Academic Record

2005-M.B.A. University of Southern Queensland
2004-M.Ed. Australian Catholic University
2001-B.Ed. Memorial University of Newfoundland
1987-B.A. University of the West Indies

Professional Experience

2012-Present  Head of School Supervision, Ministry of Education. Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
2006-2008  Vice-Principal, Bethel High School, Campden Park St. Vincent
1998-2006  Head of Modern Languages, Saint Vincent Grammar School
ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the managerial and instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in response to the challenges posed by the introduction of the policy of Universal Secondary Education (USE). Implemented in 2005 with minimal input from school principals, no research was carried out to determine the impact of USE introduction on principals’ instructional leadership and managerial practices. This study therefore represents an initial foray into understanding the challenges of school leadership in a top-down policy environment. Its main contribution lies in its analysis of the complexities of leadership in a developing country and its added value to the comparative literature on leadership practices internationally.

Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with twenty-two serving principals. Data analysis was partially based on the themes from the Grissom and Loeb (2009) guiding theoretical framework and partly on identification of emergent themes from the raw data using constant comparison techniques.

Two principal research questions and four subsidiary questions underpinned the execution of the study. The main findings from research question one include: low levels of literacy and numeracy among the student population, low student motivation, insufficiently trained personnel in pedagogy and learning psychology, an overly academic curriculum, low parental engagement, inadequate instructional and infrastructural resources and insufficient autonomy for school principals.

Findings from Research Question two revealed however that principals employed varied instructional and managerial strategies to counterbalance these challenges. Creative practices included curriculum modification, innovative teaching and learning methodologies, a supportive learning environment for students and teachers, emphasis on distributed leadership and elements of transformational leadership, the use of school management teams, expanded roles for school counsellors and forging strategic external alliances. Demographic variables of gender, location and experience were negligible in importance.

Recommendations included greater autonomy and support for principals, increased funding for the policy and improved training in systemic educational leadership. The study concluded that principal support for USE is favourable, but that the success of the policy will require greater buttressing for principals in the implementation of their fledgling innovative practices.