CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is organized into the following parts:-

a) Sampling and Population

b) Methods of Collecting Data

c) Analysis

3.1 The Assunta Secondary School was identified as the site of the study and based upon the adaptation of Lockwood (1984) and Wright’s (1986) system of categorizing managerial activities, several categories were identified as being performed by the principal of the Assunta Secondary School. As the objective of the study was to determine the managerial activities, if any, being performed by the principal and the main activities so performed, observation was seen to be the most appropriate method of data collation using a structured system that would enable a comparison to be made against previous research.
3.2 Sampling and population.

For the purposes of this study the subject observed was the principal of the Assunta Secondary School. The school is a Grade A, semi-government school with a student population of 2100, operating in two sessions; morning and afternoon. The study was limited to observation of the principal within the school environment only. Since the routine of the principal within the school environment does not tend to vary, the observation period was set for one school week, that is, from Monday to Friday.

3.3 Methods of collecting data.

There were several options available for data collection in this case, namely, interview and observation. Studies conducted at the University of Minnesota, by Hemphill (1960) and by Haas et al (1969) for instance, used questionnaire and survey as methods of collating data. However, in those cases the number of managers studied was extremely high, namely between 93 to 452 managers. In this case, only one subject had been selected and therefore warranted closer observation, bearing in mind McCall’s et al (1978) observation that managers consistently overestimated the time they spent on
production, reading and writing, telephone calls and thinking and consistently underestimated the time spent on meetings and formal discussion. An independent observation would therefore provide results unbiased by input from any other source.

3.3.1 Observation

As the study was limited to the principal’s activities within the school environment, the method chosen for data collection was by observation. A typical day for the principal begins upon her arrival in the school and ends when she leaves at the end of the day. During the eight hours that the principal is within the school compound, she may be easily observed carrying out the activities identified for analysis, thereby providing the observer the ability to collate data unimpeded and uninfluenced by the subject’s own estimate or opinion. The ease of observation also ensures that the subject is able to go about her duties without feeling that she is being observed and which may, consciously or unconsciously affect her performance and ultimately, the results of the study.
3.3.2 Details of the method of observation

McCall et al (1978) found that a manager’s working day typically consists of a large number of brief, varied and fragmented activities with significant and trivial matters interspersed in no particular pattern. Therefore, it would be necessary to observe the principal throughout the day recording all activities for later analysis and comparison. A structured method of observation was designed, that firstly identified and listed the categories of managerial activity, with further sub-categories being drawn up specific to the subject concerned. There were seven categories identified with the following sub-categories of managerial activities:

(i) Planning and Coordinating

: Assigning tasks and providing routine instructions

: Coordinating activities to keep work running smoothly.

(ii) Decision Making/Problem Solving

: Handling day-to-day operational crises as they arise.
(iii) Handling paperwork

: Processing mail.

: Doing general deskwork.

(iv) Exchanging Routine Information

: Receiving and disseminating requested information.

: Holding staff meetings of informational nature.

(v) Monitoring

: Inspecting work.

: Walking around.

(vi) Interacting with Outsiders

: Public Relations.

: External Meetings

(vii) Socializing

: Engaging in non-work-related chitchat/activities

: "Joking around"
Secondly, each school day in the week was divided into three periods of three, two and three hours respectively. The three hour periods represent the different school sessions and the two hours, the period of overlap between the two sessions. The idea would be to observe and record time spent on a particular activity, if any, within a given time frame, over a day and subsequently, a week. The time spent would be recorded in minutes and totaled at the end of the week to provide a total of minutes per week, and percentage against total time per week, both individually and collectively. By plotting the results of the study on this chart, it would be possible to determine if any patterns of work can be found and thereby compared to the findings of previous researchers.

3.4 Analysis

The results analysis would then be plotted into a series of charts and graphs that would be designed to reveal any work patterns and would also reveal which were the activities that the principal spent the most time on. The time spent could either be manually or with a calculator easily totaled into percentages that allow simple comparison of time spent on one activity against another. These percentages could also be
compared against similar percentages and ratios calculated by other researchers in their respective studies. Any similarities could then be noted and any differences explained, if possible, using the circumstances surrounding the subject or the study, before a final conclusion is drawn and recommendations made.