

Exploring Staff Involvement in an Organization Development Intervention in a School in the Kavango Region, Namibia: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The study is to explore staff involvement in organization development (OD) intervention in one of a rural junior secondary school in Kavango region, Namibia and aimed at determining the level of participation in change initiative and probing in participants' perception and experience of the intervention process. In a democratic country such as Namibia every citizen is expected to bring change and participating in activities to improve their own institution for example School. It is a common practice among teachers of Ntokota School that they are passive to take action in change initiative for improving working relationship and Organization. This study introduced an OD intervention to a School in order to inspire the mindset of staff to be active in change initiative for School improvement by using bottom-up approach strategy of staff participation in series of activities that would enable them to improve and eventually moving the School to the intended goal. OD concept Model of seven steps was used for intervention and it is a participant driven that encourages staff to release their potential to initiate change for improvement. The study is located within qualitative interpretive and critical paradigm. Observation and semi-structured interviews were the main data collection tools used in the study. The researcher transcribed, grouped similar data into category, coded and translated data into a real meaning and identifies themes that address the research goal.

The paper reveals that the absence of staff cooperation, involvement in the decision-making processes, democratic leadership were the main factors perceived retarded the staff activeness in change initiative and participation. Staff viewed OD intervention as the most significance approach to change as it offers significant understanding and conception of change and embraced new approach of fostering democracy, inclusion of staff in the decision-making process, taking a decentralized decision and enhancing cooperation among staff. The study is of potential significance to educators and educational leaders to use OD approach for change to improve human working relationship and behavior in their own organization. It may motivate researchers to pursue OD studies and conduct OD projects with any organization of their choice.

Keywords: *Staff involvement, decision-making process, participation, OD intervention, Change, Democracy, Cooperation, Leadership role.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In a democratic country every citizen is expected to bring change and participate in activities for improving the performance of their institution for example School. The study explores staff engagement in OD intervention to inspire teachers' mindset to apply bottom-up strategy to be active in change initiative for improving working relationship and Educational Institution.

2. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Namibian education system went through a process of dramatic change since at the dawning of independence from segregation to a democratic unified system which has been spelt out in the philosophical transformative policy: **Toward Education for All**, with its four major goals: **Access, Equity, Quality and Democracy** (Namibia, Ministry of Education and culture, 2003, pp. 32-41).

Namibia further adopted a decentralization policy of devolution of power from central government to regional authorities including schools to make people more responsible in change initiative (Namibia. Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing [MRLGH], 1997, P.16). In the context of this policy framework, schools also should introduce and manage change but, it has been slow taking up the challenge and that change is largely still initiated by regional officials (Namibia. Ministry of Education, (*ETSIP*, 2007, p. 28).

However, the OD intervention for change strategy differs in many ways from the other change strategies employed for example by regional officials. OD is a planned change intervention strategy which focuses mainly on normative re-educative and empirical rational strategies that is systematically implemented. It is a participant driven which involves series of activities that move the organization to the intended goal (Smith, 2003, pp. 1-3).

OD philosophy hinges on human values, democratic values and optimistic values. Humanistic values look at individual more important and should deserve respect and dignity. It is assumed that every person has potential to initiate change if people working together toward change initiative through series of efforts rather than changes imposed from external means.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study introduced and discussed OD intervention for change, inspire the mindset of school leadership and teachers to understand their democratic role to be active in change



initiative and embrace democracy, taking decentralized decision, enhancing cooperation and proactive problem-solving becomes the culture of working.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is a common practice among teachers of Ntokota School that they are passive to take action in change initiative for improving working relationship and Organization.

What are the constraints that inhibit them to be active in change initiative?

To what extent the school stakeholders get involved in the OD intervention?

What is the stakeholders' perception and experience about OD intervention?

What is the school principal's leadership role in OD intervention?

Does the intervention actually lead to change?

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the study is to explore staff involvement in organization development (OD) intervention in one of a rural junior secondary school of Kavango region, Namibia and aimed at inspiring their mindset to be active in change initiative; determining the level of participation, probing in participants' perception and experience of the intervention process.

I present Literature review that provide theoretical perspective and in depth understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny. Brink (2000) as cited in Muyeghu (2009, p. 10) states that "a literature review is a process involving reading, understanding and forming conclusion about theory on a particular topic ". Theory is significance as it provide conceptual framework of the study. Two identifiable theories namely change and organization development (OD) that inform the study are discussed below.

5.1 Organization change

The concept change is a need driven and deliberates effort of human desire to influence and modify the status quo of the organization to move to new norms of operation. According to Van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 183) change is the struggle between what is and what is desired. It is a planned, systematic process that takes time to come to fruition and the aim is to bring improvement in human life. It is time bound with the involvement of members to modify the behaviors, relationships, skills that affect the performance in organization. Fullan (1993, p. 5) elucidates that "change is journey, not blueprint" and it takes place unexpectedly at any time within the life cycle of the organization.

Fullan (2002, p.237) further describes change as “an emotional laden process that can generate feelings of tension, disquiet and uncertainty within organization”. This state of affairs always sparks out resistance to change. Van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 223) maintains that although change generate painful experience but, the outcome can be refreshing and rejuvenating. Interestingly it is more important to look at why people resist accepting the proposed change.

5.2 Resistance to change

Resistance to change is a refusal that is manifested in human behaviour to accommodate the proposed change in some of existing norms; values; culture and structure of the organization. Similarly, Zaltman and Duncan (1973) in van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 220) define resistance to change as “any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo”.

Resistance to change in generally is a symptom of discontentment with the proposed change, and management regards it as purely rejection for change. Schein (1987) in van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 221) argues that those forces reacting to changes are “part of the inherent nature of an organization”. Resistance to change should be viewed as counter reaction for change and it is normal for proper functioning of organizational system. According to Lewinian force-field theory it is very important to acknowledge that the driving and restraining forces are always helping to bring the organization at equilibrium point where organization exhibits good performance (Stoner *et al*, 1995, p. 414).

To answer the question of why some resist to accept changes, therefore, host of theorists, for example: Russouw, 1990 ; Coetzee, 1993 ; Lippitt, 1982 ; Lunenberg and Ornstein 1991 , in van der Westhuizen (2008, pp. 224-225) hold related views that staff resist changes based on the following grounds:

Habit and dependence as they are accustomed to the existing practices and authority; loss of the familiar and reliable situation or practices; loss of personal choice and values; lack of understanding or insufficient information for the reasons of change; inadequate feedback from initiators of change. Non-involvement in the planning and decision-making process for change; fear of change as change may affect their positions and loss of authority if change is realized; lack of infrastructural support and communication break down between top management structure and staff.

Similarly, De Villiers (1995) in van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 227) discovers identical motives as illustrated and mostly are psychological resistance to change expressed in human behavioural terms.



Resistance to change is a common phenomenon in organization culture, and thus leaders of organization who find themselves in such awkward situations are best advised to be conversant with resistance first and then seek an OD intervention to help with solving problems and improving working relationship with the assistance of outsider OD facilitator. According to Vaill in Cummings (2008, p. 217) and French and Bell (1995, p. 6) OD intervention in change is the heart of organization development to solve organizational problems using behavioural science concepts; improving working relationship and change the situations with the assistance of consultant. OD efforts are aimed at improving the organization performance both at small and large scale respectively.

5.3 School as an organization and change

A school is an organization that is striving towards changing and improving on human capacity to live better in harmony with other human kind around the globe. According to Moloi (2002, p. 3) school is a learning organization that embraces change in knowledge and skills including attitude and behavior through dynamic group learning. Since it is a complexity system thus it is continually experiencing challenges with change and according to French and Bell (1995, p. 2) change is the goal of organization development (OD) to improve the functioning of individuals, teams and total organization by imparting the knowledge and skills through OD intervention so that members can be able to continue improving on their own. For individuals to keep on improving, therefore school as a living entity needs to engage in continually reviewing the norms and change when necessary. It is the task and responsibility of the organization leaders to keep on observing and render the necessary support to members to embrace the intended change.

5.4 Leadership and change

The organization leader plays a crucial role in the organization; therefore leader should always be conversant with driving and restraining force of change and direct and support the members towards change. Cummings and Worley (2001) and Susanto (2008) as cited in Kashikatu (2009, p. 16) agree that "-- the role of the leaders is [*sic*] very crucial in inspiring people to support and participate in the change initiative". The concept 'participation' is important in the democratic organization as it allows members to be involved in change initiatives and own decisions, generate feelings of autonomy, satisfaction and release creative energy and self-expression. Participation, teamwork, collaboration and cooperation are the most concepts that fit well in promoting quality work life and solving organization problems (van der Westhuizen, 2008, pp. 249-251).

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) cited in Smith (2003, p. 17) state that "organization leader foster team performance best by building a strong performance ethic, rather than by establishing a team-promoting environment alone". An organization leader needs to lead with strong and acceptable morality so that members can emulate example. Leading the

organization with good morality is the value employed in OD as it uses behavioural science in solving organizational problems through different strategies.

5.5 OD planned change strategies

Planned change strategies are theories that describe different strategies of how activities are carried out successfully in the organization change effort. Chin and Benne (1976) in French and Bell (1995, p. 102) placed planned change strategies into three categories namely empirical rational strategy, normative re-educative strategy and power coercive strategy as described below.

5.6 Empirical rational strategy

This change strategy is based on assumption that people are rational and follow their rational self-interest when they realize that the change is beneficial to them. It focuses on diffusion of knowledge and information which are held closely by clients once they realize that the change is to their benefit, it is expert driven OD strategy that based on individual preferences.

5.7 Normative re-educative strategy

Chin and Benne(1976) in French and Bell (1995, pp. 102-103) argue normative re-educative strategy or cultural change strategy is “based upon the assumptions that norms form the basis of human behavior and change comes through re-educative process in which old norms are discarded and supplanted with new norms “. The strategy aimed at transforming participants in changing their behaviours through motivation. In the same breath, change in normative re-educative orientations involves change in attitude, values, skills, and relationship, not just change in knowledge, information or intellectual rationales for action and practice.

Similarly, Chin and Benne (1976) in French and Bell (1995, pp. 1002-103) Further state that in normative re-educative strategy, “pattern of action and practice are supported by social-cultural [sic] norms and commitment on the part of individual to these norms.” Smith (2003, p. 4) concurs with the notion and states that “since norms are socially accepted values and beliefs about appropriate and inappropriate behaviours held by groups, focus should be on the group, not individual, can best change the norms.” Burke (1982) as cited in Smith (ibid) holds similar version that:

If one attempt to change an attitude or behaviour of an individual without attempting to change the same attitude or behaviour in the group to which the individual belongs, the individual will be a deviant and either will come under pressure from the group to get back into line or will be rejected entirely. Thus, the major leverage point for change is



at the group level; for example, by modifying a group's normal standards.

In brief, normative re-educative strategies based on the assumption that change is possible in an organization by discarding old norms and replace them with new ones will create a new organizational equilibrium point. This is the most powerful participative driven strategy where OD hinges much to solve organization problems.

5.8 Power coercive strategy

This change strategy is based on the assumptions that it occurs when people with less power in the organization conform with the demand of those have more power. This change effort comes from external forces and featured with authoritative and disempowering members and decisions are imposed on them (Smith, 2003, p. 3). OD norms, values and assumptions are based on democratic principle and respect for human dignity and thus coercive strategies are not recommended in OD operational strategy.

5.9 Organization development (OD)

An organization development (OD) is defined as a planned change strategy aimed at improving organization culture, structure, leadership, management performance, staff attitude, behaviour and working relationship through members' participation in OD intervention process with the assistance of OD practitioner or consultant-facilitator, using behavioural science approaches to solve the targeted problems collectively within organizational setting.

It is more important that members engage themselves in action of problem-solving process hence; by doing so they are empowered with knowledge and skills of facilitation that deal with problems of similar nature that may emerge in the organization.

Similarly, Stoner, *et al.* (1995, p. 420) define OD as:

A top-management-supported, long- range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal process, particularly through a more effective and collaborative diagnosis and management of organization culture----with special emphasis on formal work team, temporary team, intergroup culture----with the assistance of a consultant-facilitator and the use of theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research.

The essential element of OD is that it enhances democratic participatory approach to decision making without coercive measures being exerted on members of the organization. The external support exist only through consultant means to help them identify the strength and weakness of organization and then members take the

responsibility in their own hand to solve problems with the guidance of facilitator during the process.

6. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed during study is located within qualitative interpretive and critical paradigm. Briefly qualitative research study is the field focused study that attempt to interpret behavior and action of phenomena under study in a verbal descriptive term. The concept paradigm is the way how we observe, think and understand the world and draw a meaningful conclusion about the actions of the phenomena under study. (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) argues paradigm is a framework for observing, understanding, which shapes both what we see and understand and draw meaningful conclusion from it.

Interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the meanings of which people give their own social interactions. It exposes how individual and group interpretation of reality influence both intentions and actions Winberg (1997). Janse van Rensburg (2001, pp. 12-16) asserts that human can understand the world as it appears to them and as such research knowledge is constructed in the minds of people who are active in the research process. In understanding the phenomena under scrutiny, thus I became member of participants, listen, cooperate and share experience. This is in line with my study that requires researcher to be actively involved in the social context of the participants.

The fundamental aims of critical paradigm are to bring change through critically interpreting the phenomena under scrutiny and helps with transformation. Winberg (1997) concurs that critical research paradigm focuses on critical understanding of the situation or practice being researched in order to plan for transformative action. Similarly Cohen et al. (2000, pp. 28-29) and Janse van Rensburg (2001, P. 24) hold similar views that critical paradigm research helps with transformative change in individuals and groups through participation as Participants are empowered through discussion, interpreting, reasoning and understanding the desired change in their own organization context. The central objective of the study was to stimulate staff in change initiative through participation in the intervention process. The study is participatory Action case study.

Yin (2003, p. 13) defines case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context setting “.Cohen, et al. (2007, p. 253) argue case study has a strength of “penetrating situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis “ as it uses multi-methods in collecting information about the chosen topic. The data of case study is unique in its own context that may differ with other social setting.

6.1 Action research

Smith (2003, p. 4) holds the view that action research “operates within a system thinking of interdependent nature of people in the workplace and their environment in order to



bring the intended change". Cohen *et al* (2000, 229) states that action research is "participatory through which people work together towards improving their own practice. Smith (2003, p. 21) states that "action research has formed the methodological basis of OD intervention". In the study I used the following OD model for intervention.

6.2 OD Model for Intervention:

(a) Entry

The entry is the initial stage for change initiative effort signifying entrance of Facilitator to the organization. According to OD principles the organization members should have initiated the intervention by identifying the organization problems first and then seek an outside consultant to help with solving the problem (French & Bell, 1995, p. 131). This was not the case with me but, I initiated the intervention and asked permission from the gatekeeper to conduct OD with school. I met staff members in the staff room and sensitized the OD program for intervention.

(b) Contracting

Contracting is an expansion of the entry phase where members of the organization reaching an agreement by signing consent document that stipulate ethical issues, anonymities and mutual benefit. Cumming and Worley (2001, p. 75) assert that the principle goal of contracting is to make a good decision of how to implement the OD. I conducted the SDF workshop in order to raise the level of readiness of members for OD intervention. Schmuck & Runkel (1994, p. 63) argue "facilitator should enter into contract with the system that need assistance and exhibit a sign of readiness". We signed contract for OD intervention and participants were not forced. Participants elected the steering committee for helping with managing the process.

(c) Data gathering and diagnosis

This process involves facilitator and steering committee to collect and diagnose the data. Burk as cited in French and Bell (1995, p. 131) asserts that data gathering and analysis are the most significant key activities during OD intervention process. Similarly Cumming and Worley (2001, p.82) agree that "diagnosis is the process of understanding how organization is performing". Semi-structured interviews and observation were used to collect data and the methods were comfortable approach for respondents to express without researcher causing tracks. Kawana (2007, p. 29) holds similar notion that "semi-structured interviews allow respondents to talk freely without researcher causing tracks".

(d) Data feedback

The primary goal of feedback is to inform the members about the outcome of the research and understand the state of organization. During this stage the steering committee and facilitator provided the data feedback to participants for validation and

helped members to establish an agenda for exploration and action planning. Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 53) assert that “it is the responsibility of OD facilitator and steering committee to provide a design problem solving schedule that will enable the system to agree to move ahead”. The members decided to move ahead with planning.

(e) Action planning

This involves identifying strategies, prioritizing the problems and taking decisions for actions. All staff including facilitator was actively involved in compiling the action plan. The priority was to conduct training first on cooperation. The staff members were trained on cooperation and then compiled plan for action implementation. The next step was to implement the action plan for OD intervention.

(f) Action implementation

This phase members of the organization are expected to implement the action plan for changes which they have committed during action planning. It is crucial as expected changes should take place during this phase and as such members took responsibility themselves to observe and record any intended change that may occur in the organization. Members were encouraged to share experience in monitoring the change and provide suggestion for further intervention if any hindering forces is identified.

(g) Evaluation

The participants were evaluated on their involvement, participation, cooperation, experience and perception about OD short term intervention process.

6.3 Data collection

Data collection is the techniques employed for gathering information from the phenomenon under study and draw meaningful conclusion to answer research questions. Similarly, Merriam (1998) in Lankshear & Knobel (2004, p.172) defined the concept data as:

Bits and pieces of information found in the environment that are collected in systematic ways to provide an evidential base from which to make interpretation and statements intended to advance knowledge and understanding concerning a research questions or problem.

Leedy & Ormrod (2005, p. 143) state that “qualitative researchers often use multiple forms of data techniques that suits well with research questions”. Patton (2002, p. 48) argues “ studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors than studies that use several methods in which different data will provide cross-data validity checks”. Different types of data provide opportunity for triangulation and ensuring validity. The study employed two methods of data collections namely: observations and interview.



(a) *Observation*

I observed participants' behaviors towards intervention throughout the whole process, their interactions, participation and contribution during morning briefings, meetings, teamwork and cooperation, daily application of leadership style and wrote down the evidence and kept record for analysis and validation.

According to Maxwell (2005, p. 94)" observation enables you to draw inferences about the perspectives that you couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data. It is of particular important to get at tacit understandings and theory in use as well as aspects of the participants' perspectives that they reluctant to directly state in interview". By observing the participants' behaviors and interactions thus it was useful to understand and draw meaningful conclusion about the phenomena under study.

(b) *Interviews*

According to Kvale (1996) in Cohen *et al* (2000, p. 267) interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest and aimed at knowledge production. Patton (2002, p. 341) argues that "the purpose of interviews is to allow us to enter into another person's perspective ".

I conducted semi-structured one-to-one interview with open-ended questions to understand about participants' perspective and experience on OD intervention. 16 participants including principal and heads of department were interviewed in three occasions using voice recorder and predetermined questions on staff involvement in change effort, participation, contribution and teamwork, cooperation as well as leadership style and their experience and perceptions on OD intervention. Separate room was availed for conducting interview.

6.4 Data analysis

According to Cohen *et al.* (2000, pp. 147-9) data analysis is not a separate phase that can be marked out at some singular time during inquiry but it begins with the very first data collection. According to Stake (1995, p. 71) data analysis is the process of unlocking information hidden so that the researcher transform them into meaningful and understanding of the phenomena.

It is a process of organizing, transcribing, categorizing, coding and translating the data into a real meaning that answers the research questions. Data analysis started with organization, listening and transcribing the voice of respondent word by word from voice recorder, classifying data of similar meaning, and coding data with different color pen, study them carefully and identify the salient themes.

6.5 Validity

According to Mason (2004, p. 246) validity is the way of confirming data by asking participants for their versions of similar events. Validity determines the legitimacy of the research therefore I double checked the data for keep trustworthy and shared with participants for member check as to ensure validity. Bush (2002) cited in Kashikatu (2009, p. 41) states that triangulation is fundamentally a device for improving validity by checking data either by using mixed methods or by involving a range of participants. To be more confidence in data validity I used the data triangulation method by checking, comparing and contrast the data derived from observation and interview sources so as to detect similarity or deviant.

6.6 Ethical consideration

Ethical issues are important in every research; therefore it was significance to take into account the effect of research on phenomena under study. Merriam (2002) as cited in Kapapero (2007, p. 50) argues that “ethics begins with the conception of research project and ends with how we present and share with others what we have learned “. The participants were given the consent form to sign as an agreement for participation voluntarily. Leedy & Ormrod (2005, p. 101) hold similar notion that “any participation in a study should be strictly voluntary”.

The names of participants and school name were written under pseudonyms to avoid suffering from losses of personal dignity and the character of the institution. All data are protected and the right of admission to data is reserved solely to the researcher, participants and supervisor.

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research goal was to explore staff involvement in OD intervention, inspire their mindset to be active in change initiative and data collected determined the level of participation, probed in participants’ perceptions and experience about the intervention process. From data presentation thus six major themes emerged and formed the basis for theoretical discussions:

1. Staff involvement in decision-making process;
2. Staff participation in the meetings and morning briefings;
3. Staff cooperation;
4. Leadership role;
5. Readiness for change; and
6. Participants’ perceptions and experience on OD intervention.



7.1 Staff involvement in decision-making process

Staff involvement in the decision-making process is a democratic process for staff members to share views and own the decision through participation. Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011, p.78) assert that teachers' involvement in the decision making process is a unified efforts for quality and effective administrative function. It is the efforts to provide the lower level with greater voice in organization performance.

From heroic leadership perspective, decision taking is believed in one person only at the apex of organization. Organization is for the group and effectiveness of organization relies heavily on group. French and Bell (1995, p. 94) remind us that early OD research shows that increased involvement and participation produce high performance and better solutions to problems, and enhances shared decision-making. In line with OD philosophy, it is believed that organization is for the group where democracy is cherished and decision is taken collectively (Hanson and Lubin, 1995, p. 35).

According to respondent T2, T4, T6, HOD2 data disclosed that teachers were not involved in the decision making process and only management takes pre-decisions and comes down to the staff and inform them about their decisions. However, respondent P, HOD3 and T3 disagreed and maintained teachers were always involved in the decision making process. Respondents further argued that staff sometimes attempted to rise up their concern during staff meetings or morning briefings about management decisions for not involving the staff but, no proper answer was given and staff had no option but only to take descriptions from medical doctor. Respondent HOD2 made it clearly that though staff take decision, it would be turned down unless such decision is in the interest of principal. In line with this claim, data observation exposed similar cases when the head dishonored the decision taken by staff and then imposed the decision on them.

According to Ndu and Anogbove (2007) in Olorunsola *et al* (2011, p. 78) hold the version that if teachers are not involved in the decision-making process they behave like strangers as their input is not accommodated and they lost sense of interest and boost in teachers' opposition in organization (ibid, p. 79). The central point should be understood that teachers need participation and own the decisions and feel proud for their contribution. When teachers are adequately involved in the decision making process there would be commitment to support the principal and reduces opposition and workload of their leader. Sergiovanni (1984) as cited in Bush (2003, p. 78) affirms that staff involvement in decision-making will lead in bonding staff together and lessen the pressures on principal if leadership functions and roles are shared.

The OD theory describes this as resistance to change that is being manifested in human behavioural terms not to accommodate change as Zaltman and Duncan (1973) in van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 220) define resistance to change as "any conduct that serve to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo". Respondent T2 and T4 confirmed that principal used to ask their opinion first before decision is taken but for formality purpose only while they have already taken the decision. This claim did not overrule majority views of poor staff involvement in the decision making process.

Drawing on participants' views, study pins down that staff involvement in the decision making process was hardly ever taken place as teachers including governing body were disowned the decisions and as such OD recognize it as genuine problem that affect members in organization. Schein (1987) in van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 221) argues that those forces reacting to changes are the characteristic of organization and it is normal for proper functioning of organizational system.

According to Lewinian force-field theory, it is very important to acknowledge that the driving and restraining forces are always helping to bring the organization to equilibrium point where organization exhibits good performance (Stoner *et al*, 1995, p. 414). In such situation where members recognize problems that impede progress thus, organization should seek assistance to help with solution if the leadership is unable to resolve the issues. School is an organization that works with different people with different understanding thus, what affects one part of the system it affect also other part if pro-active steps are not taken to avert the escalation of problem.

7.2 Staff Participation

The concept 'participation' is significant in contemporary democratic dispensation as members need to be part of the decision-making process, own decisions, generate feelings of autonomy and satisfaction and self-expression. Participation, cooperation, teamwork and collaboration are the concepts that fit well in promoting quality work life and solving organization problems (van der Westhuizen, 2008, pp. 249-251). That is the cornerstone of OD philosophy.

Hanson and Lubin (1995, p. 20) pointed out that it is vital for team members to recognize and accept their own needs and also to be sensitive to the needs of others so as to maintain some balance between these needs. Hence, OD intervention hinges on participation, teamwork and collaboration, thus team effort is more effective than individual input. In this study thus, respondent T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, P, HOD2 and HOD3 disclosed that participation of staff members in the discussions of school affairs during the meetings and morning briefings was poor. Respondents revealed that participation of staff members ranged from two to three and others remained passive and watched the 'drama'. The data disclosed that staff consists of 23 members and out of this number, only few usually from male teachers specifically the same people participate in the discussions of school matters while the rest opted for silence and "let them talk" and not bringing new ideas and aspiration.

Leadership role played in organization is implicated. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993) in van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 316) remind us that leader need to support colleagues to focus on shared vision, strategy and set of intended outcomes instead of leaving them sinking in the ocean. The data revealed that some teachers refrained from participation as they may contradict the ideas of principal and those teachers were locked up in fear of



releasing their potential to speak on any point raised in the staffroom. "Teachers feel afraid of confronting the principal" alluded by T2, 3. It is generally believed that people at workplace experience different kind of fears for example criticism, losing dignity, unfair treatment and isolation. Fears thus inhibit peoples' productivity. Organization cannot afford to have people pulling in different directions.

The study found that some teachers lost interest of participation because they were ignored for several time as expressed by T4 that "even if you participate but, your idea is ignored then you are discouraged" and teachers were de-motivated. The data disclosed similar case as stated by another respondent that "even if I contribute but, in the end my voice won't be considered". It boils down that members are in turbulent situation thus, it is advisable for the leadership to create opportunity for member participations.

The data exposed that the leader of organization was aware of lack of staff participation but, no panacea was provided to remedy the increase of the ailment. According to data, the leader of organization viewed the dilemma as individual preference to keep quiet or thought to be a daily agenda point that determines the level of participation.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) cited in Smith (2003, p. 17) state that "organization leader should foster team performance best by building strong performance ethic, rather than by establishing team-promoting environment". The study revealed that female teachers tend to participate on certain occasion only preferable discipline of learners but, not on planning and development and only male teachers who discuss issues on planning and development. For individual to participate fully thus, he or she needs group assistance through motivation, coaching and support as she may lacks of interest or certain skills in some areas. OD beliefs in-group learning where individual member taps knowledge from others through participation in-group activities. Learning in contemporary world has become part of people's life for proper adaptation to the ruling situation thus, Ntokota Junior Secondary school is not exception in this regard; it is learning organization where members share the experience and expertise of one another.

Peter Senge (1990) cited in Chinganga (2010, p. 21) helps us to understand by broadly defines learning organization as "Organization where people continually expanding their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive pattern of thinking are nurtured, collective aspirations is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together". The emphasis is that learning is an ongoing process of acquiring the desired useful knowledge and skills through dynamic group practice and sharing experience in order for them to adapt to a rapid changing world. Learning organization is not an individual activity but it has become group business where members of organization participate in learning new knowledge and skills. Involvement and participation of members in learning process is the core values of OD in change effort. Ntokota staff should see themselves as one unity in their attempt to pursue the organization goal thus; they should help one another.

According to data, some members withdrew from participation, which made the matter worse. The observation data (July-August: 2011) exposed similar problem of poor staff participation ranging from two to three members only mainly male dominant. Schmuck

and Runkel (1994, pp. 60-63) advise us that if organization is unable solving problems, better to seek the outside Facilitator to help.

7.3 Staff cooperation

Cooperation means when people work together as a team and pursue the common objective. According to Stoner *et al* (1995, p. 499) team is two or more people who interact and influence each other with complementary skills and all are committed toward achieving the common goal as they are all holding mutual accountability. However, the study disclosed that cooperation, teamwork among staff members was broken down, and teachers were divided into groups as was mentioned by respondent HOD2, HOD3, T2, T4, T5 and T6. Data further disclosed that leader promote division and practice favoritism as stated by T6.

What emerged from the study is that the majority of the participants complained there is no cooperation and teamwork among staff. When cooperation among staff members is broken down, it affects performance. Exchange ideas in cooperative and mutually supportive ways are central to aspect of effective environment. Division among staff members is not at the heart of OD philosophy. Hanson *et al.* (1995, p. 24) states that team is unity of people working together, identify and utilize one another's resources and facilitate their mutual interdependence toward more effective problem solving and task accomplishment.

a. Leadership role

Leadership role is crucial in organization in terms of pursuing organization goal and as such in the same version leader is to influence, inspire, support and motivate the followers to unite, work together and rally behind the organization goal. The data collected revealed that the leadership is democratic but predominantly features of autocratic. Democratic was reflected in when some teachers were allowed to act in HODs post and principal applied open door communication policy for teachers and other stakeholders to see the head without appointment as was stated by respondent P and HOD5. However, other aspects concerning leadership role were revealed by participants as follow.

Respondent HOD2 and T6 claimed that the leadership at school consists of more autocratic than democratic features. Respondent T2, T3, T4, T5, HOD3 refuted the allegation and stated that the leadership is featured with more democratic elements than autocratic.

Participants' views and observation data revealed that leadership style consist of mixtures of more autocracy than democracy. The democratic elements of leadership however positioned the school leadership partially in collegial model where power and decisions are also shared with other members. Bush (2003, p. 64) defines collegial model of leadership as follow:



Collegial models include all those theories, which emphasize that power and decision-making are shared among some, or all members of organization who are thought to have a shared understanding about the aims of institution.

Collegiality was reflected when some teachers were acting in the positions of HODs in order to share the workload and decisions but, involvement of staff members in the decision-making process was taken leniently as stated by participant T2, T4, and HOD2.

The study revealed that all members of organization need total leadership change and embrace democratic leadership that they have learned from OD workshops as they affirmed that OD workshop opened their mind and argued that the existing leadership practice did not offer them much what they wanted thus, they want democratic leadership that offers opportunity for staff involvement in decision making, participation and cooperation. Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 56) argue that the organization is not ready when the members are not happy with condition and believe that they themselves have no hope of improving it. In this case, staff was ready for OD intervention as they want improvement.

7.5 Readiness for change

One of the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of any change initiative is participants' and organizational readiness for change. Smith (2003, p. 18) holds the view that readiness to participate in OD change efforts depend on the desire and willingness of members to take up initiative of change as they belief with confidence that they can make a difference and embark on change. An organization is ready for OD intervention if members or the manager recognizes the problems that impede the progress and indicate their willingness for improvement. Their readiness can be traced back at the earliest stage during Survey Data Feedback workshop conducted in April 2011 for OD Assignment project as was stated by participants T2,T3,T4,T5 andT6 that "OD is democratic from bottom-up and not always from top-down, now we must implement OD". I was impressed by participants' remarks to embrace OD initiative.

Similarly, Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 59) assert that readiness for change is manifested in members' behavioral expression and feelings of group cohesiveness, solidarity and loyal to one another and protect their membership in-group as well as identifying themselves with others as group members. Organization members can be ready for change if they adopt new behavioral norms that are conversant and accepted by all as it helps for improving their situation. Despite participants' readiness, there were also some factors that influenced members' resistance.

(c) Raising the level of readiness

OD workshop

At the outset, the participants knew nothing about OD and they were overwhelmed with mixed feelings of what OD is about as some thought that OD is like other organization while others became quiet. Evidence for this claim is seen from participant who raised the question that “since OD is originated from SA how will it be implemented in Namibia, particularly at Ntokota organization?” This typical question clearly shows that participants have insufficient knowledge and understanding about OD. However, after the OD workshop that was conducted in April 2011 participants seized the value of OD in their own setting as was expressed by participants that the “OD is democratic from bottom-up, not always from top-down, from now we must implement OD”. A female participant argued that “some of the decisions that were taken here are undemocratic”.

The workshop boosted up morale of participants to support the OD intervention and requested the Facilitator to proceed. Susanto (2008, p. 54) holds the views that employees are willing to accept change if they are convinced that change is beneficial. Smith (2005) in Susanto (ibid, p. 55) asserts that developing understanding the nature and reason for change at the early stages can provide sound basis for subsequent change and greater willingness to take risk and extend beyond current boundaries. Survey Data Feedback is the way of raising the level of readiness.

Survey Data Feedback

The Survey Data Feedback was of particular important as participants for the first time to gain experience of OD in which they tapped knowledge and understanding of OD as an eye opener and became ready to embrace the intervention. Smith (2003, p. 19) states that Survey Data Feedback is “a key readiness raising intervention” and it is the process of collecting data from organization and give feedback for action planning. During the introduction of OD workshop in April 2011 participants demonstrated their readiness as they were keen to hear more about OD and how it works. Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 29) affirm that Survey Data Feedback involves data collection through interviews and observations and give feedback to participants for diagnosis and plan for action taking. For intervention to be successful thus, the followings were significance:

1. Participants were feed backed with data unambiguously.
2. Data boosted up participants’ interests
3. Data was incorporated into the natural ebb and flow of the larger OD design.

The data collected from interviews and observations provided the basis on which participants made argument and took final decision for OD intervention.

OD training workshop

Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 28) give an opinion that OD facilitator should create the learning result for a pre-determined period of time, organize and direct the activities. The



OD training workshop took place in August 2011 to empower participants with the intended knowledge and skills that affect change in Organization. Schmuck and Runkel (ibid, p. 75) hold the views that training requires highly format structures, thus facilitator need be well invested in leadership quality of conducting the training workshop to train members.

The data from training revealed that participants expressed their gratitude and happiness about the way in which OD training was conducted as was stated by one respondent that he enjoyed the group presentations and facilitator did not dictate them how to solve problems but he used learner-centered approach to problem solving. In contrast, some members were captured with ambivalent attitude due to confrontation. French and Bell (1995, p. 29) affirms that most OD programs fail because top management becomes ambivalent, or distracted because of other duties. Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 79) argue that “confrontation works best in eliminating hostilities stemming from opposition and schisms”.

Constructive confrontation is strategies used to clarify and resolve the thorny issues between two conflicting groups but, it needs an expert facilitator to help them understand each other. Schmuck and Runkel (ibid) stress that the role of facilitator is to help with training participants and guard them not to plunge into volatile situation that may lead the participants to abandon the training. However, there was no visible conflict that emerged from the participants.

7.6 Participants’ perceptions and experience of OD intervention process

(a) OD is an icebreaker

The OD intervention at initial stage was viewed as new approach, that attempting to creep into organization system. This was evidence when one of the participants asked a question that “OD is originated from SA how will it be implemented here in Namibia, particularly at Ntokota organization?” This question signals lack of understanding of what OD is all about and as such, members need more explanation.

The OD workshops and training shaped a remarkable awareness and understanding of what OD is all about because most participants expressed similar views from each workshop evaluation and interviews. From the general responses, participants viewed that OD is a process of running the organization collectively in order to achieve the common objective. They emphasize that OD is about people involvement and cooperation in organization whereby decisions are taken collectively rather than one person. Participants further affirmed that OD is about making good relationship of members in order to help them achieving the goal. They analysis OD as about developing organization from one level to another level and every one’s decision is considered and decision-making should be from bottom to top. These were participants’ perceptions that emanated from evaluations about OD intervention. participants gave resounding credit to

OD as it was stated by respondent T2, T3, T6, T7 and P that “ OD is good, democratic approach, from bottom-up, focus on development, building organization, improving leadership quality, changed my way of thinking, icebreaker”.

Data revealed that participants expressed a token of appreciation for OD intervention as it open their mind. According to Walker and Vogt (1987) in van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 191) change is set in motion and it has established a practices in favor of new procedures and behaviors that enable members moving to a new desired situation. Van der Westhuizen (2008, p. 191) argues that this movement involves the development of new norms, values, attitudes and behaviors through changes in structures. As it was disclosed by both participants and organization leader that the OD intervention shifted their way of thinking thus, there is a golden future of OD to play an important role in changing the mind of members of organization if it gets a full support.

During OD and training workshop members learned from each other by sharing the knowledge and understanding OD values, beliefs and assumptions. However, it is also believed that some members will take time to set themselves free from the bondage of egocentric and join the team. It is off course the task of other members and leadership of organization to find ways and means of getting them on board with other team members.

8. SUMMARY

The purpose was to explore staff involvement in OD intervention; inspire their mindset to embrace change initiative and determine the level of participation in OD intervention, probed in participants’ perceptions and experience of intervention process. The study disclosed that organization was suffering of lack of staff involvement in the decision-making process, participation in the meetings and cooperation among members, lack of real democratic leadership practice and management meeting program. These were the key factors perceived causing division among staff members and retarding the organization to move to the desired goal.

The SDF workshop and training contributed immensely for boosting the level of readiness for members to embrace OD philosophy of bottom-up approach strategy as an alternative way of solving organization problems and bringing change. According to data, respondents hoped that OD would serve as potential platform to advance their perception and perspective of change approach through democratic means. It revealed participants benefited allot from OD intervention as they were equipped with knowledge and skills of problems solving in the organization and influenced their way of thinking of how organization should be run. Similarly, principal acknowledged that the OD intervention was an icebreaker because it opened new way of running organization collectively.



The study also revealed that OD intervention brought some visible change in staff involvement in the decision making process because their autonomy in taking decision enjoy the priority in meetings unlike in the past where only management take decision on behalf of the entire staff. It opened a silent voice of some members to speak in the meeting and morning briefing without fear as was acknowledged by Principal who gave thanks of helping organization to break the silent wall. It brought cooperation among teachers for instance by taking collective decision to support learners who nearly dropped schooling due to lack of food and financial support from their parents. Each staff members contributed N\$20.00 monthly for funding the hostel, school fees as well as to buy uniforms and detergents for them.

9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study demonstrated its powerfulness in bringing positive change in human relation at work place. It is of potential significance to educators and educational leaders to use OD approaches to improve human relationship and behavior; cherish democracy among staff and bring long-lasting changes in the organization. The study may also encourage other researchers to do OD studies and conduct OD projects with any organization of their choice.

10. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

My study was a case study focusing on single school, influenced by its unique environment. The data collected for completing thesis was confined to respondents' perception and experience of OD intervention in unique organizational culture, the nature of organization problems and their level of readiness for change is different from other organizations that may need different OD intervention and approaches. Due to uniqueness, hence the findings may not be generalized for application in organization with different context.

The most constraints of doing the OD research study was insufficient time for OD intervention voyage while the research was expected to be completed within two months. The program was restricted to afternoon as during the morning teachers paid much attention to School program.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to explore staff involvement and inspire their mindset to initiate change; determine the level of participation in OD intervention and probing in

participants' perception and experience of the process. The intervention provides an experience and learns from participant's perspective of how they perceived change effort initiated by outsider. Being new in conducting research at higher learning institution, I found OD is laborious process which involves seven steps that require new learning. However, I remained tagged to the voyage of my study and gained more knowledge and skills. The program was successfully completed although change was visible on a small scale.

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