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USING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND GENDER TO FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Scholars in the field of performance management concur that the ultimate purpose of a performance management system is two-fold, namely to promote accountability and facilitate the continuous professional development of the employees of an organisation. This article seeks to explore how male and female educators perceive the integrated quality management system (IQMS) from an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach. An exploratory, qualitative design within the AI framework was used, and both male and female educators in selected primary and secondary schools were interviewed. The participants were encouraged to narrate positive experiences relating to the role of the IQMS in their schools. Participants also expressed a desire to use IQMS programmes to develop continuously in their profession. This study provides a pragmatic approach aimed at understanding the role of the IQMS in promoting accountability and in facilitating continuous professional teacher development to the benefit of both learners and schools. This study therefore complements the existing body of knowledge by means of a positive approach to appraisal and its role in the continuous professional development of educators in schools.

Keywords: *appreciative inquiry; performance management system; professional development; continuing professional teacher development; integrated quality management system.*

Introduction

Globally, performance management systems and professional teacher development have been foregrounded as valuable tools for the continuous development of teachers for improved teaching and learning (Abraham, 2010; Beidelman, 2016; Centre for Education and Development, 2015; Elliott, 2015).

In South Africa, prior to 1994 traditional appraisal methods were used to evaluate teachers, and inspectors from the Department of Education were solely responsible for evaluating the performance of teachers in schools. Inspections focused on two main areas of development, namely administration and classroom management (Centre for Education and

Development, 2015; Mchunu, 2014; Ntombela, Mpehle, & Penciliah, 2010). Consequently, many criticisms were levelled against this appraisal system, based on elements such as the prevalence of political bias, the unchecked power that inspectors wielded and the incompetence of inspectors. However, 1994 signalled a paradigm shift from traditional appraisal approaches to those with a greater developmental focus, which put more emphasis on continuous professional teacher development (Motilal, 2004; Odhiambo, 2005).

This paradigm shift led to the introduction of a new legislative framework for education, including new statutory bodies and a range of new national policies. The previous inspection system was replaced by new quality management programmes; the introduction of the Development Appraisal System (DAS) at the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) in 1998 was followed by performance measurement (PM) and whole-school evaluation (WSE) in 2001. Both these appraisal systems were rejected by educators and their unions because they viewed them as summative and judgemental and as not catering for educators' continuous professional development (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2015; De Clercq, 2008; Department of Education, 2003; Ntombela et al., 2010). Consequently, the integrated quality management system (IQMS) was introduced in 2003 with the aim of integrating and strengthening various components of the DAS, PM and WSE (Biputh, 2008; Christie, 2008; De Clercq, 2008; Department of Education, 2008; Weber, 2005).

The IQMS was first implemented in schools in 2005 in order to enhance educators' continuous professional development. It has also assisted them to develop skills and competencies to perform their teaching tasks effectively, which relates directly to accelerated learner performance and achievement and development of the whole school (Ntombela et al., 2010; Weber, 2005). Countries such as the United States, Australia, England, Wales and Germany also use a performance management system as an ongoing process for identifying, measuring and developing an individual's performance in accordance with an organisation's strategic goals (Abraham, 2010; Beidelman, 2016; Centre for Education and Development, 2015 Elliott, 2015). Such performance management systems involve the development of policies and procedures to ensure that staff and educators provide quality education to effectively meet the needs of their students consistent with the goals and objectives in each of these schools.

Since the introduction and implementation of the IQMS in South African schools, a number of studies have been conducted on it. The study carried out by De Clercq (2007) explored teacher quality, appraisal and development, while the study conducted by Bisschoff and Mathye (2009) focused on the advocacy of an appraisal system for teachers. Biputh and McKenna (2010) endeavoured to show how teachers perceived the tensions in the IQMS, while Ramnarain's study (2010) examined the extent to which the IQMS enhanced the professional development of teachers and advocated accountability. Mahlaela's study (2011) concentrated on teacher assessment for teacher professional development, and the study conducted by Mchunu (2014) explored the linking of appraisal

with professional development in the IQMS in South African schools. However, no empirical research has been conducted using appreciative inquiry (AI) and gender to focus on performance management and continuous professional development in South African schools. The study reported on in the present article therefore endeavoured to build on previous studies and to investigate the performance management system and continuous professional development of South African schools from an AI and gender perspective.

AI, which focuses predominantly on the positive, is an innovative way of studying situations and facilitating the necessary changes in a system (Bushe, 2010). For the purpose of the study reported on, AI is therefore defined as an investigation into what works well in a particular organisation by using the existing strengths as drivers for continued growth (Buchanan, 2014). Through AI, the IQMS has the potential to develop educators continuously, which relates directly to enhanced learner performance and achievement in schools (Daley & Kim, 2010; Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2011; Mestry et al., 2009; Ovando & Ramirez, 2007). The main research problem investigated was: How did male and female educators perceive the IQMS in their schools from an appreciative inquiry approach? In other words, what were these educators' positive experiences of the IQMS and what suggestions did they make to improve the current IQMS in South African schools? The study was an attempt to contribute to the current body of knowledge by using the AI perspective and gender to determine the ultimate purpose of the IQMS in South African schools, its role in continuous professional teacher development, as well as its impact on teaching and learning, which directly relates to improved teacher and learner performance in schools.

Theoretical Framework

In the study the performance management system and continuous professional development of teachers in South African schools were viewed through the lenses of the AI technique and models of staff appraisal.

Appreciative Inquiry

The AI technique rests on the premise that individuals create meaning through their interactions with one another and that the world is shaped and defined by social disclosure (Fifolt & Lander, 2013). Employing an AI perspective signals the intention of using the positive core of participants' experiences relating to the effectiveness of the IQMS in continuous professional development in South African schools. Instead of focusing on problems, AI attempts to build on what works well in an organisation (Trajkovski, Schmied, Vickers, & Jackson, 2012). It also offers the potential to facilitate change from the ground up, and it adopts a relational constructionist view based on affirmation, appreciation and dialogue.

Harrison and Hasan (2013) stress that AI is a dialogic, cyclical process that engages change actors in defining the change. It begins with a process of discovering and appreciating what is the positive core of the current experience, and then using this information to imagine possibilities and subsequently to design ways to achieve and create the desired future.

Trajkovski et al. (2012), Fifolt and Lander (2013), Harrison and Hasan (2013), Bushe (2013) and Scerri, Innes, and Scerri (2015) maintain that AI is often conducted by means of a 4-D process comprising Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny. They further maintain that each of the phases of the 4-D process relates to a specific task. For instance, in the Discovery phase, individuals share stories and recount personal experiences to examine the best of what is. In the Dream phase, individuals consider the ideal vision for their organisation and articulate what could be. In the Design phase, individuals develop an organisational framework able to harness the strengths of its positive core; this phase communicates what should be. Finally, in the Destiny phase, individuals implement the vision as a way to move the organisation toward positive change; this phase represents what will be.

Mather and Hulme (2013) stress that AI is an important tool for organisational improvement, focusing on what is going well in an organisation. Focusing on what is working well, in the view of Banta (2014), seems to put everyone at ease and in the right frame of mind to participate actively in discussion.

Staff appraisal models

Scholars such as Middlewood (2002), Monyatsi (2002), Motilal (2004), Daley and Kim (2005) and De Clercq (2008) have identified two models of appraisal, namely the accountability and professional development models.

Accountability model of appraisal

The accountability appraisal model, according to Monyatsi (2002), is a hierarchical, top-down approach aimed at assessing educators' performance in order to make decisions about dismissal, promotion or merit pay. De Clercq (2008) concurs, maintaining that the accountability model provides defensible and standardised information to use in human resource decisions. It is also managerial, control-oriented, judgemental and hierarchical. However, educators and their unions are mostly against the accountability model of appraisal, as it is characterised as being judgemental and it also fails to support their developmental needs.

Middlewood (2002) states that accountability focuses on organisational needs, transactional elements, measurable outcomes and the need for quantitative data. For instance, accountability requires adherence to departmental rules, regulations and procedures, and it also leads to actions related to retention, promotion and dismissal. Whereas the accountability model has a primarily judgemental element, the professional development model focuses on development and growth.

The professional development model

Middlewood (2002) points out that the professional development (PD) model focuses on individual needs and the recognition of transformational elements, and stresses educational value-added outcomes and the need for qualitative data. Daley and Kim (2010) maintain that a PD model can be used to convey expectations, assess current abilities and plan PD

and in-service training in order to develop higher levels of professional competence. They further assert that educators regularly engage in collaborative professional learning based on the standards of performance that are applied in their evaluations. The PD model focuses on the continuous improvement of employee skills and competencies. This can be achieved through the identification of personal development needs and provision of subsequent training or self-development opportunities (Daley & Kim, 2010).

Monyatsi (2002) maintains that the PD model involves the development of educators' professional knowledge, understanding and skills to provide quality teaching and learning in the classroom. Furthermore, it encourages educators to become reflective practitioners and to participate in their appraisal and continuous PD programmes. Consequently, educators are motivated and empowered and enjoy playing an active part in their own development. The next section contains a literature review relating to the performance management system and professional development of educators.

Literature Review

For the purpose of this article, this section reviews the concepts 'performance management system' and 'professional development' as these relate to educators in schools.

Performance management system

Armstrong (2006) defines performance management as the continuous process of improving performance by setting individual and team goals which are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation. It also includes planning performance to achieve set goals, reviewing and assessing progress, and developing the knowledge, skills and abilities of people in an organisation. Deb (2009) and Letsoalo (2009) share the view that the performance management system helps to identify employees who need further development through training. Further, for every worker to be utilised to his/her full capacity, a performance management system needs to be in place. Souhrada (2016) shares similar sentiments and stresses that employees need to be developed continuously and receive constant feedback and appropriate rewards.

The key purpose of the performance management system, according to Middlewood (2002) Ovando and Ramirez (2007) and Elliott (2015), is two-fold, namely to promote accountability and facilitate the continuous professional development of educators; a balance between accountability and professional development is necessary for active performance appraisal to be conducted.

As mentioned before, the performance management system in the South African educational context has been revised since 1994. A paradigm shift occurred from the traditional to the more developmental approaches to evaluating the performance of educators in public schools (Motilal, 2004). Rabichund (2011) views the IQMS as a performance measurement strategy with a managerial orientation which has been designed to enhance the quality of education in schools. It is framed by the elements performance standards, performance criteria, accountability and financial incentives, which are linked to

pay and grade progression based on the performance of staff members. Inherent in the IQMS is the focus on the continuous professional development of educators in schools.

Professional development of educators

The professional development of educators, according to Moswela (2006), is increasingly being regarded as vital in improving student performance and creating more effective schools. The Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training (2011) concur that professional development comprises activities undertaken either individually or collectively by educators throughout their careers to enhance their professional knowledge, understanding, competence and leadership capacity – in particular to increase their mastery of the curriculum and their teaching areas, their skills in teaching and facilitating learning, their understanding of children and young people and their developmental needs, and their commitment to the best interest of their learners and their schools, the well-being of their communities and the ethics of the education profession. Successful professional development of educators attempts to promote the professional growth and knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators (Bisschoff & Mathye, 2009; Lee, 2005). Further, it is rooted in educators' everyday classroom practice, based on students' needs, designed to take into account the particular contexts and circumstances of educators, and sustained over a long period of time.

In order for professional development to be effective in schools, principals should depart from the traditional managerial mindset of teacher development to embrace a more facilitative role using an interactive approach that empowers teachers to improve learner achievement. Steyn (2014) maintains that different approaches to teacher collaborative learning in schools need to be carefully planned and organised in such a way that teachers are regularly engaged and that all students can benefit. The next section discusses the research design.

Research design

A qualitative approach, in particular a case study, within the social constructivist paradigm was taken in an effort to solve the research problem (Trajkovski, Schmied, Vickers, & Jackson, 2012). The constructivist principle holds that individuals create meaning through their interactions with one another and that the world is shaped and defined by social disclosure (Fifolt & Lander, 2013). The study builds on recent research on linking appraisal with professional development in the IQMS in South African schools (Mchunu, 2014).

Five primary and five secondary schools located in the Ekurhuleni South District in Gauteng province, South Africa were purposefully selected for this study: Schools A, D & E (quintile 3 primary schools), School B (quintile 1 primary school), School C (quintile 2 primary school), Schools F, G & I (quintile 3 secondary schools), School H (quintile 4 secondary school) and School J (quintile 2 secondary school). Quintiles are used to rank South African schools according to their socio-economic status (Department of Education, 2004). In South Africa schools are ranked according to quintile: quintile 1 and 2 schools

are regarded as "poor" schools, while quintile 3 and 4 schools are regarded as "richer" schools.

Table 1.1 below gives a brief description of the schools selected to participate in this study according to their rankings or quintiles:

Table 1.1: Description of schools according to their rankings

Schools	Level	Quintile
Schools A, D & E	Primary schools	3
School B	Primary school	1
School C	Primary school	2
Schools F, G & I	Secondary schools	3
School H	Secondary school	4
School J	Secondary school	2

These schools were purposively selected on the basis of being previously disadvantaged, characterised by poor infrastructure and a scarcity of teaching and learning resources, and being located in townships profoundly affected by socio-economic factors such as crime and poverty. Furthermore, most followed traditional appraisal practices prior to 1994. Some of the schools failed to promote the academic performance and achievement of the learners. For instance, some primary school learners achieved poor Annual National Assessment (ANA) results, and learners in some secondary schools obtained poor results in the National Senior Certificate (NCS) exams. The sample for the study consisted of the following:

- The principal of each of the ten schools selected to participate in the study was engaged in a one-on-one interview;
- Five school management team members from each school were interviewed as focus groups; and
- Six educators (a repetition of two experienced educators, two educators with less than three years' experience and two educators who were democratically elected as staff development teams (SDTs) in each school) were also interviewed as focus groups.
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Thus, in total, ten (10) principals, fifty (50) school management team (SMT) members and sixty (60) post level one educators were included in the study. Therefore, one hundred and twenty (120) participants were included in the study for interviews. Both male and female educators were selected to participate in this study, since both male and female educators occupied leadership and management roles in schools. Botha (2016) makes the observation that gender issues have become an increasingly important factor worldwide, since leadership and management roles in a new education dispensation are distributed among males and females. Therefore, 61 male and 59 female educators were selected to participate in the study. This is shown in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: Number of participants according to gender

Participants	Males	Females
Principals	06	04
SMT members	28	22
Educators	27	33
Total males and females	**61**	**59**
Total participants	**120**	

In this exploratory study, an adapted AI approach was employed that focused on the Discovery and Dream phases with the principals, SMT members and educators, to uncover the most significant experiences pertaining to the use of the IQMS to promote accountability and continuous professional development of the staff in schools (Fifolt & Lander, 2013; Trajkovski et al., 2012). Participants were asked, among other things, to respond to the following questions: (1) What is the ultimate purpose of the IQMS in South African schools? (2) What are your positive experiences of the IQMS? (3) How can the implementation of the IQMS be improved in your school? Data were captured by means of an audio recording, while field notes were taken during the interviews. The transcripts were reread, segmented and inductively coded by reviewing participants' responses into themes and finally generating categories and subcategories (Scerri, et al., 2015). The coding and identification of themes were based on the conceptual framework of the study (Scerri, et al., 2015), that is, the Discovery and Dream phases in the AI approach to the role of the IQMS in continuous professional teacher development in schools. Member checking was done by giving transcriptions of the interviews to the participants to confirm the accuracy of the findings.

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education. Prior to the interview, informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Data collection procedures

The process of collecting qualitative data was inductive, and concepts were built from the details obtained from the participants. The study used multi-method approaches such as in-depth interviews, transcribed notes and audio tape to gather information to enhance the reliability and validity of the research (Muhammad, Muhammad & Muhammad, 2008). Data were collected from participants by means of the following:

(a) Individual interviews with principals

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted to elicit the data from the principals. All interviews were conducted after school hours in an effort not to disrupt effective teaching. The interviews assisted with more extensive and memorable responses (Briggs, Coleman, & Morrison, 2012; Denscombe, 2007) by focusing on two of the phases in the 4-D cycle, namely the Discovery and Dream phases. The purpose of adopting this approach was to gain a clear understanding of the principals' positive experiences regarding the IQMS in their schools, the contribution of the IQMS towards continuous professional teacher development and the part it played in learner performance and in

advancing whole school development (Bell, 2010; Newby, 2010). Moreover, the principals were asked to offer possible suggestions for improving the IQMS in their schools.

(b) Focus group interviews with SMT members and educators

The study also used focus group interviews to collect shared ideas from the SMT members and educators who, as experts, were knowledgeable on the topic being investigated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As with the interviews with the principals, these interviews focused on the first two phases in the 4-D cycle, that is, the Discovery and Dream phases. Through probing questions on the issue at hand, a momentum of change was created. Each interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes and was tape-recorded with the consent of all the participants. All interviews were conducted after school hours in an effort not to disrupt effective teaching.

Data analysis and interpretation

In the data analysis transcripts were coded and grouped together into similar patterns, categories or themes. An inductive analysis approach was used in which the raw data were read to construct and synthesise meaning, starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 367). The following categories emerged from the study: the ultimate purpose of the IQMS in South African schools; the role of the IQMS in continuous professional teacher development, and the impact of the IQMS in learner performance and achievement and in advancing whole school development.

The participant profile

In order to ensure that the principle of confidentiality was adhered to, the schools were coded as follows: Schools A to E (primary schools), and schools F to J (secondary schools). The principals were coded as follows: Principals A to J. SMT members and educators were coded according to their respective schools. The system of coding that was used ensured that there was no link between the data and the participants or between the data and the setting, thereby ensuring the participants' anonymity and confidentiality. For instance, SMT member A from school A to J and Educator A from school A to J. Table 1.3 below shows the participant profile and coding in detail.

Table 1.3: Participant profile and coding

Types of schools	Individual interviews	Focus group interviews	Focus group interviews
Public primary & secondary schools	Principal of each of the ten schools	Five SMT members from each school	Six educators from each school
Schools A to E (primary schools) Schools F to J (secondary schools)	Principals A to E from primary schools Principals F to J from secondary schools Principals A, F, E & I – female Principals B, C, F, G, H & J – male	SMT members A to E from primary schools SMT members F to J from secondary schools	Educators A to E from primary schools Educators F to J from secondary schools

Findings

Based on the AI approach, the following categories were identified: the ultimate purpose of the IQMS in schools (Discovery phase) and the role of the IQMS in continuous professional teacher development (Dream phase).

The ultimate purpose of the IQMS

In the Discovery phase of the AI, participants were offered an opportunity to state their views and shared their positive experiences with regard to the ultimate purpose of the IQMS in their schools. This phase revealed the 'best' of the reasons for appraising educators in schools (Fifolt & Lander, 2013, p. 20). The responses showed participants' appreciation of the IQMS in promoting accountability and quality education in schools and in developing educators continuously in their profession.

- *Promote accountability and quality education in schools*

The participants expressed their willingness to familiarise themselves with IQMS procedures and processes, since these guide them in accounting to the Department of Education as an employer by adhering to departmental rules, regulations and procedures (Middlewood, 2002). Principal I (female) expressed the following view: 'The IQMS has potential to promote accountability and quality education in schools as educators know what is expected of them in terms of their job descriptions'. The view was also shared by male SMT member C from School F, who stated that, 'The IQMS requires the keeping of certain documents such as minutes of meetings that emanate from pre- and post-appraisal discussions, PGPs [professional growth plans], SIP [school improvement plan] documents and evaluation scores as proof that all appraisal procedures and processes are adhered to'. These views are in keeping with that of Rabichund (2011), who stresses that the IQMS is a performance measurement strategy with a managerial orientation which has been designed to enhance the quality of education in schools.

However, female SMT member A from School H held a different view, observing that, 'Some of the schools do not adhere to the IQMS procedures and processes. Further, they only compile documents for compliance purposes to the department. Consequently, the IQMS ends up not achieving its intended purpose of promoting quality education in schools'. Principal B (male) agreed, commenting that, 'The manner in which IQMS is conducted in some schools does not fulfil its purpose of accountability and continuous professional teacher development. For instance, IQMS is viewed as a once-off event conducted towards the end of a year with the purpose to accumulate assessment scores directly related to remuneration. Therefore an aspect of identifying strengths and weaknesses and to monitor them continuously which is briefly discussed in the next subsection is over looked'.

- *Identification of strengths and weaknesses*

The study revealed that both male and female educators in most schools understood the purpose of the IQMS in their schools. Their views reflected their positive experiences, as supported by the first phase in the AI. The participants also commented that the IQMS has an important role to play in identifying educator strengths and weaknesses. Further, strengths are encouraged and rewarded, while developmental opportunities are created to deal with the weaknesses. In this regard, female educator D from School J stressed that, 'The IQMS assists to identify strengths and weaknesses for the educators, starting from the baseline up to the summative evaluation. Further, strengths are rewarded and developmental workshops are organised to overcome weaknesses. For instance, educators are developed continuously by means of development workshops developed either by the school internally or by the department of education'. Therefore, the purposes of the IQMS highlighted by both male and female educators selected to participate in the study correlate with the purposes of a performance management system as proposed by Middlewood (2002), Ovando and Ramirez (2007) and Daley and Kim (2010), who stress that the key purpose of appraising educators is two-fold. First, appraisal is used for accountability purposes, and second it is used for continuous professional teacher development through the identification of strengths and weaknesses. These authors further maintain that accountability provides defensible and standardised information to use in human resource decisions. Further, personal development can be used to convey expectations, to access current abilities and plan personal development and in-service training aimed at developing higher levels of professional competence. When educators show a high level of accountability and continued professional growth they develop proper skills and competencies that relate to improved learner performance and achievement. These are briefly explored in the next section.

The role of the IQMS in continuous professional teacher development

In the Dream phase of the AI, participants were offered an opportunity to collectively explore ways to use the IQMS to facilitate their continuous professional growth (Trajkovski et al., 2012). The responses showed participants' desire to use the IQMS to facilitate their continuous professional development through the encouragement of teamwork among individuals, development of skills and competencies to perform teaching

tasks effectively, provision of constant feedback, enhancement of learner performance and achievement and advancement of whole school development. The role of the IQMS in promoting teamwork among individuals is briefly explored in the next subsection.

- *Promote teamwork among individuals*

All the participants favoured the IQMS because it promotes teamwork among individuals. Principal C (male) stated, 'Through IQMS development programmes such as class visits which require pre- and post-appraisal discussions, educators at all levels are encouraged to work in teams throughout their careers to enhance their continuous professional knowledge'. This view was shared by Principal E (female), who maintained that, 'Structures such as SDTs and DSGs assist educators to work as teams and to reflect in their own teaching practices in the classrooms. For instance, they work together to solve various problems they encounter in the classrooms'. This view is therefore in line with that of the Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training (2011), which are of the view that IQMS development programmes encourage educators to work in teams throughout their careers to enhance their professional knowledge, understanding, competence and leadership capacity, and in particular to increase their mastery of the curriculum and their teaching areas, their skills in teaching and facilitating learning, their understanding of children and young people and their developmental needs and their commitment to the best interest of their learners and their schools, the well-being of their communities and the ethics of education. The following subsection discusses the role of the IQMS in developing the skills and competences of educators.

- *Development of educator skills and competencies*

Participants were offered an opportunity to express their views with regard to the role of the IQMS in developing their knowledge, skills and competences to perform their teaching tasks effectively (Weber, 2005; Ntombela et al., 2010). Male SMT member D from School H stressed that: 'If IQMS procedures and processes are properly conducted in schools, they have potential to assist educators to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to perform their teaching tasks effectively'. The aforementioned view is therefore in line with the finding by Deb (2009) and Letsoalo (2009), who emphasise that successful appraisal and professional development of educators have the potential to promote their professional growth and knowledge, skills and attitudes. Principal I (female) shared similar sentiments, maintaining that, 'If IQMS development programmes are properly conducted in schools, they assist to develop skills and competencies to facilitate effective teaching and learning in the classrooms'. This view also coincides with the finding by Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge and Biputh (2008), Mestry et al. (2009) and Ntloana (2009) that educator development programmes assist in continuous educator development, and should focus on the improvement of learners' experiences through the enhancement of educators' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Further, they provide ongoing support and career development. Although participants valued IQMS development programmes for continuous development, they wanted more time to conduct programmes such as pre- and post-appraisal discussions during baseline and summative evaluations, monitoring of PGPs and adherence to all four appraisal cycles. In this regard, male educator F from School B

was cited as saying: 'Very limited time is given to the IQMS development programmes such as class visits, including pre- and post-appraisal discussions. Consequently, appraisal processes and procedures end up a quick-fix experience with a view to compile documents for submission purposes to the department'. In the same vein, Principal A (female) suggested that, 'Principals together with their SMTs should create more time to conduct for IQMS development programmes and to provide constant feedback'. This topic is briefly explored in the next subsection.

- *Constant feedback from appraisal processes*

Participants expressed satisfaction relating to the use of the IQMS in their schools, as they received constant feedback from structures such as SDTs and DSGs. Principal J (male) stressed that, 'Educators enjoy to get constant feedback from the DSGs during baseline and summative evaluations by means of post appraisal discussions'. This view corresponds to the finding by Souhrada (2016), who stresses that through the performance management system, educators undergo continuous development and receive constant feedback. This therefore assists educators in developing proper skills that contribute to enhancing accelerated learner performance and achievement and in developing the school as a whole. This topic is briefly discussed in the next subsection.

- *Enhance learner performance and achievement and whole school development*

The study revealed that when educators are developed continuously, they develop knowledge and skills that assist in enhancing accelerated learner performance and achievement and in advancing whole school development. Principal E (female) in this regard stressed that, 'IQMS development programmes need to be planned in such a manner that educators are engaged in sustained development programmes that assist to develop them continuously and to reflect in their own teaching practices'. This view was also shared by Principal H (male) who stressed that, 'Developmental workshops organised by the Department of Education and SMT members within the school assist to inculcate knowledge and skills to the educators that help them to perform their teaching tasks effectively. Consequently, learner performance and achievement is enhanced and the whole school develops'. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Steyn (2014), which stresses that different approaches to teacher collaborative learning in schools needs to be carefully planned and organised in such a way that teachers are regularly engaged in continuous professional development that benefits both students and the whole school. Enhancing achievement and providing a quality educational experience for all students, in the view of Elliott (2015), has long been the most important outcome expected of schools.

Conclusion

By applying AI and gender to performance management and continuous professional teacher development, this study has shown the value of using the IQMS to promote accountability and quality education in schools. Furthermore, it also assists in developing educators continuously in their profession. Therefore, most male and female educators selected to participate in the study concurred that the IQMS plays a significant role in promoting accountability and quality education, as educators know what is expected of

them in terms of their job descriptions. Moreover, it also helps to facilitate their continuous professional development in schools. The study showed that there was no real difference in the views of males and females as regards the significance and importance of the role of the IQMS in schools.

The study revealed that most participants recognised the value, potential and importance of an IQMS in their schools, as such a system makes it possible to acquire the skills and competencies to effectively perform tasks that benefit both learners and schools. The study reported on serves as a possible guide for schools that may consider using the AI approach and gender to explore the effectiveness of the IQMS in promoting accountability and quality improvement in education as well as continuous professional teacher development across the province. This study is not an answer to all the challenges associated with the IQMS, but it may contribute to a better understanding of its purposes, principles, procedures and processes in schools. More longitudinal studies need to be conducted into employing the AI technique to further the effective implementation of an IQMS as a tool to facilitate continuous professional teacher development that benefits both learners and schools.

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