

Barriers And Challenges Related To Cultural Diversity Management Within The Schools In South Africa

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Abstract

Globalization, internationalization and technology have increased the movement of people from different cultural backgrounds around the world. The coexistence has created rapid cultural diversity challenges, forcing many democratic countries to review their labour laws, compelling organisations to adopt sound diversity management policies. Pre 1994 in South Africa, the workforce did not represent the diversity of the country. The end of apartheid created opportunities for culturally diverse workforces in most sectors of the economy. Schools are no exception to this change due to teacher and learner diverse population as women and people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds are sharing the workspace. The School Management Teams (SMTs) led by the Principals, need to be properly equipped in terms of knowledge, skills and capacity to deal with increased cultural diversity for the achievement of organizational goals. This paper aims to identify barriers and challenges related to cultural diversity management within the schools in Umzinyathi District, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. The research seeks to find out if schools in Umzinyathi district are utilizing cultural diversity management for the achievement of organisational goals.

The paper is exploratory and descriptive in nature and adopts a qualitative approach. The focus was on School Management Teams (SMT) of ten schools in the UMvoti Circuit under UMzinyathi District comprises the principal, vice-principal(s), and heads of departments, and senior teachers. Using purposive sampling, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face involving 36 SMT members. Content analysis was used to analyse data. Data were presented in tabular form. The study revealed that there are no work-related barriers due to the availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds under the UMzinyathi District in KZN. SMT members' activities are important in influencing cultural diversity management. However, having no barriers and challenges does not mean that there is no conflict. Hence, the study recommends that the Department of Basic Education introduces cultural exchange programmes and partnerships with other schools to share educational resources, sports development and leadership development.

Keywords: cultural diversity; diversity management, school management teams; South African schools