

“Educational Leadership and Management in an Indian School Context”

Theme: School leadership, Management, Administration and Governance

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Abstract

Education is the main change agent in developing and developed societies. There is great interest in educational leadership in the 21st century because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes. There is also increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners. Schools need trained and committed teachers but they, in turn, need the leadership of highly effective principals and support from other management. As a result, the management of educational organizations is regarded as one of the most important management perspectives. Basically, educational management is a discipline with respect to the management of educational organizations and since this field of study has been developed on the premises of other resolutely established disciplines. While the need for effective leaders is widely acknowledge and, there is much less certainty about which leadership behaviours are most likely to produce favourable outcomes. Although the process of determining organizational goals is fundamental to educational management, linking between goals and aims of education and actions of educational management may be considered as vital. The present study aims to assess the effectiveness of current leadership and management within an Indian school setting by critically analyzing the leadership models, styles and strategy that are most likely to achieve the best outcomes along with to provide a clear framework to which leadership can be understood within the Indian school context. The participants consisted of principals from Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalays and State Government schools. The data collected through interview questions, were based on Fidler’s (2002) notion, that to move forward, we need to have a very clear idea of where we are. All questions were designed to be open and higher order to give all participants more freedom. Individual responses to each interview question were analysed and triangulated with supporting evidence and categorised into appropriate areas of educational leadership and management to identify common consensus. The results were focused on parameters such as achieving the vision, curriculum management, delegated roles and staff motivation leaders and personality strategic focus.

Key Terms

Educational Leadership; Educational Management; Education; Curriculum; Leaders and School.

Introduction

Management is a series of actions and tasks relevant to highly well-organized and effectual application of resources within the organization in order to attain organizational objectives (Sapre, 2002, p.102) and educational management may be regarded as a discipline with respect to the management of educational organizations (Bush, 2011, p.1). From another perspective, Bolam (1999) believed that educational management is a function of execution for fulfilling decided policies and made a distinction between educational management and educational leadership. However, there should be a main link between goals and aims of education and actions of educational management (Bush, 2011, p.1) and thus, the process of determining goals of organizations is fundamental to educational management (Bush, 2011, p.3). The tag used to describe this field of study has altered over time from educational administration to educational management and finally to educational leadership (Gunter, 2004). Theories and models of educational management have been categorized by different scholars. Cuthbert (1984) classified educational management theories to five groups including analytic-rational, pragmatic-rational, political, phenomenological and interactionist models. Additionally, Bush (2011, p.34-35) based on four element including the level of agreement about objectives, the concept of structure, the level of environmental influences and the most appropriate strategies within the educational organizations has categorized the models of educational management into six clusters which are formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural models and finally has linked these six models with nine different leadership styles in the context of educational organizations. These nine leadership styles are managerial, participative, transformational, distributed, transactional, postmodern, emotional, contingency and moral. It is notable that since the concentration of instructional or learning-centered leadership is mostly on learning and teaching (direction of influence rather than the essence and origin of influence), it has not been linked with any of the six models of management (Bush, 2011, p.17-18).

The Significance of School Leadership

It is widely recognized that leadership is second only to classroom teaching in its impact on student learning. Leithwood et al (2006) showed that 'leadership acts as a catalyst for beneficial effects, including pupil learning. The report also distinguishes between the impact of head teacher leadership (typically 5-7%) and total leadership (27%). The finding provides much of the empirical underpinning for the current interest in distributed leadership

(see below) and for the concept of leadership ‘density’. Robinson’s (2007) meta-analysis of published research shows that the nature of the leader’s role has a significant impact on learning outcomes. Direct leader involvement in curriculum planning and professional development is associated with moderate or large leadership effects. ‘This suggests that the closer leaders are to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to make a difference to students (Robinsons 2017). This finding indicates the instructional leadership effects are much greater than those of other leadership models. Leithwood et al’s (2006: 5) conclusion, that ‘there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership’, offers powerful support for the vital role of heads, senior and middle leaders in all types of schools.

Education Management and Leadership

The concept of management overlaps with that of leadership, a notion of great contemporary interest in most countries. Cuban (1988) provides one of the clearest distinctions between leadership and management. He links leadership with change while management is seen as a maintenance activity. Leadership, means influencing others’ actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change. Bush (1998; 2003) links leadership to values or purpose while management relates to implementation or technical issues. Leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. “Leading and managing are distinct, but both are important.

Definitions of School Leadership

Gunter (2004) shows that the labels used to define this field have changed from ‘educational administration’ to ‘educational management’ and more recently to ‘educational leadership’. Author (2008) discusses whether such changes are purely semantic or reflect substantive changes in the nature of the field. Yukl (2002) argues that “the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective” but the following ‘working definitions’ includes its main features; “Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders

to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision' (Author and Author 2003). Three dimensions of leadership arise from this working definition;

Leadership as Influence

Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumptions that it involves the social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person [or groups] over other persons [or groups] to structure activities and relationships in a group or organizations (Yukl, 2002). Author (2008) refers to three key aspects of these definitions. First, the central concept is influence rather than authority. Both are dimensions of power but later tend to reside in formal position, such as principal or head teacher, while the former could be exercised in school or college. Leadership is independent of positional authority while management is linked directly to it. Second, the process is intentional; the person seeking to exercise influence is doing so in order to achieve certain purposes. Third, influence may be exercised by groups as well as individuals. This notion provides support for the concept of distributed leadership and for constructs such as senior leadership team.

'This aspect of leadership portrays it as a fluid process, potentially emanating from any part of the school, independent of formal management positions and capable of residing with any member of organization, including associate staff and students (Author, 2008).'

Leadership and Values

The notion of 'influence' is neutral in that it does not explain or recommend what goals or actions should be pursued. However, leadership is increasingly linked with values. Leaders are expected to ground their actions in clear personal and professional values. Day, Harris and Hadfield's (2001) research concludes that 'good leaders are informed by and communicate clear sets of personal and educational values which represent their moral values for the school. This implies that values are 'chosen' but Author (2008) argues that the dominant values are those of government and adds that these may be imposed on school leaders. Teachers and Leaders are more likely to be enthusiastic about the change when they 'own it'. Hargreaves (2004), drawing on research in Canadian schools, finds that teachers report largely positive emotional experiences of self-initiated change but predominantly negative ones concerning mandated change. There is a tension here between the obligation to implement the

policies of democratically elected governments and the need for teacher professionals to feel positive about new initiatives if they are to act on them successfully.

Leadership and Vision

Vision has been regarded as an essential component of effective leadership. Southworth (1993) suggests that heads are motivated to work hard 'because their leadership is the pursuit of their individual visions'. However, Fullan (1992: 83) says that 'vision building is a highly sophisticated dynamic process which few organizations can sustain'. Thoonen et al (2011: 520) refer to the 'adverse effects' of vision, which arise when principals do not involve teachers in the process of vision building. The articulation of a clear vision has the potential to develop schools but the empirical evidence of its effectiveness remains mixed. A wider concern relates to whether school leaders, are able to develop a specific vision for their schools, given government prescription of both curriculum and content.

Theories of educational leadership and management

Like leadership traits, there is no single all-embracing theory of educational management, reflecting the vast diverse range of educational institutions around the world, which require different approaches and solutions. Different theories of educational leadership and management reflect very different ways of understanding and interpreting events and behavior in schools. As with many leadership theories, their effectiveness changes when related to education.

Transformation leadership

Transformational leaders may be found at all levels of the organisation. Such leaders are visionary, inspiring, daring, risk taking and thoughtful. Transformational leaders have charismatic appeal, also commonly associated with trait theory. "Transformational leadership takes place when leaders interact with followers in ways that enhance their creativity and motivation in the organization" (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders manage to motivate others to achieve more than originally planned or intended; they create a supportive organizational climate where individual needs and differences are acknowledged and respected. Transformational leadership is based on values and what is morally right, thus assuring directional dedication towards professionalism and activating the higher order needs of organizational members. According to Bass' transformational model, organizational members focus on team or organizational goals first rather than their own interests. With this platform,

organizational members are more likely to contribute more effectively towards participative, democratic decision making without conflict or selfishly with-holding ideas.

Participative leadership

Participative theories suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. These leaders encourage participation and contribution from group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision making process. The belief that leadership is best considered a group quality has gradually gained widespread acceptance in the field of education. Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons and Hopkins (2007) describe participative/distributed leadership as “the leadership idea of the moment”. Generally with participative leadership; staff, resources and the school’s structure are interwoven in pursuit of a common vision that has meaningful and attainable goals and shared values. A participative approach is very reliant of other members of staff who may not perform or may have conflicting visions to that of the school.

Distributed leadership

A distributed leadership theory recognizes that there are multiple leaders (Spillane et al., 2004) and that leadership activity is widely shared within and between organizations. In relation to leadership at the institution, distributed leadership focuses on the interactions, rather than the actions of those in formal and informal roles. This theory represents the alternative approaches to leadership that have arisen because of increased external demands, including parents, stakeholders, owners, learners and the community. The significant work of Harris & Spillane (2008) identifies the increasingly complex world of international education, stating that leadership now requires diverse types of expertise and forms of leadership flexible enough to meet changing challenges and new demands. If implemented accordingly and successfully, distributed leadership practice is likely to lead to improved organizational performance and outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2004)

Review of literature

Leadership in schools is the most important factor in achieving improvements in school performance. Leaders make a significant difference in any organization. There is no single way to lead which can guarantee success, leadership is situated and contextual, involving issues such as diversity, inclusion and equity and embracing change to embed social justice. In order to achieve success a school requires trained and committed teachers but in return they need the

leadership of a highly effective principal. Cuban (1988) claims that the influence process is beneficial in that it is intended to lead in order to gain specific outcomes and results, bringing out the best in peers such as, in an educational institute. 'Leadership then refers to people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieve certain goals; it implies taking initiatives and risks'. Many leadership characteristics are evident in the work of Stodgill (1974) (see Appendix 1). A successful leader must be very adaptable to any situation and remain knowledgeable to current policies and alert to external factors. An effective leader is cooperative with all members of staff and all pupils which in turn earn them a lot of respect. A successful leader is decisive, persistent and risk taking which contributes to the continuous progress of a school. Many of the traits and skills identified by Stodgill (1974) are generic and could be found in numerous personality questionnaires or studies, but there are traits/skills which can be deemed as significant in particular practices or institutions, they are 'dominant' and 'persuasive', a desire to influence others. There are factors which transcend on to other members of staff and students within the school. An effective leader should always be willing to go the extra mile, such as social events for example, or leading and taking part in extra-curricular activities where some heads wouldn't leave their office. It may be that a leader doesn't possess any or many of Stodgill's traits or skills but may be able to implement leadership theories successfully, perhaps by delegating work elsewhere. It is important to acknowledge that a leader should not be required to possess universal traits; the leadership traits possessed should be specific to their institute.

McCall and Lombardo (1983) developed the ideas of Stodgill in researching both success and failure. They identified four primary traits by which leaders could succeed or alternatively 'de-rail'. The four traits are;

1. Emotional stability and composure; Being calm, confident and predictable, particularly when under stress.
2. Admitting error: Owning up to mistakes, rather than putting energy into covering up.
3. Good interpersonal skills: Being able to communicate and persuade others without resorting to negative or coercive tactics.
4. Intellectual breadth: Being able to understand a wide range of areas, rather than having a narrow (narrow minded) area of expertise.

Vision is regarded an essential component of effective leadership, in sync with clear goals of where the school, as a whole, are aiming to be [or achieve]. Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989) draw on previous works of leadership and its relativity directly to vision:

1. Outstanding leaders have a vision for their organization.
2. Visions must be communicated in a way in which secures commitment among other members of the organization, at all levels.
3. Communication of vision requires communication of meaning.
4. Attention should be given to institutionalizing vision if leadership is to be successful.

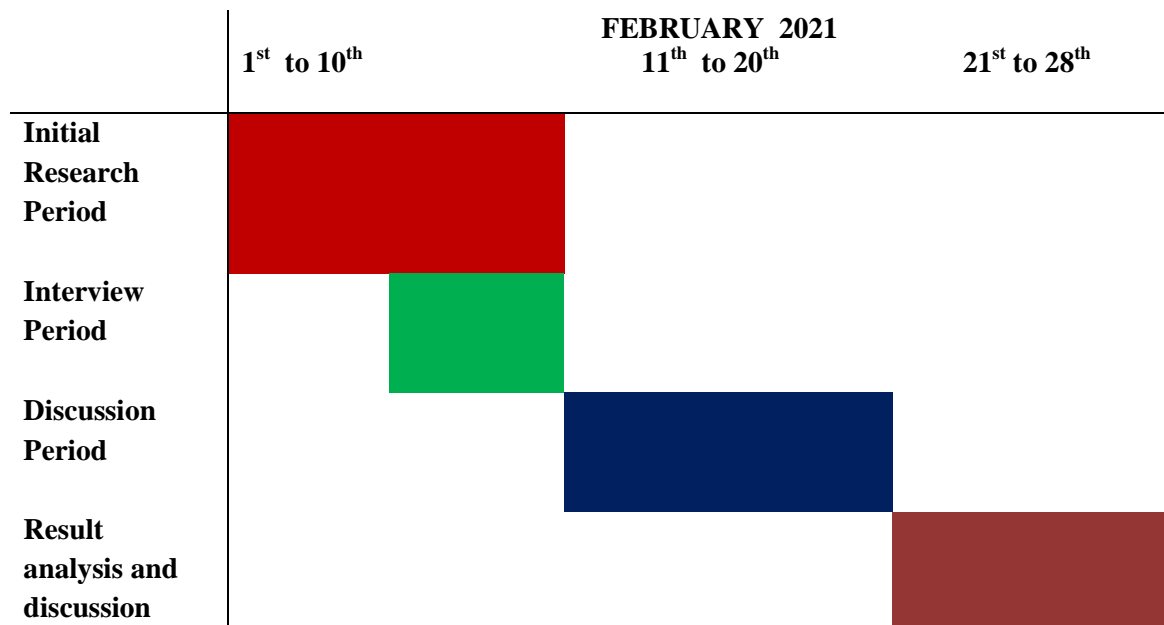
Cuban (1988) defines a leader as being able to influence others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are those who shape goals, motivations and actions of others, initializing change to reach existing and new goals. Blum & Butler, (1989) and Cheng (2002. P.51) suggests that goal orientation is one of only two common factors within educational leadership.

Methodology

The present study aims to assess the effectiveness of current leadership and management within an Indian school setting by critically analyzing the leadership models, styles and strategy that are most likely to achieve the best outcomes along with to provide a clear framework to which leadership can be understood within the Indian school context. The participants consisted of principals from Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalays and State Government schools. Prior to participation, participants provided full consent and they were treated in an appropriate professional manner. Qualitative data was obtained through online interviews and triangulated with observation and information obtained in the review of literature. Data was triangulated to ensure material is valid and reliable. Interview questions (Appendix 2) were based on Fidler's (2002) notion, that to move forward we need to have a very clear idea of where we are. All questions were designed to be open and higher order to give all participants more freedom.

All data collected will be used to advise any strategic planning and implementation. All data will be based on Fidler's (2002) theory and understanding, the initial stage of strategy formation is to take stock of the present. Such an analysis might include the evaluation of the working of a previous strategy or if there was no explicit previous strategy, identifying the strategy in retrospect could be a starting point.

Research plan: Gantt chart



Result and analysis

Individual responses to each interview question were analyzed and triangulated with supporting evidence and categorized into appropriate areas of educational leadership and management to identify common consensus.

Table 1 - A table to show the interview and discussion data obtained from participants.

	Interview Data	Discussion Data
Curriculum area leadership	A tiered system of centrally co-ordinated activities in which all staff have a part to play, with different levels of responsibilities.	Team-working and developing others energy, determination and work-rate. Keeping up with policy and planning.
Review and develop the aims and objectives of Institute.	Problem-solving and decision-making. Leadership and integrity. Adaptability, flexibility, and mobility.	Team-working and developing others energy, determination and work-rate. Keeping up with policy and however; there is limited information. Conflict with responsibilities.

Review, develop and implement teaching and learning strategies.	A tiered system of centrally co-ordinated activities in which all staff have a part to play, albeit of different levels of responsibilities.	Team-working and developing others energy, determination and work-rate.
Identify / develop and allocate learning resources which create / support the necessary learning environment	Delegation of resources etc. and resources management. Delegation to teachers.	Team-working and developing others energy, determination and work-rate, evident in school. Delegation to subordinates with regular communication evident in primary.
Review and develop suitable methods of assessing student learning outcomes	Problem-solving and decision-making.	Team-working and developing others energy, determination and work-rate.
Administrative duties	Management, planning, budgeting, reporting and admin. Meeting deadlines/commitments creativity. Leadership and integrity. Adaptability, flexibility, and mobility.	Team-working and developing others energy, determination and work-rate

Discussion

This section aims to identify the many roles of a leader and will critique several leadership models, by providing a solid platform by which a leadership strategy can be built.

Achieving the vision

The Institution aims to educate the whole child and produce rounded individuals who are well prepared to take their place in society. The institution has a strong focus on developing children's social skills and manners, as well as thinking about the six core values and attributes – integrity, respect, caring, enquiry, reflection and perseverance. In the schools, it is evident that the institution achieves its mission by nurturing language proficiency; ensuring the early acquisition of English; protecting and celebrating cultural customs and traditions and nurturing independent learners. Teachers are autonomous in their practice; however the institution is able to achieve its mission as a result of highly effective shared common practice. The institution seeks to provide an outstanding education through dual language instruction in English and Hindi. All students will become independent learners by means of enquiry, reflection and perseverance. We act with

integrity and treat one another with respect, learning together as responsible global citizens. The school is very much like a community and has incorporated the input of parents. Although a participative style is overseen and successfully managed by leaders, the material, ideas and practice is that generated by leaders and teachers as a collective whole. Some areas which tend to be managed more by leaders include ensuring responsibility is delegated; resources are allocated accordingly; time scales are specified and success criteria are identified, including the introduction of appropriate assessment and standardizing. There are other factors which are key features of the institutions mission statement. They appear to be managed and maintained by leadership and administered by all members of the institution including management, teachers, and parents. The key features include ensuring sense of belongingness; fostering universal values such as personal integrity, respect for others and care for community and global issue and achieving true bilingual proficiency.

Curriculum Management

Effective curriculum management is essential in all areas of an educational institution. As the school is built on outcomes rather than processes, it is good to compare the teaching practice process of the curriculum with the overall success. The leader appears to focus mainly on administration and management, by focusing solely on the administration and management, other areas like curriculum management and management of individual subject areas are cast aside, leaving staff demotivated, thus leading to tardiness.

Delegated roles and staff motivation

Throughout the institution a lot of duty is delegated; it is interesting to observe the performance levels of staff in relation to how they are man-managed or have roles delegated to them. In the successful department, roles are given to staff that make them feel appreciated. Members of staff feel they have a key part to play in the successful operation of the institution. Members of staff are given a lot of ownership and are given more autonomy. With this approach, there are still regular communication and progress updates which coincide with appropriate time related deadlines, all of which are effectively monitored by the leader. In the secondary school, Micro-politics (Lofthouse 1994, p134) also have some effect and several members of staff feel strongly that the actions of one or two powerful individuals have prevented or delayed several of their initiatives. There are several individuals who are not managed appropriately. There are some

members of staff that are a hindrance, or counterproductive, which poses the question; is this related to personality alone?

Leaders and personality

Current research in the field of educational leadership and management appears to be centered on leadership styles and how leaders actually lead their staff. One observation that has been made of staff within the current institution is the need to remain steady under pressure, an observation made of some members of the leadership team. Being able to handle the job requirements at difficult periods such as meeting deadlines or managing hostile situations is a personality trait that has yet to be covered in great detail. Any flaws or weaknesses of leaders could have a domino effect and lead to tardiness, stress and further hostility among staff.

Strategic Focus

As a school, the institution are effectively managing their current provision and are simultaneously developing and enhancing educational provision for their children. As a school aiming to expand the institution needs an appropriate strategy.

The below figure, Davies and Davies, (2005) shows a flow chart in which strategy deployment and extensive operational activities are built on the school's values and visions, showing how strategy has been developed from a transformational model.

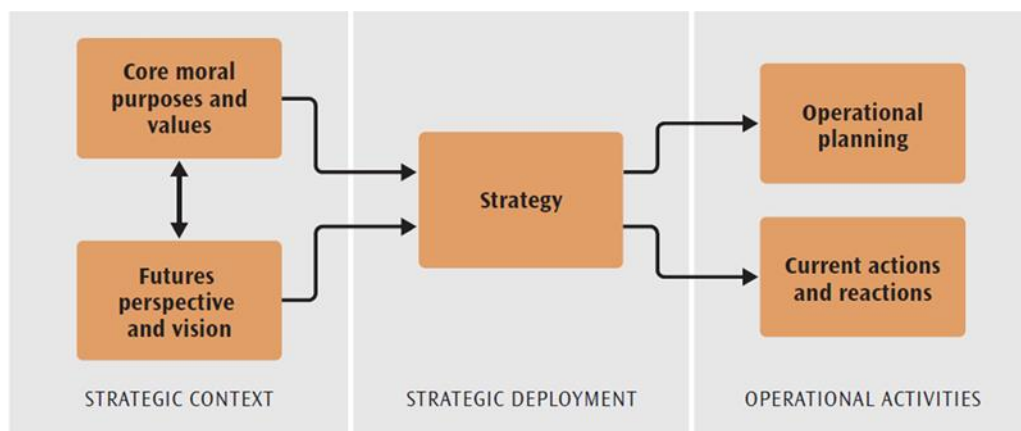


Figure 1 – Strategy deployment

The moral purpose that informs why we actually do the things that we do is visionary thinking, which can be defined as being long-term and idealistic, that's where we would like to head for strategic, which is more medium-term realistic steps towards that vision school development planning, which is fairly short-term operation for specific events and activities.

The view of strategy is very much direction-setting and part of strategic planning. Strategy is about broader and fundamental elements of the school. It should address the core and significant issues that the school will encounter and seek to deploy approaches that will meet those challenges, particularly those encountered by the secondary school of the institution. It should not be seeking to replicate the short-term detailed plans but with an extra year or two of detail. Strategy development should be a way of the whole school community focusing on the key issues that are fundamental for successful future development. It should also enable the school to separate out the strategic activities and the operational activities in a coherent way. Any strategic plans should be successful and sustainable in both the short term and long term.

Strategy can usefully be considered as a way to think about the future of an institution. Garratt (2003: 2-3) gives an excellent definition of strategic thinking:

‘Strategic Thinking’ is the process by which an organization’s direction-givers can rise above the daily managerial processes and crises to gain different perspectives. Such perspectives should be both future-oriented and historically understood. Strategic thinkers must have the skills of looking ... forwards ... while knowing where their organization is now, so that wise risks can be taken while avoiding having to repeat the mistakes of the past. The institution should aim to expand and grow effectively and efficiently using an appropriate strategic plan based on an example of good practice.

The school is driven by three strategic groups which form a strategic framework and planning process. Communication and strategy reviews with management and the school leadership team and other staff members. These three groups feed into the overall strategic and operational framework of the school. The operational part of the school’s planning framework is seen in three further groups. This framework is designed to link strategic and operational planning so that the school can drive the short-term improvement in standards while developing the long-term capacity of the school, demonstrating a hierarchical system in which senior leaders drive the improvements that are delivered and administered by subordinates including teachers and management. The school development plan is one outcome of this process. It is a document that encapsulates the school’s aims for itself and the route it plans to take to achieve those aims.

The main processes and elements of an SDP can be summarized as follows:

1. The process of producing the plan should involve as many stakeholders as possible.

2. It should be used as a means of checking progress, informing decisions, securing resources and motivating staff.
3. It should combine both short term goals with a longer 3-5 year overall perspective and context.
4. It should encourage and require both bottom up and top down communication, so that it is informed by people's individual needs and aspirations and well as inspiring them about the needs and aspirations of the school as a whole.
5. Priorities for resources, finance, building development, staff development, curriculum development should all be negotiated and agreed within the planning process.
6. It should evolve as part of a cycle of review, planning and implementation.

Further work

Further work should link educational leadership and management directly to academic achievement and positive school climate, similar to the work of Dellar's (1998). Another factor to be considered should be the social hierarchy that exists in education; it would be good to compare leadership in a private school context with leadership in state/government education, over a sustained period of time to ensure validity and reliability. Geographic location should also be considered and further work should compare the private international schools to their equivalents.

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Appendix 1 – Stodgill's trait theory (1974)

Traits	Skills
Adaptable to situations	Clever
Alert to social environment	Conceptually skilled
Ambitious and achievement oriented	Creative
Assertive	Diplomatic and tactful
Cooperative	Fluent in speaking
Decisive	Knowledge about group tasks
Dependable	Organized
Dominant	Persuasive
Energetic	Socially skilled
Self-confident	
Persistent	
Tolerant of stress	
Willing to assume responsibility	

Appendix 2 – Interview questions and topics of discussion

1. What do you consider to be your main roles and responsibilities?
2. What do you consider to be your most important aims and tasks in the school?
3. What is your vision for your department and the school? Do you feel you are fulfilling that vision?
4. What do you consider to be your greatest achievement so far?
5. What areas could be improved within your department (in relation to achieving the vision of the institution)?
6. What actions could be taken to improve practice among staff?
7. What do you consider to be the key elements of a successful department?
8. What do you consider to be your main qualities as a leader?