statements	73
5.2.6. Summary of mission statements provided	74
5.2.7. Availability of vision statements	75
5.2.8. Summary of the vision statements	76
5.2.9. Goals and objectives of schools	76
5.2.10. Availability of appropriate policies and procedures at school	77
5.2.11. Availability of procedures that deal with absence, lateness and punctuality	78
5.2.12. The attitude of learners towards punctuality rules	78
5.2.13. How learners accept learner supervision	79
5.2. 14. Learner's behaviour	79
5.2.15. Whether policies and procedures are helping the school to attain effective teaching and learning	80
5.2.16. Reasons for having policies and procedures at	81

schools

5.2.17. Reasons for managing without policies and procedures	81
xii	
	Page
5.2.18. Distributions of policies to all staff members	82
5.2.19. Reasons for distributing school policies and procedures to all staff members	83
5.2.20. Reasons for not distributing school policies and procedures	83
5.2.21. Presence of discipline policies	83
5.2.22. People who designed the school policies	83
5.2.23. Communicating information to learning	84
5.2.24. Presence of committees that deal with late coming	84
5.2.25. Presence of code of conduct for learners	85
5.2.26. Views towards the abolishment of corporal punishment	85
5.2.27. Dealing with misbehaviour and late coming	87
5.2.28. Knowledge of the constitution legislation in the new South African System	87
5.2.29. Policy documents that deal with management of learner supervision and punctuality	88
5.2.30. Specialisation of educators in various activities	88
5.2.31. Knowledge of educators about the learning areas they facilitate	89
5.2.32. Operational and constitution of the SGBs	90
5.2.33. Communication with parents	90
5.2.34. Involvement of parents in the management of the school	91
5.2.35. How parents respond and contribute to learners learning	92
5.2.36. Principals views on learner supervision	93
5.2.37. Researchers view point	94
5.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS	95
5.3.1. Educators genders	95

5.3.2. Educators' age	95
5.3.3. Educator's teaching experience	96

xiii

	Page
5.3.4. View on the leadership styles of the principals	96
5.3.5. Working relationships with the principals	97
5.3.6. Presence of the discipline policy	98
5.3.7. Involvement in determining or formulation of policies	99
5.3.8. The principal's attitude towards learners offence	100
5.3.9. Principals attitude on delegation of duties	101
5.3.10. Involvement of parents in school management and governance	101
5.3.11. The climate of the school	102
5.3.12. Education policy acts that are used at school	103
5.3.13. Acceptance of the abolishing of corporal punishment	103
5.3.14. Disciplining of learners	104
5.3.15. Reasons for not using the examples given	105
5.3.16. Reasons for using all disciplinary measures	106
5.3.17. Attendance of workshops on learner supervision	106
5.3.18. Knowledge of the constitution and education legislation in the new South African education system	107
5.3.19. The basic functionality of schools	107
5.3.19.1 The smoothness with which the school runs	108
5.3.19.2. Learners attendance rate	109
5.3.19.3. Learners punctuality	110
5.3.19.4. The effectiveness of the school procedures for dealing with attendance, truancy and lateness	111
5.3.19.5. Learners in their work	112
5.3.19.6. Learners application in relation to studies	113
5.3.19.7. Learners behaviour during lessons	114
5.3.19.8. Learners around the school	115

5.3.19.9. School discipline procedures	116
5.3.19.10. Links with parents	117

xiv

	Page
5.3.20. Educators' view point regarding management of learner Supervision	118
5.3.21. RESEARCHER'S VIEW	118
5.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS	118
5.4.1 Learners' gender	118
5.4.2. Learners' grade	119
5.4.3. Repeated grades	119
5.4.4. How well learners know the school procedures	120
5.4.5. Knowledge of how to behave	121
5.4.6. Knowledge of what to do if learners' are absent or late for school	121
5.4.7. Where to go for help	122
5.4.8. Things which learners consider to be problems at school	122
5.4.9. The relationship between learners and the principal	123
5.4.10. Involvement in matters concerning school management and governance	124
5.4.11. Learners involvement in the formulation of discipline policy	125
5.4.12. Communication of school rules to learners	125
5.4.13. The use of corporal punishment as an effective disciplinary measure in schools	126
5.4.14. Treatment of learners by principals	127
5.4.15. The availability of principals for answering questions which affect learners	127
5.4.16. Parents involvement in the learning of their children at school	128

5.4.17. Who learners are staying with at home	129
5.4.18. Like or dislike of school	130

xv

	Page
5.4. 19. Reasons for liking school	130
5.4.20. Reason for hating school	130
5.4. 21. Knowledge of parents of their children's late coming problems	130
5.4.22. The causes for learners late coming to school	131
5.4.23. Learners views of safety at school	132
5.4.24. Changes learners would like to effect at school	133
5.4.25. Things that need improvement at school	133
5.4.26. The researchers' view	133
 5.5. CONCLUSION	 134
 CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUDING REMARKS	 136
 6.1 OVERVIEW	 136
6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS	139
6.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	142
6.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS	143
 7. REFERENCES	 145



8. ADDENDUM

Addendum A	157
Addendum B	166
Addendum C	172
Addendum D	179
Addendum E	180
Addendum F	181

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Principals gender	70
2. Principals ages	71
3. Learners' enrolment	71
4. Percentages of attendance	72
5. Availability of mission statements	73
6. Availability of vision statements	75
7. Availability of appropriate policies and procedures in schools	77
8. Procedures that deal with absence, lateness and punctuality	78
9. The attitude of learners towards punctuality rules	78
10. Learners acceptance of supervision	78
11. Learners behaviour at school	79
12. Help of policies and procedures	80
13. Distribution of policies	81
14. Availability of the discipline policy	83
15. People responsible for drawing the policies	83
16. Availability of committees that deals with late coming	84
17. Availability of the code of conduct for learners	85
18. Views toward the abolishing of corporal punishment	85
19. Knowledge of the constitution and education legislation	87
20. Specialisation of educators	88
21. Knowledge of learning areas taught by educators	89
22. Operational and constitution of the SGB	90

	Page
23. Communication with parents	90
24. Involvement of parents in school matters	91
25. Response and contribution by parents	92
26. Educators gender	95
27. Educators age	95
28. Educators teaching experience	96
29. Views on principals' leadership style	96
30. Working relationship with the principal	97
31. Availability of the discipline policy	98
32. Involvement in determining school policy	99
33. Principals attitude towards learners offence	100
34. Principals attitude on delegation of duties	101
35. Involvement of parents in governance	101
36. Climate of the school	102
37. Acceptance of the abolishment of corporal punishment	103
38. Ways of learner discipline	104
39. Attendance of workshops on learner discipline	106
40. Knowledge of the constitution education legislation	107
41. The smoothness with which the school runs	108
42. Learner attendance	109
43. Learners' punctuality	110
44. Effectiveness of the school procedures	111
45. Learners in their work	112
46. Learners and their studies	113
47. Learners' behaviour during lessons	114
48. Learners around the school	115
49. School discipline procedures	116

50.	Links with the parents	117
51.	Learners' gender	118

xviii

		Page
52.	Learners grades	119
53.	Repeated grades	119
54.	Learners knowledge on school procedures	120
55.	Knowledge on how to behave	121
56.	Action taken when absent or late	121
57.	Where to go for help	122
58.	Relationship with principals	123
59.	Involvement in matters concerning governance	124
60.	Involvement in the formulation of school policy	125
61.	Communication of school rules	125
62.	The use of corporal punishment	126
63.	Treatment of learners by principals	127
64.	Availability of principals for learners' problems	127
65.	Parents' involvement in their children's learning	128
66.	Those staying with learners at home	129
67.	Like or dislike of schooling	130
68.	Knowledge of parents for their children's late coming problem	130
69.	Learners view of safety at school.	132

ACRONYMMS

DoE	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RSA	REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
SA	SOUTH AFRICA
SASA	SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT
SGB	SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
SMT	SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM
NEPA	NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT

