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STAFF TURNOVER CHALLENGES IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Management in the field of Public and Development Management, MM (P&DM).

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ABSTRACT

The teaching profession in South Africa continues to experience an exodus of teachers; a trend which impacts negatively on service delivery and matric results. In a country faced with persistent unemployment, poverty and acute skills shortage, effective education becomes an important tool for remedying the situation. Attracting and retaining talented teachers is vital in building the capacity required to improve teaching and learning as well as educational policy outcomes. The purpose of this research was to analyse the challenges contributing to staff turnover in some schools in Capricorn district municipality in Limpopo province. The study found that adverse working conditions and lack of support were the major contributory factors to the problem of staff turnover in the province. The study recommended that talent retention strategies be integrated with operational plans in order to minimise the exodus of suitably qualified teachers in the province.

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own unaided work. The report is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university or tertiary institution for a qualification or examination.

_____

MATOME RAMOKGOLO

MARCH 2011

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my beloved sister Eunice Ramakgolo who passed away in October 2006. She inspired me to do this degree and I will always remember her unique character.

My late father, John Matome Ramakgolo always uttered the following motivation words: **“kotumela moepa thutse ga go lehumo letswang kgauswi.”** These Northern Sotho words simply means: one needs to keep focus and work hard, if one really wants to be an achiever in life. This are the words that still keep me going. As I was busy with this report even during hard times, when I spent sleepless nights, I always reminded myself that if I want to achieve this, I really have to work hard and be focused.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On top of everybody else, I want to thank my God Jehovah for all the wonderful things He does for me in my daily life.

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ABBRIVIETION AND ACRONYMS

HR	Human Resource
DOE	Department of Education
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SGB	School Governing Body

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Attracting and retaining skilled and competent teachers is the key to effective teaching and learning; particularly in South Africa, where matric results have not been satisfactory. The increasing number of teachers who leave the teaching profession poses a risk not only for the youth of this country but also for the economy, which is in dire need of skills. Increased staff turnover is problematic as it constrains productivity and leads to poor educational service delivery and instability.

Research (Mona, 2004, p.7) shows that 7 per cent of teachers leave the profession yearly. The reasons for this turnover range from dissatisfaction with working conditions to career ambitions. The concern is not so much about the number of teachers leaving the profession, but rather the type and quality of the people involved. In most cases, the people who leave the profession are the so called “cream of the crop”. In other words, it is the highly qualified and experienced people who are leaving the profession; and this tends to happen more frequently in remote rural areas where teaching skills are already very scarce.

The study was therefore motivated by the need to understand the major challenges that contribute to the rising rate of staff turnover in the teaching profession, particularly in the Limpopo province. Of grave concern in this regard is that if employee turnover is not curbed, particularly in rural schools, service delivery could be derailed and the quality of education may decline – resulting in more unemployment, poverty, crime and homelessness. Therefore, staff turnover is not just confined to rural schools in Limpopo province; but rather a problem that concerns almost all provinces in South Africa.

The study was undertaken with a view to reveal some of the underlying causes of employee turnover in schools, as well as possible measures that can be instituted to help mitigate such challenges.

This is important as the department of education is faced with numerous competing policy priorities to address with limited resources. More importantly, if issues of staff turnover are neglected, particularly in under-resourced rural schools, the limited number of suitably qualified teachers could diminish even further.

The objective of the study was achieved by applying principles of the qualitative approach; which requires researchers to tap into the actual experiences of the people affected by the identified problem. The interview technique was used to elicit information on experiences of principals, teachers, and administrators regarding working conditions for teachers and reasons for staff turnover in two rural schools in the Capricorn district municipality in Limpopo province. Although the data collected from these schools do not give a full account of what happens in the whole province, however, the inclusion of administrators in the sample makes the findings of the study fairly credible.

Based on the foregoing, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the background of and rationale for the study in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the issues that inspired the research. Also covered in this section is the problem statement and purpose of the study, including research questions and significance of the study.

1.2 Background

The rate at which teachers are leaving the teaching profession is disturbing, and it is accelerating all the time. The problem has now reached epidemic proportions in that a mass migration is in progress from the teaching profession to industry and other sectors. The government and other stakeholders urgently need to address this migration. The government and teachers' unions are ever at loggerheads over various issues relating to education, with the result that many competent and experienced teachers feel constrained and leave the teaching profession to join the public and private sector.

Statistics show that over 4 500 teachers resigned in the 2007/2008 financial year alone, up from about 4 300 in the 2007/2006 and 3 800 in the 2005/2006 (Mona,

2004,p.5).The above mentioned defection has left many schools derelict because they have lost their most important asset, hard-working and motivated teachers.

1.2.1 Policy framework

Like any other government function, education is governed by relevant policies and legislation. This section looks at some of the policies and regulations governing service delivery in the South African school system. Lessons from this exercise will broaden the reader's understanding of the contextual issues surrounding staff turnover in the school environment.

1.2.2 Institutional arrangements

The department of education is responsible for driving policy implementation in the education system. In the current environment, provinces are responsible for the execution of policy programmes in their domains. Each province has a provincial department of education that manages policy implementation in schools. Provincial departments exercise their mandates through circuit inspectors and subject matter experts, who work closely with principals and heads of department at the school level. This decentralised approach ensures that the national department of education remains in contact with the school system in all provinces.

The Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, which is now called Umalusi, is entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning processes, including assessment of learners. At the school level, school managers and heads of department make up the administrative team, while teachers constitute the workforce required to deliver good performance in the classroom situation.

This information is relevant to the study as it shows how the education system is organised to ensure effective service delivery. The fact that circuit inspectors and subject matter expects are located at the service delivery level raises some questions about the ability of these structures to inspire teachers so that they can do more in the classroom and remain within the teaching profession for a long time.

It is important to know what role these stakeholders play in ensuring that teachers get all the assistance to be able to perform their functions satisfactorily. As will be seen in chapter three, the interview also targeted administrators. The aim was to ensure that a balanced view of what transpires in the school system is obtained.

1.2.3 Unit of analysis

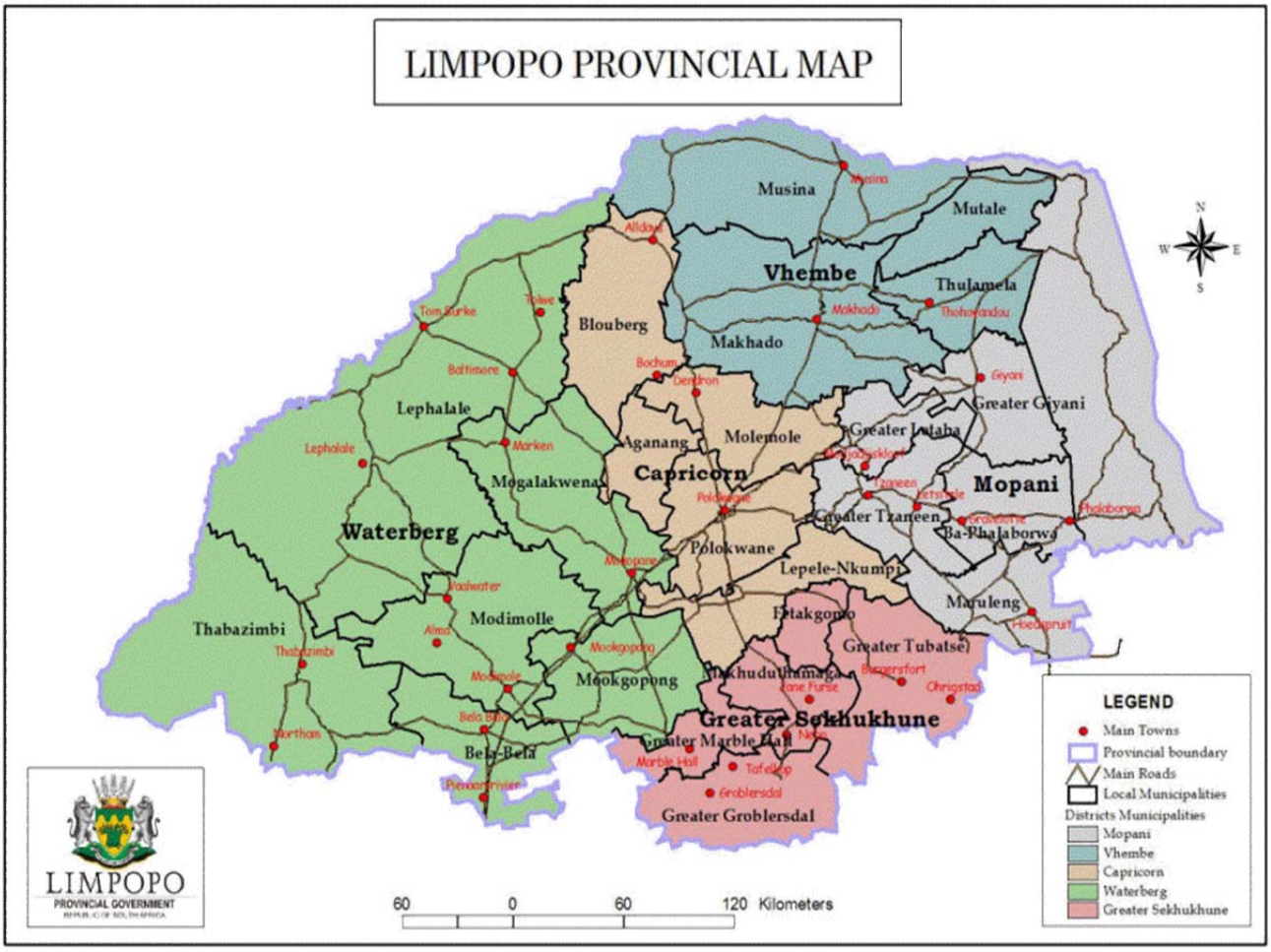
A unit of analysis is the phenomenon that the researcher wants to investigate. It could be a single case or a group of cases, such as people or organisations. The unit of analysis in this research included two rural schools situated in the Capricorn District Municipality in Limpopo province. The schools were selected after proper consideration of their experiences in terms of staff turnover as one of the formidable challenges affecting service delivery. The enrolment in the first school is 500 pupils and a staff complement of 30 teachers. The second school boasts a total of 650 pupils with 33 teachers. Looking at these figures, it is clear that both schools almost have the same challenge in terms of human resources and learner enrolments.

1.2.4 Demographics

Approximately, Capricorn district municipality has a population of 1,243,167 million people. This is largely a rural area. The age of the economically active population range between 0, to 14 and 60 per cent are over the age of 60%. In addition, over 25 per cent of the population has no formal education, and over 40% with limited education below grade 12. It is estimated that over 55 per cent of the locals are unemployed (Statics South Africa, Community Survey, 2001).In terms of labour patterns, the Capricorn district is characterised by high levels of migrant labour, with many local people working in nearby towns, Johannesburg and Pretoria.

In addition to the migrant labour system, the community also suffers from the lack of infrastructure and transport. Consequently, teachers and learners have to travel long distances to and from schools. In effort to address this challenge, the MEC for education in the Limpopo province donated 2900 bicycles to the local community to assist learners who live in remote areas. A map of the Limpopo Province is shown below:

Figure 1: The Provincial map of Limpopo Province showing its sub regions and other important features.



Source: www.limpopo.gov.za

The above information is revealing about some of the formidable challenges that the Capricorn community faces in relation to education. For example, the fact that over 40 per cent of the population have no formal education indicates that the area is beset with high levels of illiteracy. And, the only way to combat this problem is to promote effective education in the area. Certainly, this is not a good sign as some of the local schools are hard-hit by staff turnover. Persistent staff turnover worsens the situation, as it increases the rate of illiteracy and unemployment in the community.

The study was intended to provide useful information on why teachers are leaving and what could possibly be done to bring the situation under control.

1.3 Problem statement

Despite the increased focus on transforming and improving the education system in South Africa over the last decade, it seems that all schools still suffer as a result of the lack of human resources. This problem appears to be more severe in predominately black schools where the overwhelming majority of pupil's are African, black and from disadvantaged backgrounds. Consequently, very few of these schools are able to produce good results. Seemingly, the problem is exacerbated by highly qualified teachers leaving the profession in large numbers.

Research shows that staff turnover has increased significantly in South Africa over the last ten years, as many teachers move to greener pastures in either the public sector or the private sector (SADTU, 2003, p.3). This coincides with the high failure and dropout rates in schools, which has persisted despite all the efforts by the department of education to bring it under control. Available literature tends to provide a generic view of the factors leading to inefficiencies in the education system and why this leads to teachers leaving the profession. It is important to understand why teachers are leaving the teaching profession. Data gathered from schools in Limpopo Province will be used to identify trends so as to identify the situational reasons for this.

1.4 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to analyse the challenges that contribute to staff turnover in some schools in the Capricorn district municipality in Limpopo.

1.5 Research questions

a. What are the main causes of staff turnover in Secondary schools in Limpopo Province?
b. Are there mechanisms in place to monitor and reduce staff turnover in secondary schools in Limpopo province?

c. Does the Provincial Education Department have an effective talent retention policy in place?

1.6 Significance of the study

The education sector in South Africa cannot afford to lose more teachers as this deepens the problem of high failure rate at matric level in secondary schools, particularly in the Limpopo province, where many of its rural constituencies are still characterised by high levels of unemployment and illiteracy and acute shortage of skills, and growing staff turnover in some local schools.

In view of this situation, the research findings may provide useful information that could assist principals and managers of the affected schools to gain insight into the causes of staff turnover and thus develop ways to deal with it. Essentially, the intention of the study was to raise awareness about the causes and potential impact of staff turnover on teaching and learning processes and matric results. It was assumed that this information would aid planning in the affected schools.

At the provincial level, the findings of the study could assist policy makers with practical information relating to some of the human resource challenges facing local schools, particularly in the Capricorn district. Armed with this information, policy makers would be able to make informed decisions on how to prevent staff turnover and to improve service delivery in local schools.

Academically, the research sought to contribute to knowledge by providing in-depth insights and conclusions in respect of the factors contributing to staff turnover in secondary schools generally and in the Limpopo province in particular.

More importantly, the study was also aimed at providing possible ways of theorising staff turnover in the school environment by highlighting the linkages between induction, motivation, performance management, development opportunities, rewards and staff turnover. The underlying assumption was that the manner in which these human resource activities are performed may either mitigate or exacerbate employee turnover in schools. This position illustrates the type of theorising that the study proposed in order to increase academic knowledge.

1.7 Structure of Research

Chapter 1 Introduction to the research

This chapter introduces the research topic and provides an overview of the rationale and background of study and the research problem. It also explains the purpose of the research, research questions and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 Literature review

This chapter reviews the readings pertaining to the study and demonstrates how these sources relate to the research topic. The theory regarding the causes of staff turnover in the teaching profession is discussed to justify the research topic.

Chapter 3 Research methodology

This chapter explains the research plan. It focuses on the approach adopted by the study, data collection methods, sampling technique, as a well as the strategy that will be used to present and analyse data.

Chapter 4 Presentation of findings

As its name implies, this chapter presents and explains the data collected from the case study. Data will be presented in past tense and various visual aids will be used to enhance this process. These include pictures, tables and relevant graphs.

Chapter 5 Analysis of findings

This chapter provides a break-down of the evidence collected from the field and transforms this data into meaningful information. From this process, it should be clear as to why teachers are leaving the teaching profession.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter, which builds on chapter 5, demonstrates the researcher's understanding and judgement of the research findings. It shows how the researcher sees the causes of the problem (staff turnover) in light of the research results.

1.8 Conclusion

The background and purpose of the study has been explained; followed by the problem statement and research questions. Emphasis was placed on the reasons that justified this investigation which, as pointed out, relate to the challenges leading to staff turnover in the teaching profession in the Limpopo province. Chapter two, which follows next, is concerned with literature review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Theory lays the foundation for any research. The aim of this chapter is to identify and review literature materials on the subject of teacher turnover in the South African school environment. The discussion of literature includes definition of concepts; current state of turnover in the teaching profession, theoretical perspectives, international perspective and consideration of the impact of these issues on the research problem.

2.2 Conceptual framework

There are many ways to define teacher's turnover, including the general categories of leavers and movers. In the present context, the definition of staff turnover therefore includes three distinct types: (a) teachers who leave teaching and become unemployed; (b) teachers who leave the labour force; and (c) teachers who leave for jobs in other occupation (SADTU, 2004:p.5).

Staff turnover, can be defined as permanent departure beyond organisational boundaries (Wayne, 2000, p.622). Staff turnover, is either avoidable or unavoidable. Unavoidable or involuntary turnover is associated with marriage, pregnancy and transfer. Avoidable turnover results from failure of the job to keep the employee in the organisation's service (Wayne, 2000:p.622).

Turnover may be functional, where the employee's departure produces benefit for the organisation, or dysfunctional, where the departing employee is someone the organisation would like to retain (Gillies, 1999, p.247).

In this context, turnover means the movement of people out of the organisation. Such movement could be voluntary or involuntary. The proposed research seeks to establish whether teachers leave the profession due to personal reasons or factors relating to the work environment.

Defection can be defined as a movement of teachers away from the teaching profession to join industry and other sectors of public and private endeavour (Oxford dictionary, 2002: sv"defection")

2.3 Factors influencing teachers to leave the profession

According to Smithers and Robinson (1990) there are five main reasons for teachers leaving the profession: workload, new challenges, school situations, salary, and personal circumstances. Among these five main reasons, workload is the most important factor in affecting teacher's turnover, while salary is the least important (Smithers and Robinson, 1990).

Geber also argue that teachers depends on the head master for satisfying their needs and achieving their goals, while head masters depend on their teachers for achieving their own goals as well as those of the organisation"(Geber,1995,p343). The theory of Lewin, Lippit and White (1995) clearly identifies different leadership style (Geber, 1995, p356).

2.3.1 Workload

Being a teacher is not an easy job. Teachers must teach their learners, as well as complete paperwork, lesson plan and assessment. This can be overbearing. There is an increase on assessment and accountability of teachers. This means that spending more time at school working. Meeting these requirements and juggling these tasks is hard and frustrating (Ingersoll, 2001).

2.3.2 Compensation

Of all the factors affecting employee attitudes and performance at work, compensation is probably the most influential variable. Generally, compensation refers to both financial and non-financial incentives that employees receive from an organisation in return for their service and contributions.

Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schultz (2008:280) define compensation as a reward mechanism that emanates from the allocation, conversion and transfer of a portion of the revenue of an organisation to its workers and staff for their monetary and in-kind claims on goods and services. Other terms used to denote pay include rewards, incentives, salaries and wages. The main objective of a compensation package is to influence employee motivation in a positive manner so as to lead to improved organisational performance.

To be acceptable, pay should meet three criteria: First, pay must be internally equitable. This means that each employee must be paid in proportion to the market value of their job. Second, pay must be externally competitive – it must be based on market price, that is, the going market rate. Third, pay must be proportionally motivating to employees. Together, these factors affect an employee's perception on whether pay is fair or unfair.

Therefore, if an employee perceives vast differences between what the organisation offers and the market price, and between himself and other employees, pay dissatisfaction may arise and, if perverse, it may cause the employee to leave the organisation in search of better paying organisations elsewhere. In summary, pay is more likely to motivate employees in a positive way if it meets the criteria of external equity, internal equity, individual equity and procedural equity.

The pay criteria cited above have implications for the study. For instance, it is generally assumed that one of the reasons that compel teachers to leave the teaching profession is that they perceive pay to be unfair and grossly insufficient. In other words, they are paid salaries that are neither equitable nor comparable. The idea that pay must be relative to the going market is one of the key indicators that some teachers use to explain their dissatisfaction with the salary packages that they receive from the department of education.

Nel *et al* (2008: 286) identify 7 principles that are used by successful organisations to ensure that pay leads to superior performance and results. These include: paying for performance and ensuring that performance is tied to the successful achievement of critical business goals; linking rewards to other levers of organisational change, such

as providing recognition when deserved, offering career development, and providing challenging opportunities; rewarding measurable competencies; matching incentives to organisational culture; keeping incentives clear and simple; and effectively communicating the rewards strategy to all employees.

2.3.3 New challenges

New challenges often cause new, inexperienced teachers to leave the profession. For the most part, their first few years in classrooms are spent trying to get organized, get a grasp on the pace of teaching material, and learning how to effectively manage a classroom. Disruptive learners make a teacher's job more difficult by having to deal with learners and in some cases having to take disciplinary actions (Ingersoll, 2001).

Furthermore, teachers are not well equipped with the new curriculum they are using. In most case teachers spent most of their time trying to make sense of the new system which result in some instances teachers spending their time in class without benefitting the learners (Ingersoll, 2001:p.144).

2.3.4 Personal circumstances

Since teaching requires a lot of time and effort, sometimes personal circumstances affect a teacher's decision on whether or not to leave. The most common personal circumstances that cause teachers to leave is the family. For other teachers, quality time with their family and take care of their family very important and the workload of being a teacher doesn't allow them time to do this. Age is another personal factor or circumstances that cause teachers to leave. Typically, it is younger teachers or older teachers approaching retirement that usually leave the teaching profession. For older teachers, there is a direct correlation with early retirement and pension plans (Ingersoll, 2001:p.143). This means that it is most likely for an older teacher to retire if they have a pension plan.

2.3.5 School situation

School situation encompasses many different things. It can be how the school is run, who runs the school, what type of programmes are available to teachers. In rural areas, the main reason for teachers leaving is due to cultural differences and professional isolation (Williby, 2004).

How the school is run is also another factor causing teachers to leave. A lack of administrative support is damaging to a teacher's self-esteem, poor facilities causes teachers to become frustrated, and insufficient mentoring leaves the teachers with nowhere to look for advice, and ultimately causes teachers to leave. Leadership plays an important role in the process of understanding the problem faced by teachers. (Williby, 2004:p.133).

The following section discusses various theoretical guidelines in relation to the role of leadership and management in schools, employee turnover, motivation, management functions, basic human resource management activities and international perspective on staff turnover. Subsequent sections provide an integrated discussion of these issues with a view to show how they relate to the study as a whole.

2.4 Theoretical framework

Theories about turnover usually focus on the factors that motivate people to stay or perform their jobs better. Geber argue that," teachers depends on the head master for satisfying their needs and achieving their goals, while head masters depend on their teachers for achieving their own goals as well as those of the organisation"(Geber,1995,p343). The theory of Lewin, Lippit and White (1995) clearly identifies different leadership style (Geber, 1995, p356). More is said on leadership styles in the next section.

2.4.1 Leadership

Leading an organisation to constructive change begins by setting a direction – developing a vision of the future (often the distant future) along with strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision. Leadership is also responsible for aligning people. This means communicating the new direction to those who can create coalitions that understand the vision and are committed to its achievement.

In municipalities, senior managers, mayors and ward councillors form part of the leadership capacity needed to deliver high quality services to local communities (Korter, J.P. cited in Harvard Business Review, 2001:3).

Besides defining the mission and vision of the organisation, leaders must inspire people and continuously track and measures performance to ensure that everyone in the value chain performs the duties assigned to them in a fair and responsible manner. What this suggests is that leadership influences capacity building and service delivery. In short, leaders are responsible for people development and performance management. Essentially, this principle also applies to municipal leaders and managers.

In a world of constant change, leaders must be able to lead transformation in their organisations. Gibson, Ivancevich and Donelly (1988:377) mention several attributes of transformational leaders, which include: raising the level of consciousness of followers about the importance and value of designated outcomes; getting them transcend self-interest for the sake of team or cause; generating a personal trust; and convincing followers to extend themselves and to develop further.

2.4.2 Emotional intelligence

Because they deal directly with people, leaders must be able to use their emotional intelligence to build lasting working relationships and to create cohesion, unity and peace in their organisations. Goleman (in Armstrong, 2006:603) has defined four

components of emotional intelligence in which leaders and managers should be competent. These include:

a. **Self-management** – the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods and regulate your own behaviour coupled with a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence. The six competencies associated with this component are self-control, trustworthiness and integrity, initiative and adaptability, comfort with ambiguity, openness to change and a strong desire to achieve.

b. **Self-awareness** – the ability to recognise and understand your moods, emotions and drives as well as their effect on others. This is linked to three competencies, namely self-confidence, realistic self-assessment and emotional self-awareness.

c. **Social awareness** – the ability to understand the emotional make-up of other people, and skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions. This is linked to six competencies: empathy, expertise in building and retaining talent, organisational awareness, cross-cultural sensitivity, valuing diversity, and service to clients and customers.

d. **Social skills** – proficiency in managing relationships and building networks to get the desired result from others and reach personal goals, and the ability to find common ground and build rapport. The five competencies associated with this component are leadership, effectiveness in leading change, conflict management, influence/communication, and expertise in building and leading teams.

The competencies mentioned above apply to school managers as they also interact with people from diverse backgrounds on a daily basis. This calls for sound people management skills. In particular, mastery of emotional intelligence skills is very important for school leaders and managers. As shown above, social awareness include the ability to empathise with employees and building the talent that the organisation needs to perform well. In addition, effective communication skill is also

paramount for leaders, including the ability to manage change and conflict in the work environment.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence is important in building and maintaining strong, healthy working relationships in schools so that teachers can feel recognised and cared for. In fact, as Flannagan and Finger (2003:116) observe, relationship building has become a key value adding activity in organisations – the better the relationship, the better the business.

According to Henderson (in Flannagan and Finger 2003:116), building relationships starts with gaining the respect of: colleagues at work; supervisors and customers. In reality, this means the following: Gaining the respect of colleagues requires that you: pull your weight, acknowledge the contributions of others, not being afraid to ask for help, being positive, and not gossiping about others. Secondly, the respect of one's superiors can be attained by treating them as you would your colleagues; meeting deadlines, staying calm in a crisis; being organised and efficient; becoming a problem-solver, thinking creatively; being articulate and keeping up with trends in business.

Third, gaining the respect of customers requires one to be: polite and helpful to customers; pleasant and polite on the phone; solving problems; know your products/services; offer advice and creative solutions; follow-up, returning calls; and, more importantly, showing genuine interest in people.

The point about meeting deadlines and earning respect of others is important, as is the need to be organised and efficient, and helping customers. In the school situation, learners, parents and other interest groups are the most important clients; whose contributions need to be harnessed to improve organisational performance.

2.4.3 Leadership styles

It is widely recognised that leadership style tends to have an influence on people management in the workplace. On the positive side, leadership style, if used properly, could inspire people to do their best and to want to stay with the organisation. To some extent, this suggests that leadership style impacts staff morale which, if not taken care of, may result in high staff turnover. Below is a summary of the various leadership styles and their implications for the study.

According to Geber (1995:434), “there are almost as many theories and modes of leadership as there are writers on the subject. However, all theories contain two important concepts; authority and power. Hersey and Blanchard (in Geber1995), argue that “any leadership effort will result in subordinate behaviour which may be classified successful or unsuccessful, somewhere on a continuum between the two extremes” (Geber, 1995, p.356)

“Effective leadership is not about position power in an organisation management hierarchy, but about personal power that enables the leader to create a bright future and desired quality life” (Geber,1995,p.356-367). Charlton (Geber 1995) cites that “An organisation’s ability, skills and commitment to enable, empower and liberate human resources will be its only source of competitive advantage in future”.

It follows from this interpretation that leaders are there to inspire people; to create enough room for creativity and innovation; to see to it that all managers and employees commit to and work towards the attainment of organisational goal; and to liberate human resources – so that people feel recognised and empowered to make valuable contributions to the success of the organisation.

Based on the above, school managers, therefore, need to move away from power play to a more pragmatic, people-driven management approach; so that teachers can be part of the solution. The following section summarises leadership styles and shows how these may influence staff morale and turnover in a school environment.

a. Autocratic leadership style

In this form of leadership, decision making rests mainly with the leader. As Bartol and Martin (1994:412) put it, autocratic leaders tend to make unilateral decisions, dictate work methods, limit worker knowledge about goals to just the next step to be performed, and sometimes give punitive feedback.

This style works well in situations where the organisation is faced with tough environmental challenges and has limited resources and time to justify joint-decision making. However, it has been shown that autocratic leadership tends to stifle creativity and innovation in organisations. More importantly, severe dictatorship may alienate employees and force some of them to consider leaving the organisation. Therefore, it follows that over-emphasis on autocratic leadership may have an impact on staff morale and staff turnover.

b. Democratic leadership style

As its name suggests, democratic leadership is participative in nature and thus provides an ideal opportunity for employees to take part in the decision making process. Democratic leaders tend to involve the group in decision-making, let the group determine work methods, make overall goals known, and use feedback as an opportunity for helpful coaching. Therefore, democratic leadership creates an enabling environment where employees feel empowered to contribute to organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

In the school environment, democratic leadership may be utilised to encourage teachers to discuss their work and career needs freely and openly with their managers (HODs) and agree action plans and deadlines. However, the success of this leadership style depends largely on the leader's interpersonal skills. If he/she lacks human relations skills, democratic management may lead to more chaos and derailment of service delivery processes.

c. Laissez-faire leadership style

Under this leadership style, leaders usually give employees complete freedom, provide necessary materials, participate only to answer questions, and hardly give feedback to subordinates. In other words, such leaders manage by wondering.

This method is said to work well in situations where subordinates are multi-skilled and autonomous, for example, self-managing teams. In the school situation, too much freedom could undermine effective teaching and learning in schools and thus lower performance standards. So, this leadership style needs to be blended with the other leadership styles discussed above, otherwise anarchy may result.

The important lessons from the foregoing discussion, therefore, may be summed up as follows: the type of leadership adopted by school managers may either promote or hinder effective human resource management in schools. Secondly, people involvement is probably a better option when it comes to staff motivation; whereas autocratic leadership may lead to more rigidity, conflict and resistance, as people's wishes are silenced or overlooked. Although not popular in many organisational settings, the laissez faire approach, however, makes one important contribution to people management, and that is, giving people the resources that they need in order to accomplish organisational goals, including their own career needs.

It is not clear whether school managers are able to harness these leadership styles in order to improve working conditions for teachers and to inspire them to take full ownership of their own learning and development. The analysis undertaken in chapter five will probably provide some clues on this question. The next section looks the core management functions and their implications for staff turnover.

2.5 Management

According to Flippo and Munsinger (1975:2), management is fundamentally a process of planning, organising, directing and controlling activities that will lead to an effective fulfilment of organisational objectives within the parameters set by society. Management style may have a contributory effect on staff turnover.

2.5.1 Management functions

A brief look at basic management functions is important for the study as the problem under investigation is a human resource management issue. Managers, whether in private or public organisations, perform almost similar functions: planning, organising, leading and controlling. It is important to understand these principles as they possibly have a direct impact on how people are managed in schools. Below is a summary of these functions and their implications for the study.

2.5.2 Planning

According to Flippo and Munsinger (1975:29), planning is the management concerned with determination of the objectives and their accompanying programmes. It enables managers to determine what is to be done, where it is to be done, how, when, and by whom. What this definition suggests that planning is a goal setting process that sets the scene for how organisational programmes will be implemented and evaluated. In the school environment, planning is not confined to management; all teachers are expected to do planning, including lessons plans.

For school managers, planning plays an important role in the identification and prioritisation of teachers' career needs in line with applicable human resources policies and practices. In other words, one would assume that principals and HOD would be able to plan how to motivate and develop their subordinates.

2.5.3 Organising

In simple terms, organising involves putting together the human and materials resources, support structures and rules and procedures; and assigning roles and responsibilities to people. The ultimate goal of organising is to get things done as planned. The importance about this management function is that it involves resources, which are vital in supporting talent management, particularly in schools where it is often difficult to attract and keep highly performing individuals.

2.5.4 Directing/Leading

The manager has primary responsibility for initiating and guiding work toward the accomplishment of organisation objectives (Flippo and Munsinger, 1975:29). This function involves leading, guiding and inspiring people so that organisational goals can be achieved. The people element is important here as it highlights the need for managers to be conscious of the fact that people have unique needs and aspirations in the workplace; including the need for career advancement opportunities; which influences the decision whether to stay or leave the organisation.

Principals and heads of department have a responsibility to ensure teachers' needs and expectations are addressed in a fair and equitable manner; and that teachers are motivated to do their work well. More importantly, leading people also means creating an environment where they can be free to share knowledge and ideas about work, customer service and careers. This is probably one of the most crucial aspects in the process of leading people, particularly in the school environment, which is characterised by competing interests, and the pressure to deliver high quality results.

2.5.5 Controlling

According to Bartol and Martin (1994:501), controlling is the process of regulating organisational activities so that actual performance conforms to expected organisational standards and goals. As the definition suggests, controlling means that managers develop appropriate standards, compare on-going performance against those standards, and take steps to ensure that corrective actions are taken when necessary.

Furthermore, since most organisational activities ultimately depend on human behaviour, controlling is largely geared towards ensuring that employees behave in ways that facilitate the reaching of organisational goals. Thus controls both highlight needed behaviours and discourage unwanted behaviours. Given this, it can be argued that controlling may be used to encourage and hold teachers accountable for their development in schools.

In other words, controlling can be used to channel teacher behaviour towards learning and development, which could be vital in reducing staff turnover, particularly in rural schools, where teachers still face challenging working conditions.

Effective management involves periodic measurements of results. Actual results are compared with planned results (the objective), and if deviations exist, changes must be made. The important point here is that once a decision is implemented, a manger cannot assume that the outcome will be achieved. Some system of control and evaluation is necessary to make sure the actual results are consistent with the results planned for when the decision was made (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1988:586).

This statement has implications for school managers, especially with regard to the management of human resources. Plans designed to lead, guide and motivate employees should be constantly tracked and measured to ensure that they achieve the desired goals, i.e. high job satisfaction and reduced staff turnover. The key functions involved human resource management are considered briefly below.

2.6 Organisational structure

Bartol and Martin (1994:283) define organisational structure as the formal pattern of interactions and coordination designed by management to link the tasks of individuals and groups in achieving organisational goals. Organisational structure is the outcome of the organising process. The structure of an organisation provides the fundamental capacity required to bolster service provisioning and control. Thus, the manner in which an organisation is structured may either support or hinder the attainment of service delivery goals.

The type of structure that an organisation adopts determines the level of responsiveness to customer needs, as well as its ability to engage in creativity and innovation, which central to effective service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Robey and Sales (1994:7) concur with this view when they say that organisations are the products of social action because they are created and designed by humans for human purposes. Organisational design can make the difference between success and failure in achieving those purposes. Where managers do not pay attention to organisational design, structures and processes may develop that actually prevent the achievement of goals.

Organising skills, therefore, become critical for all managers in the organisation. This requirement also applies to school managers as they deal with a wide range of stakeholders in and outside the organisation. Thus, a structure that allows a fair amount of flexibility is more likely to encourage teacher participation than the one that puts too much emphasis on rules and procedures and centralisation of authority.

2.7 Human resource management

As the study pertains to a human resource issue, namely staff turnover, it may be useful to briefly look at the fundamental principles underpinning this management function. This will assist the study in two ways: first it will give a clear indication of what effective people management entails in practice. Second, it will reveal the important considerations in managing people at work; including the activities that have to be performed to ensure that the organisation has the right type and number of employees.

Key functions involved in HR include attracting, recruiting, selecting, inducting, evaluating, rewarding, developing, motivating and maintaining human resources. The manner in which each of these functions is performed may influence an employee's attitude on whether to stay or leave the organisation. For example, if the recruitment and selection processes are perceived to be unfair, some new employees may resign within few days of joining the organisation.

Similarly, negative perceptions arising from poor pay packages may cause an employee to spend less time with the organisation; at worse this may also retard their performance on the job. Likewise, the lack of career opportunities could prompt

some employees to view the organisation as a “waste of time”, or a “bad employer”. Consequently, they may decide to leave.

The above examples illustrate what could happen in the school environment if school managers fail to perform the key HR functions mentioned above properly. Essentially, principals and HODs have a responsibility to ensure that the human resource policies issued by the Department of Education are properly implemented in schools.

Furthermore, maintaining human resources is also important here as it highlights the need for creating a safe, non-threatening, and empowering environment in which people feel free to do their work and realise their career goals. For example, ensuring the safety and protection of teachers against HIV/AIDS and violent elements from surrounding communities is a very important task for school managers. This could help ease teachers’ anxiety and thus inject a sense of commitment and loyalty to the school.

The following section looks at induction and demonstrates how this process impacts staff morale and turnover generally, and its implications for the study.

2.8 Induction

According to Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisant, Sono and Schultz (2008:261), orientation or induction means to become familiar with, or adjusted to facts or circumstances. It is the process of informing new employees about what is expected of them in the job and helping them cope with the stress of transition. Employees receive orientation from their co-workers, and from the organisation.

The induction process helps the individual to understand the social, technical and cultural aspects of the workplace. Kleynhans (in Nel et al, 2008:261) states that the goal of an induction programme should be to: help people to be less absent from work; help new employees fit in easier and quickly; help the employees understand the big picture; make the employees part of the team; develop plans and goals for the new employee; gather information from the new hire; anticipate and answer their questions; to enhance employee-employer relationships; and finally, to reduce reality

shock and cognitive dissonance – dissonance occurs when there is a psychological gap between what newcomers expect and what they actually find.

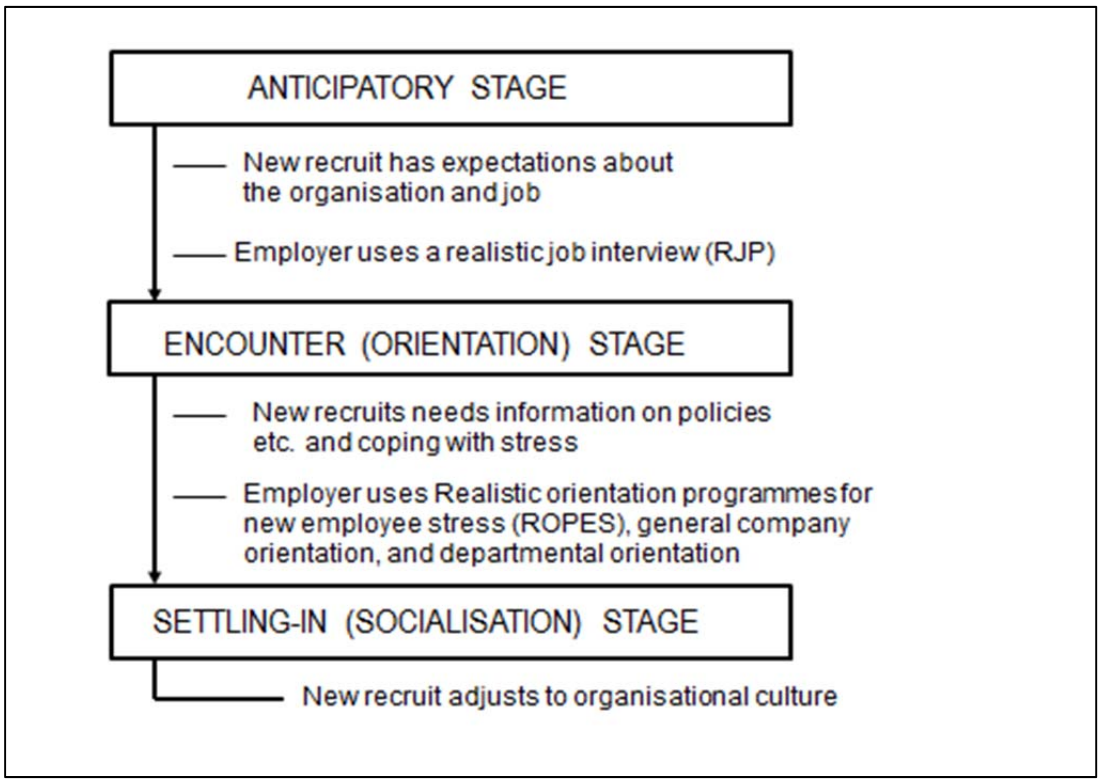
2.8.1 Benefits of induction

According to Nel et al (2008:262) induction has the following benefits: Reduces reality shock; increase job satisfaction and lowers turnover – when employees meet their objectives, satisfaction tends to improve, which lowers turnover and absenteeism; alleviates employee anxiety – proper induction results in less hazing by peers and criticism by supervisors, as well-integrated new comers need less attention from peers and supervisors and perform better; Creates positive work values and reduces start-up costs – Fostering a sense of belonging allows the new employee to become productive much more quickly; and, improves relations between managers and subordinates – improved relationships are the result of new employees settling in to the new environment as quickly as possible, without becoming too much of a burden to their managers and co-workers.

What is clear from the above discussion is that induction plays an important role in both the socialisation and motivation of new employees. More importantly, a well implemented induction programme may help staff turnover and absenteeism in an organisation. What this means, therefore, is that there is a link between induction, performance, job satisfaction and staff turnover in organisations. Employees who have received good induction are more likely to stay and do better in their jobs than those that receive little or no induction.

Nel et al suggests a model that can be used to implement an induction programme effectively in organisations, which is shown below. This model has implications for the study as it shows the critical stages that make up the induction process, and what managers can do in each of these stages to address the needs and expectations of new employees. The model suggests that induction is a systematic process; which means that it needs to be planned properly.

Figure2: An Induction model



Source: Nel et al (2008:265)

As shown above, the induction model comprises three stages, namely anticipatory stage; encounter stage and socialisation stage. All these stages have certain behavioural implications, for example, in the first stage the new employee has high expectations about the organisation and the job.

Some of these expectations may be high or even unrealistic, and if unmet can lead to dissatisfaction, poor performance and high turnover. The employer uses a realistic job interview to create appropriate expectations about the job.

In the second stage the new employee has started work and is facing the reality of the job. This stage is characterised by a high demand for organisational information, for example, policies, rules and procedures, reporting relationships, etc. At this stage the employee is trying to internalise the rules and procedures of the organisation. In response, the employer will use realistic orientation programmes (ROPES) to help the new employee adjust quickly to his job and the organisation as a whole.

The last stage involves settling-in, or socialisation. Here the employee learns and internalise the organisation's culture. He/she learns the norms and values of the organisation. This helps the employee understand how things are done in the organisation, including the dress code and working relationships.

The three stages reveal important information about the relationship between induction, dissatisfaction and poor performance. For example, as illustrated in stage one the employee comes with great expectations about the job and the organisation; some of which may be positive, negative or exaggerated. Depending on how the employer handles these expectations, the decision whether to stay or leave the organisation may be taken right at the beginning of the employment contract. This demonstrates the role that induction can play in helping management to create a friendly working environment for new employees.

Therefore, like all other organisations, schools are expected to provide good induction to new teachers so that they can be more productive on the job. As shown above, the risk of neglecting induction has dire consequences for the organisation, as it may cause staff turnover. To some extent, this illustrates the strong link between induction and staff turnover. Given this, the question that arises then is: Do schools in Capricorn district municipality provide such induction to new teachers? Hopefully, the findings of the study in chapter five will shed more light on this issue.

2.8.2 Why induction fails

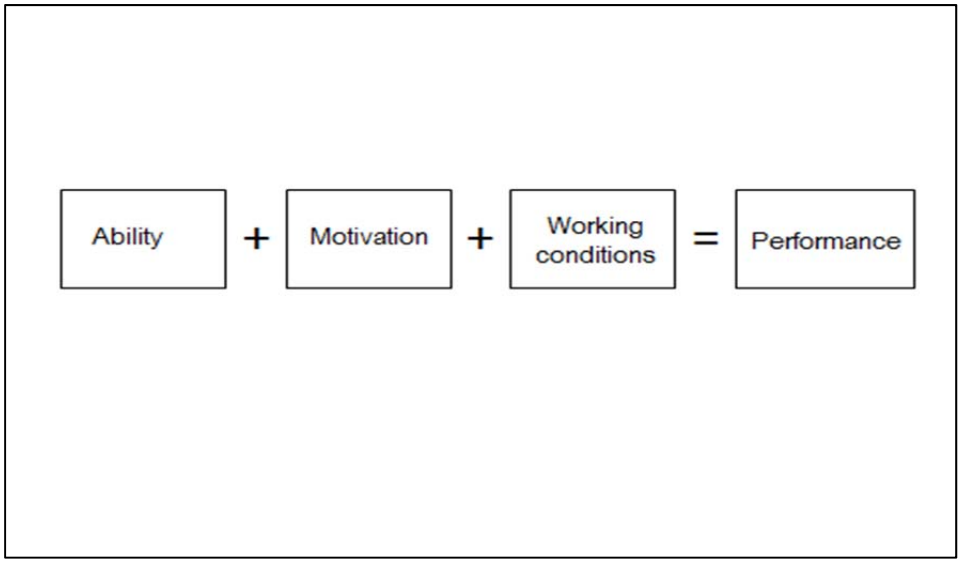
Induction fails in organisations partly because: the responsible person does not have enough time to conduct the induction programme; organisations do not attach high importance to induction; some organisations believe that effective recruitment and training can replace induction; in some cases, important issues are not included in the induction programme. The evidence presented so far suggests that effective induction plays a key role in helping new employees to settle in their jobs and to development positive attitudes about the organisation, which in turn may influence them to remain in the organisation for a long time.

Whether schools are succeeding in planning and implementing induction programmes is another matter. But the results of the study in chapter five will provide some clues on this question.

2.9 Motivation

According to Bartol and Martin (1993:377), motivation is the force that energises behaviour, gives direction to behaviour, and underlines the tendency to persist. This definition recognises that in order to achieve goals, individuals must be sufficiently stimulated and energetic, must have a clear focus on what is to be achieved, and must be willing to commit their energy for a long enough period of time to realise their aim. Since the leading function of management involves influencing others to work toward organisational goals, motivation is an important aspect of that function. Research shows that there is a close link between performance, ability, motivation and working conditions. Figure 2 below illustrates the relationship between these factors.

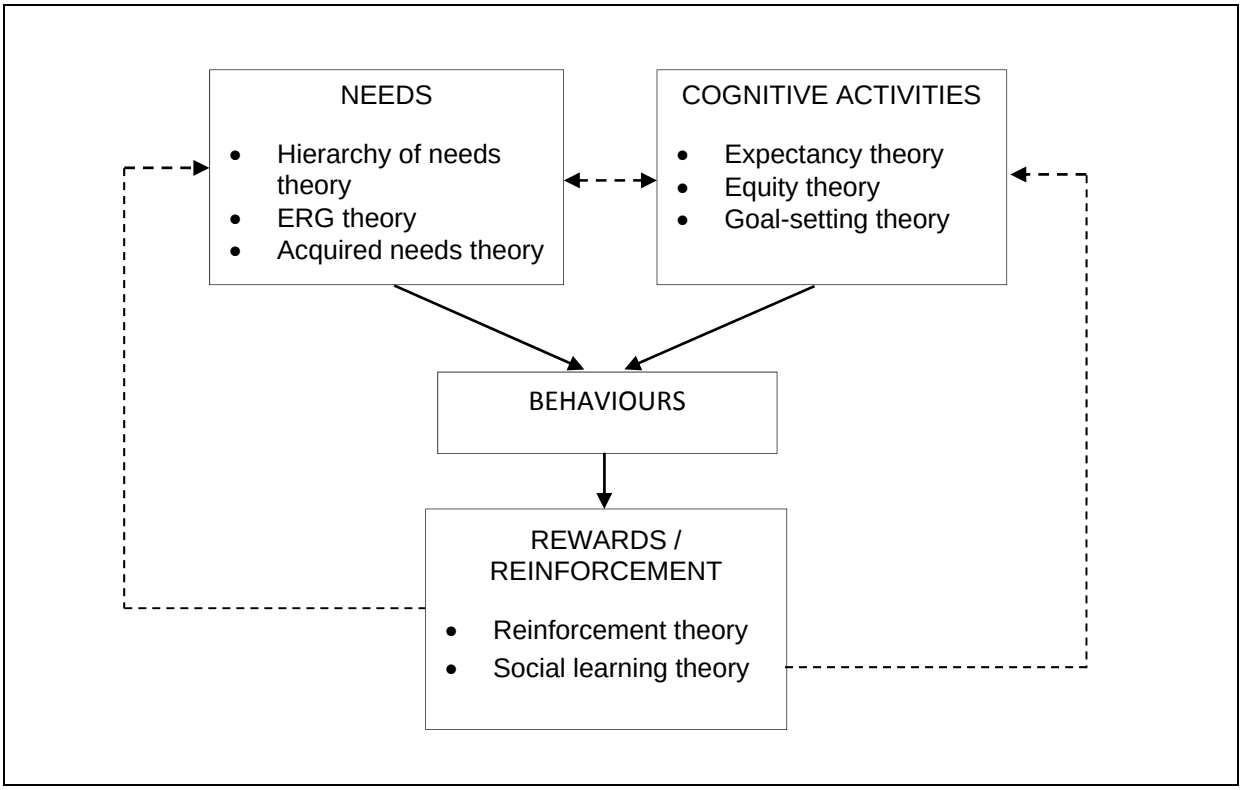
Figure 3: Relationship between performance and ability, motivation and working conditions



Source: Bartol and Martin (1994)

As shown above, numerous factors affect performance in the workplace. These include ability, which implies skills; the energising force within a person and working conditions. The latter is very important in this study, as it was included in the research questions in order to determine if working conditions had an impact on staff turnover. The next diagram (figure 4) provides an illustration of how the motivation process works.

Figure 4: Motivation Process



Source: Bartol and Martin (1993:378)

Figure 4 above shows the main elements involved in the motivation process. Inner needs (such as the need for food, companionship, and growth), and cognitions (such as knowledge, and thoughts about efforts that people might expend and rewards they might receive) lead to various behaviours. If the behaviours are appropriate, they may result in rewards. The rewards then help to reinforce people's behaviours, fulfil their needs, and influence their cognition about the linkages between their behaviours and future rewards.

This scenario bears relevance for teachers in schools. Teachers expect to be rewarded for their contributions to service delivery, i.e. better results. Conversely, lack of rewards may lead to unfulfilled needs. If this happens, teachers may lose interest in their work or withdraw from the situation completely.

Research evidence also suggests that people are motivated by different factors in the work place other than rewards. Casio (2003) suggests that the quality of work life may be more important to other employees than rewards or pay.

Motivation is a critical opponent of this particular study hence teacher performance in schools largely depends on motivation. Most researcher process becomes broad in approaching problems and looks at more alternative than just focusing on one solution. The supporters of traditional approaches highlight that the thinking point is the head master. Teachers must follow what has been established by head master. This approach is so rigid that it becomes demotivating for those involved.

Herzberg (in Cole, 1990) writes, when people experience happiness and satisfaction in their jobs the feeling in most cases originate from the task itself". Such factors called "motivators" include opportunities for growth or advancement in the job, achievement of the workers, and recognition for achievement, increased responsibilities and the work itself. "Feelings of dissatisfaction are the product of factors related to the surroundings of the job like policies, interpersonal relations with headmaster, peers, salaries and benefits, security and working conditions.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs hypothesized that within every human being exists a hierarchy of five needs.

- "Psychological needs: include hunger, thirst and shelter.
- Safety: includes security and protection from both physical and emotional harm.
- Social: includes affection, belonging, acceptance and friendship.
- Esteem: includes internal esteem factors such as self-respect, autonomy and achievement, and external esteem factors such as status, recognition and attention.

- Self-actualization: is represented by the drive to become what one is capable of becoming, includes growth, achieving one's potential and self-fulfilment" (Robbins, 1991, p.235-266).

Theorist like McGregor, in his theory X and theory Y, put emphasis on noticeably different sets of assumptions made by Headmasters about their teachers. One set of such assumptions regards teachers as being "inherently lazy, requiring coercion and control, avoiding responsibility and only seeking security. This is theory X and its emphasis is control and extrinsic reward" (Cole, 1990, p.47).

Theory Y assumes that "Employees does not need to be controlled and coerced if they are committed to the organisation's objectives, under proper conditions they will not only accept but also seek responsibility: more rather than less people are able to exercise ingenuity at work (Cole, 1990, p.46-47).

Herzberg's motivational hygiene theory (1990) has been well received by managers (Headmasters) and vivid distinction between factors inducing positive satisfaction and those causing dissatisfaction. It has led to considerable work on the so called "job-enrichment" i.e. the design of jobs that they contain the optimum number of motivators (Cole, 190.p.49).

Theory X assumes a more scientific approach as it draws a line between Headmasters and Educators. Educators are not part of the organisational process. Management has its own assumption about educators and treats them as such. No form of participatory approach is seen as necessary or appropriate and, as a result, negative perception grows and leads to a discard for other stakeholders within the same organisation. Although MacGregor's theory X is more about perception of performance, it also highlights important aspects achieving the said performance, i.e. process. The assumptions about what Headmaster had in mind about other people might negatively blindfold them and treat those people as they perceive them. Mona (2004:p.4) advocates the lack of mobility, inadequate induction programmes, poor working conditions and growing salary gap between teachers and other college graduates as source of teacher turnover.

Staff turnover is attributed to successfully high amounts of pay (Price, 1977, p.68).Staff turnover is lowest in high paying industries than in lowest paying industries (Mobley, 1982). Some studies challenge the view that pay is an important determinant of turnover and staff retention. Mona (2004:p.4) points out that remuneration is the initial way that a company gains its employee` s loyalty. This is however a short – term strategy for staff retention.

The above theories highlight several important points about staff motivation and some of the conditions that may lead to turnover. For example, the need for teachers to realise that teachers can, if given autonomy, take full responsibility for their jobs and that issues like induction, pay, nature and appearance of the working environment, management attitudes and behaviours and relationships all play a key role in influencing an employee's decision whether to stay longer in the organisation or to leave within a short space of time.

2.10 International Perspective

In the United States 50% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003a). The movement of teachers affects the composition of teachers at these schools, institutional stability, and also the demographics and qualifications of the teacher workforce as a whole (USA Department of Education, office of Postsecondary Education, 2005). States, districts and schools are forced to devote attention, time, and financial resources to initiatives designed to attract additional candidates to replace those teachers who leave the teaching profession (Voke, 2002).

Teacher's turnover directly impacts student achievement, teacher quality and accountability. Moreover, teacher turnover is also a costly phenomenon (NCTAF, 2003). "The most serious consequence and direct disadvantage of high teacher's turnover is that it erodes teaching quality and learner achievement" (NCTAF, 2003: p.33).

Therefore, it is crucial for school principals to retain qualified teachers in the profession and support and help them develop into quality professional. Ingersoll (2001b) described the inability of schools to staff classrooms adequately with qualified teachers is one of the pivotal causes of inadequate school performance according to contemporary educational theory.

Many researchers have shown that salary and poor working conditions influence teacher's attrition. Luczak documented that several teacher and school-level characteristics influenced attrition, including teacher gender, the percentage of minority learners in a teacher's class, and salary as compared with the cost of living. Average teacher salary, average years of experience teacher have with a district and the number of learners per teacher was described as factors related to teacher turnover (Scott, 2004). The NCAFT (2003) stated that teachers in high poverty areas have higher overall teacher turnover rates.

2.11 Managerialism

Increasingly, many public sector organisations are turning to the managerialist approach as a tool for improving performance, customer service and accountability. Basically, this theory stresses, among other things, efficiency, effectiveness and quality, as against process and equity, in the management of public resources - involving goal setting; performance benchmarking; performance definition; performance measurement; performance feedback and performance enhancement incentives (Dixon, Kouzmin and Korac-Kakabadse, 1998:164).

Likewise, schools are expected to enhance performance and produce better results by attracting and retaining highly competent teachers. Therefore, the managerialist principles cited above could prove useful in helping school managers build strong and motivated work teams. In this way, schools, particularly in the Capricorn district municipality, may be able to achieve better job satisfaction and retention of teachers.

2.12 Discussion

Up to this point, a number of thematic concepts and issues have been explored to demonstrate how they relate to staff turnover in schools generally. Below is an integrated summary of all these issues and their implications for the study.

First, the literature surveyed so far indicated that staff turnover is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by many variables; which range from personal, organisational to environmental factors. Given this, it was concluded that turnover cannot be generalised across schools, as there are vast differences in terms of both severity and scale of the problem in different schools.

Overall, it seems that causal factors are linked to the school environment and as well to the career motivations of teachers. General causes of staff turnover include the following: availability of other opportunities, skills, education, age, distance, working conditions and family responsibility.

Turnover is seen as an individual behaviour based on perceptions about desirability and ease of movement. A wide variety of factors interact before an individual arrives at a decision to leave. In rural areas, these factors may include lack of transport, long distances to and from work and the general lack of infrastructure such as decent housing in some of the areas.

This suggests two things for the study: first, the findings of the study may be inconclusive as there are a number of different variables that influence a person decision to stay or to leave the teaching profession. Second, this also means that the causes of staff turnover may emanate from the surrounding environment.

Literature evidence also suggests that leadership plays a critical role in creating an empowering environment and inspiring people to commit to a common vision. Various leadership styles and their impact on staff morale were considered, including autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and laissez-faire style.

On balance, it is clear that there is no single best leadership style. Rather, what is needed is a fit between the goals of the organisation and the needs and expectations

of employees. In the school situation, this means that principals and HODs should strive to motivate employees and to ensure that those that perform well on their jobs are recognised and rewarded fairly.

Effective human resource management requires managers to be familiar with the key HR functions, namely: HR planning, recruitment, selection, induction, utilisation, performance management, compensation management, learning and development, and health and safety. As indicated previously, each of these functions may have a direct or indirect impact on staff morale and turnover.

Therefore, principals and HODs have a responsibility to ensure that these functions are performed fairly and effectively in their schools. However, this cannot happen unless leaders and managers have basic understanding of the policies and regulations governing human resource management in the school environment. Good HR decisions are needed in schools because of the general concerns about corruption and nepotism in government institutions.

Motivation theories considered so far showed that employees are motivated by different factors and that working conditions play a major role in this. Hertzberg's hygiene theory, for example, demonstrated that certain job factors may induce positive attitudes and/or behaviour in employees; which may cause them to do more good work and to probably stay with the organisation. For this reason, managers need to pay attention to job design as a way of motivating employees.

McGregor's theory X and theory Y provided differing insights on what motivates people at work. For example, theory X holds that effective control by management and extrinsic rewards may induce positive staff behaviour. By contrast, theory Y attempts to show that where employees are liberated from management control, they may take full responsibility for their jobs.

Importantly, Maslow's hierarchy of needs provided a clear break-down of the human needs that should be addressed in order to enhance staff moral and retention. These include psychological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualisation needs. Balancing these needs may induce positive employee behaviour, including job satisfaction. Self-actualisation is important here as it relates to the availability of opportunities for

advancement and development; which may enable an organisation to keep highly ambitious and competent employees who want to reach the pinnacle of their careers.

Several important lessons emerged from the USA experience. Staff turnover in some US district schools has reached 50 per cent, with most of this occurring within the first five years. Attempts are made to curb turnover by devoting more time and resources to replacing departing teachers. However, teacher replacements costs may be a big problem in a developing country like South Africa, which is faced with many competing policy priorities, not only in education but in other policy areas as well. This is even worse in rural schools, which are extremely under-sourced, particularly in the Capricorn district municipality.

Internal experience also highlighted the adverse effect of staff turnover on both service delivery and results. For example, it was noted that turnover erodes teaching quality and learner achievements. In addition teacher turnover tends to be higher in poverty-stricken areas. To some extent, this lesson relates directly to the key assumption underpinning the study, which is that staff turnover is more prevalent in poor rural schools in the Limpopo province.

The managerialist approach, on the other hand, highlights the need for increased performance and accountability in the management of public institution. The emphasis on effective performance management is important for schools, as this could be used to enhance teachers' performance and to align their development needs with the values and strategy of the organisation or school.

2.13 Implications for the study

The preceding discussion has highlighted several themes which resonate with the study. The first one is job satisfaction. If the level of job satisfaction is high in the school, staff turnover is more likely to remain moderate. The second theme is organisational climate. The type of atmosphere that prevails in a school may be either positive or negative. A positive atmosphere is friendly, empowering and inspiring; whereas a negative atmosphere tends to create uncertainty, resentment, conflict and divisions, all of which may lead to poor performance, absenteeism and

ultimately, high staff turnover. Creating a conducive organisational climate in the school environment depends entirely on school leaders and managers.

The third theme relates to employee expectations. Generally, when young and inexperienced teachers join the profession, they have high expectations about many things, such as better career prospects and the need for protection, guidance and support from their managers and peers. If the school leadership pays little attention to the expectations of new teachers, some teachers may feel neglected and alienated. In extreme cases, this may induce turnover.

The fourth theme relates to the importance of sound human relations in the school environment. Building and maintaining strong and harmonious working relationships is critical in ensuring sustainability of the workforce in schools. It was evident from the motivation theories that people at work are motivated by different factors, such as the need to belong and the need to be loved and cared for. Therefore, acrimonious working relationships may impact negatively on staff morale and cause some teachers to consider leaving the school.

In conclusion, the literature surveyed so far has shown that staff turnover is a reality in the school environment, not only in South Africa, but in the rest of the world too. Staff turnover poses a threat to effective service delivery and outcomes, and exerts pressure on limited state resources. It was this assumption that motivated the researcher to undertake a qualitative study into the causes of staff turnover in the Capricorn district municipality in Limpopo province.

Having considered the key themes and lessons from literature, it is now time to turn to the research methodology. Chapter three, which follows shortly, outlines the qualitative research methodology utilised by the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, research design and methodology are explained, with particular emphasis on the paradigm adopted for the study, data gathering tools, purposive sampling, limitations of the study and research ethics. The intention is to make the reader aware of the operational plan followed to achieve the goals of the study; which focused on the staff challenges in the teaching profession in the Limpopo province.

3.2 Research methodology

According to Mouton (2002:34) methodology is a plan to apply a variety methods and techniques in the systematic pursuit of knowledge. Furthermore, it includes the collection plan which sets out the detailed strategy for collection of data and analysing data. On the other hand, Research design is a plan to select subjects, research sites and data collection procedures with a view to answer research questions (De Vos et al, 2005:p.132).

3.3 Paradigm

A paradigm is the philosophy or premise on which the research is based. This study adopted the qualitative approach as a guiding principle in both data gathering and analysis. According to De Vos et al (2005:p.132), qualitative research elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. Similarly, Patton (1985: p.1) as an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and interactions.

In undertaking this study, the researcher was of the view that certain challenges cause teachers to leave the teaching profession. Therefore, qualitative research provided a useful tool for unpacking the actual problems that cause staff turnover in

some schools. A qualitative study allows the researcher to understand the actual experiences of the target group regarding the problem under investigation.

According to Creswell, (1998), qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distant methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports, detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting. There is wide consensus from these definitions that qualitative research is a naturalistic and interpretative approach concerned with understating the meaning that people attach to phenomena in their social worlds. Qualitative research is characterized by the following:

Qualitative research aims at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the meaning that people (research participants) attach to their social worlds. The samples are small in scale and are selected purposively on the basis of salient criteria. Furthermore data collection method usually involves close contact between the researcher and the participants, which allows for the emergent issues to be explored.

In qualitative research, analysis is open to emergent concepts and ideas, which may produce detailed description, identify patterns of association or develop typology and explanations. Results tend to focus on the interpretation of social meaning through representing the social world of the research participants Ritchie and Lewis (2003). The researcher chooses the qualitative approach, either because of the nature of the research questions can be best answered through in depth analysis of the phenomena, or the variables cannot be easily identified.

More importantly, qualitative research is appropriate in cases where theories are not available to explain the behaviour of participants or their population of study, or when the researcher needs to present a detailed view of the topic. Qualitative approaches recognise that the studied issues have many dimensions and layers, and so they try to portray the issue in its multifaceted form Denzin and Lincoln (1994).

3.4 Sampling

The study has utilized purposive sampling. In this type of sampling, the researcher has thought critically about the parameters of population and chose a sample accordingly (De Vos et al, 2005, p.138). This research utilized purposive sampling. The purposeful selection of participation represented a key decision point in a qualitative study. The researcher has provided a clear identification and formulation of criteria for the selection of respondents.

The advantage of using purposive sampling is that it has enabled the researcher to decide in advance who to include in the study. Quantitative research emphasized the representativeness of a sample, qualitative research, on the other hand, has focused on the richness of the cases being selected in terms of their ability to provide sufficient information on the research problem for understanding and explaining the behavior of people.

However, as will be seen shortly, this sample had certain limitations, as participants were drawn from only two schools; which hardly account for the majority of schools found in the Limpopo province. More was said on the issue under limitations of the study. The composition of the sample is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Composition of the sample

Sample
• One Circuit Manager from the province • Two principals from schools affected by staff turnover • Two former teachers who have left the profession • Two teachers who are still in the profession • One member from the school governing body

As table 1 indicates, respondents were drawn from the different stakeholder communities in order to enhance both depth and validity of the data. For example, the inclusion of administrators in the study ensured that the view of the department of education is reflected in the study concerning staff turnover and related factors;

while the participation of a member of the governing body enabled better understanding of how parents feel about staff turnover and working conditions for teachers in the Capricorn district municipality.

3.5 Research Design

According to Sellitz et al, a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the implementation of the research. It is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research questions. Research design also indicates which individuals will be interviewed, when, where and under what circumstances. This is done in order to give valid and accurate answers to the research questions, and to show credibility of the research study.

The research design for this study is qualitative, as it seeks to discover the actual experiences of educators, school managers, teachers and parents on the causes of staff turnover in Capricorn district municipality.

3.6 The data collection process

Data was collected from three schools using the interview technique. One-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding the challenges that compel teachers to leave the profession. According to Lee et al, (2003:P.281) a one-on-one interview involves a conversation and discussion that captures the attitude and interaction between the researcher and the participant.

Reliability and validity can be a major concern when a one-one-one interview is used. The interview plan consisted of open-ended questions, which were used to solicit information on perceptions and personal experiences by educators on the challenges they face in schools. According to Patton, (1987), the advantage of using in-depth interview is that it enables the researcher to have sufficient direct, personal contact with the participants. Data was recorded in a note book and later classified in a manner that matched the sequence of the research questions.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis means breaking the subject into parts for individual study and evaluating their relationship (Mouton, 2002:p.35). The researcher used data and notes taken during the interviews and organize them in ring binders. Data was compared and contrasted to identify similarities, dissimilarities, emerging issues and new concepts.

3.8 Validity and reliability

According to Babbie, (2004, p. 143) validity refers to the extent to which the instrument used to measure accurately and reflects the concept it is intended to measure. Schulze (2002b:p.79) points out that trustworthiness must be guaranteed at all cost. Guba's model of trustworthiness of qualitative research was used in the study to ensure reliability include truth value, consistency and applicability and triangulation, which was used to compare and contrast the data supplied by respondents.

Reliability means dependability or consistency. It suggests that the same thing is repeated or recurs under the identical or very similar conditions. The opposite of reliability is a measurement process that yields erratic, unstable, or inconsistent results. Validity suggests truthfulness. It refers to how well an idea fits with actual reality (Neuman, 2011:188).

Neuman (2011:196) further argues that qualitative researchers are more interested in authenticity than in the idea of a single version of truth. Authenticity means giving a fair, honest and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of someone who lives it every day. Qualitative researchers try to create a tight fit between their understanding, ideas, and statements about the social world and what is actually occurring.

Using the above qualitative principles as guide, this study, for example, taped the experiences and opinions of principals, teachers, and administrators regarding working conditions for teachers and the factors contributing to staff turnover in their

schools. This exercise was based on the belief that these people have a practical experience of how it feels to work in remote and under-resourced rural schools in the Capricorn district in Limpopo province.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The first hurdle in this study was how to deal with sensitive personal information during the interview. Some respondents were not keen to talk openly about their frustrations in the teaching profession. To get the required information, the researcher sometimes had to persuade and convince participants that such information would contribute to the alleviation of the challenges that they face in the teaching profession.

Access to schools was also a challenge as some of them are situated far from the main road. Securing appointments for the interview was a daunting task as most participants doubted whether their head masters would allow this.

While the core respondents were drawn from two schools in the Capricorn district, the data was measured against principals and circuit managers who had broader views and perspectives on the research problem (staff turnover) in the region. In this way, the analysed data provided some indication to the extent of the challenge in the province as a whole, despite the limited scope of the sample.

The inclusion of decision makers in the sample was based on three reasons: firstly, as representatives of the department of education teachers and circuit inspectors are probably well-versed on human resources issues and developments in the Limpopo province. Secondly, principals and circuit managers have the privilege to attend high level (departmental) meetings where strategic issues such as staff motivation, human resource development and employee turnover are discussed. As a result, they may be able to provide useful insights into the causes of staff turnover in the region, and to indicate whether issues of staff turnover constitute a real threat to service delivery in Limpopo schools generally. Thirdly, since they have been involved in the classroom situation before, principals and circuit managers have a wealth of experience about conditions of service; in other words, they know some of the

formidable challenges that force many teachers to leave the teaching profession. So, their input proved useful in the study as it reflected both theory and practice.

The inclusion of decision makers in the study was made possible by the use of judgemental (purposive) sampling and triangulation. For example, while judgemental sampling ensured flexibility in the selection of specific types of participants; triangulation provided the researcher with the opportunity to compare and contrast data from different categories of respondents, e.g. former and current teachers, member of the governing body, principals and circuit managers. This helped to enhance validity, and enabled the researcher to cautiously extrapolate the findings of the research.

The next paragraph explains how the results were reported. This will be followed by a presentation of the results.

3.10 Ethical considerations

In conducting research, investigators are expected to adhere to certain research principles and these include respect for the rights of participants. This applies to both quantitative and qualitative studies. In this study, the researcher assured participants that their right to privacy would not be violated and that their responses would be kept confidential during and after the research. The use of one-on-one interviews created a free and secure environment where participants could explain their personal experiences to the researcher in a fair manner.

3.11 Conclusion

The methodology that guided this study incorporated qualitative research theory and included in-depth interviews as tools for data collection. In organising the sample, the researcher utilised purposive sampling; which provided the basis for identifying and selecting the right type and number of participants. In chapter four, attention is given to data presentation and the summary of findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the study on staff turnover challenges in the teaching profession, with particular emphasis on the Limpopo province, where the study was conducted. Research findings consisted of the data obtained from the respondents identified through purposive sampling.

4.2 Limitations of the study revisited

Before presenting the results, it may be useful to start by stressing the point made earlier about some of the major limitations of the study. The data presented here was obtained from only two schools, which hardly account for a big province such as Limpopo. This makes it difficult to generalise the results across the province. Therefore, it is recognised that not all the schools in Limpopo schools experience high rates of staff turnover. This assumption guided the data presentation process.

To mitigate this challenge, the researcher triangulated data sources (respondents) so that the inputs of all key stakeholders, including decision-makers could be included in the research. It was assumed that decision-makers e.g. circuit inspectors and principals had a better understanding of the bigger picture concerning staff turnover in and around the Capricorn District Municipality, and therefore could provide rich data on both the past and current situation.

The limiting factors were also mitigated by comparing and contrasting primary and secondary data. The latter provided useful information on the status quo, new developments and shifts regarding teacher turnover in the country generally, and the Limpopo province in particular. Besides enhancing the quality and integrity of the data, this also enabled the researcher to make fairly reasonable conclusions about the results. The next paragraph explains how the results were reported. This will be followed by a presentation of the results.

4.3 Data presentation process

Reporting of findings in this study involved explanation and the use of various techniques such as coding of respondents' names to protect their identity; sub-dividing the text into paragraphs; punctuation; paraphrasing, quotations, and using headings to ensure proper organisation of the text and flow of ideas. The presentation followed the sequence of the research questions. This helped keep the discussion focused on the main themes of the research.

4.4 Responses to the research questions

The responses presented in this section include the views of all the stakeholders who participated in the research, in line with the sample defined under the research methodology in chapter three. These answers reflect the thinking that each of the participants had about the challenges that compel teachers to leave the teaching profession in some schools in the Limpopo province.

4.4.1. Why do you think many teachers leave the teaching profession?

The rationale behind this question was to identify the reasons for staff turnover from the perspective of stakeholders. The importance of this question is that it is directly linked to the research topic. Respondent A admitted that schools in the Limpopo province battled to attract and keep suitably qualified teachers, as conditions in the profession improved at a rather slow pace. The respondent said teachers left the profession for reasons such as personal ambitions, change of life style – people wanting to live in the city and earn a better salary, and frustration with the slow pace of change.

According to Respondent B, the reason for teachers' turnover is hard to pin down because "most of these people come to the profession with different motives. Some just come to earn a salary, while others see teaching as a life time career. Those who come for a salary do not stay for a long time" (Interview, 6 November 2010). Respondent B said the situation differed from one school to another.

For example, schools that had competent managers were more likely to keep good teachers than those with weak managers.

Respondent C stated that some teachers were leaving because they did not get enough support and motivation from their principals. The respondent said some school managers had pressure from the department as a result they only concentrated on results and forgot about teachers' personal needs. According to the respondent, the lack of support made teachers "feel cheap and neglected" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent D made reference to her own situation, saying that the reasons for her exit from teaching related to factors such as lack of resources, which made it difficult for her to achieve the required performance targets; and the need to move on in life, i.e. find a better and more rewarding career elsewhere. The respondent said she liked teaching when she first joined the profession but was later demotivated by the fact that teachers' efforts are not appreciated by the department of education and local communities. She said "when teachers have a problem, no one supports them, instead, they are told to go back to class (Interview, 6 November 2010). She said the lack of opportunities for advancement made her lose interest in the profession.

Respondent E indicated that the repetitive nature of the job caused boredom and frustration on his part. The respondent wanted a challenging job that would help him learn new things every day, and teaching failed to offer such opportunities. The respondent cited four reasons which he thought forced teachers to leave, and these included the search for a better place to study in order to improve one's profile, dictatorship in some schools; too much pressure from the department; and the difficulty of controlling unruly child behaviour in schools.

Respondent C indicated that, although teachers were leaving, however, the situation could still improve as the government was now starting to deliver on issues such teaching and learning materials; including building of new schools in rural areas. The respondent stated his opinion as follows:

We should give our government a chance. I know that the situation has caused misery to many people due to slow service delivery. But there is no doubt that things have changed. Now you have the MEC talking directly to teachers in different schools and taking note of their concerns. Take the example of the 2900 bicycles that were given to learners who travel long distances to and from school. That is a great improvement (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent E warned that if something is not done to improve teachers' salaries and benefits, more teachers would leave the profession and that matric results would continue to deteriorate in the Limpopo province. The respondent added that teachers need to be guided as to how they can improve their careers and that this should be a joint responsibility of circuit managers and school masters. The respondent said:

The reason why some teachers leave is because they are neglected. This makes them think about alternative careers. It is even worse here because, unless you take responsibility for your own future, no one is going to help you. The problem is that too much attention is now given to matric results. As a result, teachers' career needs have been compromised. I am not saying we should not attend to learners' needs, but I do feel that principals, inspectors and HODs have not done enough when it comes to supporting the development of teachers; which is why many people get stressed and end up leaving (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent F said many of those who left teaching had done so partly because they did not appreciate transformation. In other words, they did not want to be part of change. The respondent believed that the number of teachers leaving the profession would decrease with the gradual improvement in teacher remuneration and benefits.

The respondent added that staff turnover created exciting opportunities for young, energetic graduates who were joining the profession. The respondent added that attitude change was needed among teachers: "People need to behave professionally and project a positive image about teaching" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent G concurred with this view by stating that staff turnover is not a threat to the teaching profession as such. Instead, it should be seen as an ideal opportunity for extending career paths so that teaching can become a more exciting and challenging job for both newcomers and experienced teachers. The respondent however, pointed out that it was the responsibility of principals to ask teachers who resign from their schools why they are leaving. The respondent said this would help principals identify and address the problems that cause dissatisfaction among teachers in their schools.

Yes, it is true that many people have left teaching due to poor working conditions, and there is very little that can be done to stop this. But it would be wrong for principals to ignore the problem, because at the end of the day it is the learner who suffers due to staff shortages. Resigning teachers can provide good reasons why they are leaving. Principals can use this information to solve problems and to motivate teachers to stay (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent H expressed sympathy for teachers, saying that despite the difficult situations that they experienced in their respective schools, teachers were still able to produce good results at the end of the year. The respondent suggested that governing bodies should come forward and give practical support to teachers; such as giving praise and encouraging their principals to release funds needed to buy teaching and learning resources.

4.4.2 How would you describe the working conditions for teachers?

This question sought to elicit information about the conditions of service for teachers and to determine if these contributed to employee turnover in the selected schools.

Respondent A stated that working conditions were not necessarily very bad for teachers. The respondent was happy with the role played by the Department of education in improving the conditions of service for teachers and hoped that this would stop teachers from leaving. The respondent made a strong appeal to educators to remain committed to the teaching profession, saying:

"We know that not all is well in our schools at the moment. But we appeal to our teachers to remain in the classroom. The community needs them. The pupils need them. It is for the good of our country. Working conditions are improving and our MEC has ensured us that things will change in schools".

Respondent B indicated that conditions of service were improving and teachers should appreciate this, instead of leaving. The respondent said it was important for teachers to move away from "the old confrontational approach to a more constructive approach in which they see themselves as stakeholders". We are no longer engaged in conflict. Teachers must not stand aside and expect things to change naturally, they must be part of change; they must join principals, subject advises, governing bodies and inspectors to change the situation" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent C was of the view that improving the conditions of service for teachers is a process, and not a once off event. The respondent said teachers should be patient as they were not different from other public servants. The respondent added that principals need to play a key role in motivating teachers by telling them the positive things that the department of education is doing for them; for example, the proposed introduction of computer technology in schools e.g. lap tops.

According to respondent D, the working conditions in the teaching profession have not improved significantly despite the introduction of a new government. The respondent made two examples in this regard: firstly, teachers still have to "toyi-toyi" (protest) before they can get a salary increment every year. This showed that government was not keen to improve conditions of service for teachers.

Secondly, teaching resources are still lacking in some schools despite repeated attempts by the affected schools to get them. These include books, furniture and science laboratories. The respondent summarised his view like this:

Ending the old education system is going to take years, particularly in the rural areas. These schools are worse off than those in nearby towns; which have better

staff numbers and resources. Here, teachers and learners still travel long distances to get to school, and by the time they get there, they are already tired and unable to work effectively. What concerns me most is the slow delivery of the promises that the government has been making to teachers since 1994. This makes many teachers to lose hope in the new system ((Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent E said teachers who worked in and around towns in Limpopo faced better working conditions as their schools were well-equipped than those situated in remote rural areas, where improvement efforts were very limited. Respondent F concurred with the above statement by saying that working conditions differed from one school to another and from district to district. The respondent said teachers working in former model C schools, for example, were far better than rural teachers in that parents and governing bodies in such areas provided tangible support to their teachers, such as volunteering services during winter schools or catch up programmes.

Respondent G said working conditions were improving rather slowly and this tended to frustrate young inexperienced teachers who had higher career expectations and ambitions. The respondent further stated that the situation was worsened by the lack of proper induction of new teachers in schools. As a result, they started work with very little knowledge of how the school system operates and what challenges to expect from it.

According to this respondent, induction in schools tends to focus on basic issues such as “introducing the new teacher to staff and students,” and overlooks culture and operational requirements of the school. This made it difficult for new teachers to cope with the tough working conditions in the school situation. The respondent was very clear on the importance of induction for new teachers:

You see, a young inexperienced graduate gets hired on day one. On day two he/she reports for duty. On the very same day, he/she is introduced to fellow teachers and learners. The next thing he is told where the staff room is and which classes he/she

is going to teach. You can ask any teacher around here they will probably tell you the same thing. So, when you start work, you hardly know what the school is trying to achieve in terms of service standards and results. This must be resolved (Interview, 6 November 2010).

4.4.3 What is your opinion about teachers' remuneration?

The aim of this question was to find out how participants felt about pay issues and whether these were related to staff turnover in the selected schools. Respondent A stated that teachers' salaries had improved since 1996. However, such improvements were not felt by all teachers. For example, teachers with high enrolments, former model C schools and teachers in towns probably earned better than teachers in rural areas. It was acknowledged that differences in pay caused dissatisfaction among teachers who were still earning low salaries.

Respondent B echoed the same view expressed by respondent A, saying that the situation in terms of salaries is not as bad as many people think it is. The respondent stated that new teachers earned high entry level salaries, which he said were above the R6,000 threshold and that HODS and principals' remuneration had improved considerably, almost comparable to private sector junior or middle managers. The respondent emphasised the fact that teachers cannot expect to earn the same salary as their experience and qualifications differed substantially.

Respondent C pointed out that there was a gradual improvement in teachers' remuneration however a lot of improvement was still needed, particularly in the rural areas, where teachers lagged behind. The respondent said the reason why teachers complained about low pay is because benefits are limited and thus not making a significant impact on total remuneration.

Respondent D saw no substantial improvement in teachers' remuneration. According to this respondent, "teachers are still far from earning a decent salary. Their work is not appreciated." The respondent felt that the department should benchmark its pay policy with those of countries in Europe, particularly the UK, where most teachers go

for greener pastures. Respondent E said the situation was changing but the main problem was that such change happened at a rather slow pace and teachers suffered due to the fast-rising cost of living.

Respondent F stated that teachers' compensation had improved over the years. The respondent gave examples about the gradual adjustment of salaries and benefits. "No teacher today earns below six thousand rand a month. This is a great improvement compared to the early 1990s when junior teachers earned as a little as three thousand rand a month" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent G felt that teachers' concerns were now being attended to and that the union (SATDTU) had played a key role in alerting the department of education to the poor salaries that teachers earn. Respondent H stated that pay for teachers was improving and that it was the role of governing bodies and circuit managers to ensure that teachers' concerns in respect of pay were identified and addressed quickly. The respondent stressed the importance of bringing teachers' concerns to the attention of the department of education as soon as they occur, rather than waiting until "we have a lot of problems" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

4.4.4 What support does the department of education provide for teachers with social health problems?

Respondent A indicated that the department played a major role in facilitating teaching and learning in schools. Examples of government support given included supply of text books in schools; feeding schemes, and provision of policy documents to facilitate decision making in schools. Respondent B concurred with this view by saying that the department of education has adopted a pragmatic approach to support schools. Principals and governing bodies can now make decisions quickly without having to wait for directives from the department. Medical aid and housing benefits were also cited as some of the assistance given to teachers.

Respondent C indicated that a wellness programme was in place for teachers however, many teachers were not aware of this. According to the respondent, the programme included HIV/AIDS counselling and advice information.

Teachers need to keep in touch with their circuit offices in order to learn more about available wellness programmes and assistance.

Respondent D denied knowledge of any teacher assistance programmes, saying that teachers were left to fend for themselves. However, the respondent did acknowledge the fact that medical aid was being provided and that its costs were reasonable compared to what other professionals were paying in other sectors. Respondent E mentioned medical aid as one of the major benefits that help teachers cope with social health problems. But the responded also emphasised that:

"They (government) should not wait for teachers to strike before they solve problems. The government is for the people, so it must keep its promises. Many teachers like me started the career with great hope and expectations, but as the years went by without tangible benefits from the department, many of us realised that the only way to get a better life would be to leave teaching. I must say this is not good for learners and the community. But what can you do because you also have a family to look after" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent F felt that it was too early to judge the department of education in terms of service delivery because there are serious challenges at both the secondary and tertiary levels that the department has to deal with. The respondent indicated that teachers should be realistic about their demands as the government was trying its best to support them in schools. The respondent lacked knowledge about the specific support that teachers were receiving from the department of education.

Respondent G acknowledged the fact that teachers received support from the government in the form of hand outs, booklets and medical aid. The respondent said it was the responsibility of each teacher to ask their managers for information. Information that the department provided related to issues such as HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention measures and nutrition. The respondent said this information was free for all educators.

Respondent H praised the department for helping teachers with medical aid and suggested that teachers should be patient as the department was busy with changes that would benefit all of them. The respondent summed up his view as follows:

Nobody can deny that we come from a culture of confrontation and violence. But this is the time to start realising the challenges that we face as a community. We must appreciate the little that we get and use that as a means to improve the education of our children. Who will run this country if our children are not educated? Teachers need to start thinking about how they can make a contribution to the development of our communities (Interview, 6 November 2010).

4.4.5 How would you describe teachers' workload?

It was vital to determine the level of support that teachers in schools received from the institutional and administrative that form part of the service delivery chain. This is exactly what this question sought to determine.

Respondent A cautioned against "generalising the workload for teachers across the board" (Interview, 6 November 2010). According to this respondent, teachers' work load range from medium to high, depending on the size of the school, i.e. enrolment as well as the geographical location of the school. Schools that had a high number of teachers, workloads remained moderate and reasonable; whereas schools that had limited staff complement tended to have higher workloads.

Respondent B stated that teachers' workload was moderate in his school and said this was because teachers were specialising in their respective fields e.g. commerce, maths, science and geography. The respondent said factors such as lack of proper consultation and dialogue contributed to high workloads as these decisions were imposed in some schools. This respondent made a very important point regarding the consultation of teachers in the allocation of work:

"Sometimes you find that your school is big and you have a lot of learners to accommodate, which obviously means more work for teachers. But if you invite

teachers to a meeting and tell them the truth that your school is facing in terms of high learner enrolment, and ask them to suggest ways of solving the problem, you will be surprised about the good solutions that some of them will suggest. No teacher will say let us not admit additional pupils. Instead, they will say, let us share the work equally because it is good for our learners. Others even volunteer to take extra classes in the morning without pay. So if you have their support, it is much easier for you to run the school smoothly" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

According to respondent C, teachers' workload is hard to reduce in schools due to the high number of learners who repeat certain classes. The respondent said sometimes teachers get overloaded with work due the fact that some of them are multi-skilled, i.e. they can teach many subjects and have a good track record. In such situations, principals allow them to do more work.

Respondent D felt that teachers' workload is unreasonable and is one of the factor that cause many teachers to lose interest in the profession. The respondent blamed the department for failing to hire an adequate number of teachers for rural schools, particularly in the Limpopo province. In addition, the respondent stated that part of the problem is the lack of computers in schools. As result, many teachers spend their time doing paperwork instead of teaching. According to this respondent, work overload caused severe stress among teachers and forced some of them to lose interest in their work and to even skip lessons in an effort to find more resting time.

Respondent E said teachers were overloaded, and that this was due to the lack of teamwork in some schools. The respondent indicated that teachers with little work were less willing to assist those who battled with many subjects. The respondent blamed school managers for the uneven allocation of work, which he said caused dissatisfaction among some teachers.

Respondent F pointed out that the issue was not the workload per se but rather the manner in which work was assigned to teachers. According to this respondent, teachers need to be consulted before work is allocated to them, because some of

them do not have enough experience in handling or teaching different subjects simultaneously. According to this respondent:

"If you give a less experienced teacher more work, he/she will end up bunking classes or even skipping some lessons; not because he/she wants to, but because he/she is tired. Others try to persevere and continue to work, but when a good opportunity comes up, they leave quickly without even serving the notice period. Principals must not assume that all teachers know how to cope with challenging working conditions".

Respondent G stated that teachers' workload varied across schools and many teachers are able to cope with the challenge, especially those that received support and encouragement from their principals.

However, the respondent was more concerned about the negative effect of abnormal workloads on some teachers, which he said caused enormous stress. The stressful conditions were described as follows:

"You have travelled a long distance to work and when you arrive, the only reality you face is the time-table, which shows that you will teach the whole day. You also have to cope with paperwork and extra-curricular activities such as sports. All this needs your energy. By the end of the day you want nothing. On top of this, you earn a low salary that does not even allow you to leave a decent life. Even if you are strong and motivated you end up getting stressed because everyone around you is battling with a lot of work and there is no time to talk about other things except work" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Similarly, Respondent H expressed concern about the lack of manpower in schools, saying that this compromises the quality of teaching and learning and cause unnecessary stress among teachers. The respondent emphasised the fact that many teachers in the area suffer from stress because they do not get enough support from their managers as they try to cope with demanding work schedules.

4.4.6. What is your opinion on career development for teachers?

Opportunities for training and career advancement are critical aspects that motivate many employees to remain in their jobs for a long time. Therefore, this question aimed to determine if participants had access to such opportunities. Respondent A indicated that the department of education had already started incentivising teachers to further their studies through a bursary scheme which covered areas like mathematics and Science.

Respondent B said teachers were given study leave in order to further their studies in areas related to their subjects. The responded saw this as a golden opportunity for teachers to improve their careers.

Respondent C stated that it was the responsibility of teachers to approach their principals and talk about their career goals within the context of teaching. The respondent added that most principals supported teacher development; but the problem was that some teachers were not willing to learn.

Respondent D denied the existence of career development opportunities for teachers. According to this respondent, “teachers themselves have to stand up and look for opportunities. There is no direct support from the department” (Interview, 6 November 2010). Respondent E pointed out that teacher development in schools has not yet been formalised. The respondent felt that principals and HODs lack the skills required to nurture and develop talent among teachers in their schools. Respondent F blamed the lack of relevant and current information as one of the factors that undermine teacher development in schools. The respondent said teachers in rural areas do not have access to career development information. Instead, they rely on friends who frequent cities to supply such information.

Respondent G was of the view that the current democratic climate in schools provides an ideal opportunity for teachers to improve their careers. However, the problem is that many teachers are not aware of existing career development opportunities in their schools, due to poor communication or lack of dialogue

between them and their managers. Respondent H stated that “it is important for teachers to adopt a positive attitude and to love what they are doing” (Interview, 6 November 2010). This respondent felt that a positive attitude was very important in career development, as it laid the foundation for self-improvement and promotion to more senior positions.

4.4.7 What can be done to curb the exodus of teachers?

The purpose of this question was to elicit views about possible ways in which staff turnover could be minimised to ensure that many teachers remained in the teaching profession in the identified schools.

Respondent A stated that government and the business sector need to join hands to improve the state of education so that teachers can stay much longer in the profession. The respondent felt that the business sector could play a key role in helping to improve the conditions of service for teachers, particularly in the rural areas. Funds and donations e.g. books and furniture were cited as the much needed form of assistance from the business sector.

According to respondent B, the first thing that needs to happen is “attitude change among teachers themselves. Attitude change training is needed to help teachers see this profession in a positive light” (Interview, 6 November 2010). According to this respondent, the department of education should provide this type of training as soon as possible.

Respondent B wanted to see a greater improvement in school communications. The respondent said circuit managers and principals need to join hands to promote a culture of open communication in schools so that both teachers and learners can benefit from the process. Respondent C stressed the fact that teachers should be given fair rewards for their efforts and that the department of education needs to respond quickly to the critical issues affecting teacher morale in schools.

Respondent D felt that the only way to curb staff turnover is to give teachers more money, i.e. better salaries that are comparable to other sectors. The respondent added that the "piece meal approach" in addressing teachers' remuneration had failed in the past and therefore would not stop teachers from leaving the profession, as the cost of living forced them to do so.

Respondent E stated that the department must stop changing the curriculum now and then as this caused confusion, frustration and uncertainty in the teaching profession. Curriculum change must happen over time i.e. 10 years, as opposed to every five or six years.

Respondent F stated that the situation can improve if the department gave teachers competitive salaries and visible support in rural schools. The respondent said the issue of salaries can be resolved if the department prioritised its expenditure and make teacher remuneration a top priority. Respondent G said school managers and senior officials in the department need to show high appreciation for the contributions that teachers make to schools despite the numerous challenges obstacles they encounter every day.

According to respondent G, teachers can stay in the profession if the issue of learner discipline is addressed by the department in an effective manner. The respondent felt that many teachers were leaving partly because they were being frustrated by the unruly behaviour of some learners, which tends to be very problematic in secondary schools where teachers have to deal with grown up pupils. The respondent described the problem as follows:

My concern is that the soft approach to discipline is not helping teachers at all, more especially in secondary schools, where some learners try to compete with teachers, or spend more time playing games on their cell phones instead of learning. It is precisely this culture that contributes to poor learner performance in our schools. Some pupils carry knives at school and when a teacher tries to enforce discipline, he/she may get hurt right in front of other teachers and learners. It is very scary. Something needs to be done about this (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Respondent H wanted to see the involvement of all stakeholders, i.e. teachers, learners, parents and administrators and the department of education in the solution of the challenges facing teachers in schools. According to this respondent, the challenges facing teachers in schools are complex and thus require the inputs of all these stakeholders.

4.5 Summary of findings

To some extent, the data presented in the foregoing confirms the occurrence of staff turnover in some schools in the Capricorn district municipality. The challenges leading to staff turnover seem to vary across schools in the area. In light of this statement, the findings of the study may be summarised as follows:

- In respect of working conditions, the findings reflected both optimism and scepticism. For example, while some respondents expressed hope about transformation in the sector, others remained sceptical about the department of education's ability to turn the situation around. What this means is that there were mixed feelings on whether working conditions for teachers were improving.

- It was maintained that teachers still faced numerous challenges in the school environment, which included low pay, lack of support from management, shortage of resources, poor communication, lack of consultation, demanding work schedules, excessive paper work, long distances to and from work, and lack of incentives for high performing educators. Of grave concern for some participants was that these conditions would take time to alleviate given the skewed allocation of resources in schools in the Limpopo province. It was unanimously agreed that urban schools were better resourced than rural schools.

- It was widely recognised that drastic changes were needed to improve the conditions of service for teachers and emphasis was placed on the quality of work life and salaries. However, it was also acknowledged that working

conditions differed from one school to another. A concern was also raised about the failure of teachers to appreciate the changes that the department of education had already introduced in local schools, such as the gift of 2900 bicycles to pupils leaving in remote areas. This was seen a step in the right direction as it would help teachers deal with the problem of late coming.

- More importantly, it was recognised that the situation would not change unless teachers themselves became active agents in the change process. Attitude change was seen as priority number one in this regard. Teachers had to start seeing themselves as key stakeholders, instead of standing on the side lines and blaming the department of education, which some participants felt was doing its best to try and improve working conditions for teachers. Evidence to this effect included medical aid, housing schemes and opportunities for further education and training.

- With regard to support for teachers, the responses ranged from positive to negative, with many participants citing the fact that the department only provided medical aid and housing allowances to teachers. Other participants were not convinced that teachers received support from the department. For example, it was maintained that it took long for the department to respond to teachers' demands. Such delays reduced trust in the ability of the department to the deliver the services required to bolster teaching and learning in schools. In some cases, teachers had to resort to industrial action (strikes) before getting what they want. This was seen as a good example that illustrated the department's inability to deal with teachers' concerns in a proactive manner.

- It was acknowledged that certain challenges contributed to the persistent staff turnover in some schools in the Capricorn district of Limpopo. These included low salaries; unsatisfactory benefit packages e.g. low subsidies, which made in difficult for teachers to buy decent houses in nearby towns as the cost of these houses had doubled over the years; frequent changes in the curriculum – which caused confusion at the school level; lack of feedback on teachers'

performance; lack of discipline and, exclusion of teachers from decision making.

- However, it was also acknowledged that the increasing number of teachers leaving the profession would open new opportunities for graduates entering the profession. The implication of this statement is that moderate turnover in schools is not necessarily a bad thing as it tends to benefit young teachers from college. At best, moderate turnover would help mitigate the high rate of unemployment in the Capricorn district, which as shown in chapter one suffers from high rates of joblessness and illiteracy, among other problems.

- On the downside, it was widely accepted that the high levels of staff turnover in the Capricorn district municipality would undermine service delivery and thus worsen matric results in the long run. Therefore, measures had to be taken to curb the exodus of teachers from the profession. Much of the blame was placed on the department of education for slow service delivery. It was maintained that the reason why some teachers were leaving was because they had “lost hope in the education system”. This suggests that they had lost confidence on the ability of the department to deliver on its mandate.

- It was commonly agreed that teachers’ workload was abnormal and contributed to frustration and demotivation of teachers. Examples of this included too much emphasis on administrative work (“paper work”) which added pressure to teachers – forcing them to work extra hours in even in their homes. Teachers hardly have time to rest because even during holidays they are supposed to do catch up programmes for which there is no remuneration.

- Uneven allocation of work worsened the situation as it created more work for some teachers, while others had very little work to do. Besides causing resentment and demotivation for some teachers, this also contributed to teacher fatigue and frequent absenteeism as some teachers suffered from stress. Lack of consultation was seen as major cause of this problem. A striking feature of this response is that, the school which encouraged teacher

participation in decision making did not experience any resistance from teachers as they were part of the decision making process. In the second school, things were different: teachers were not comfortable with the imposition of work.

- Half of the respondent interviewed indicated that career development opportunities for teachers were limited and not fully understood by many. Part of the problem was that some school managers were either reluctant or completely unable to inform teachers about such opportunities, including the ability to organise career planning workshops and conducting training needs assessment for teachers.

- Other respondents indicated that opportunities for development existed in some schools but the problem was that these had not been properly communicated to teachers on the ground. It was felt that teachers do not receive enough support from their schools, which they need to develop their knowledge and skills. Consequently, they are forced to fend for themselves. Self-help was said to be very difficult in rural areas, where information and resource centres are often very scarce.

- Suggestions for improvement varied considerably, reflecting the nature and magnitude of the challenges that teachers faced in the teaching and learning environment. These ranged from better pay, effective communication, visible management support and commitment, consultation and dialogue, quick identification and resolution of teachers' problems, and involvement of teachers in the decision making process in schools.

- The majority of participants were concerned about the lack of leadership support and commitment. It was strongly felt that the leader's role is very important in helping employees understand performance goals and identifying their career needs and aspirations. Consequently, the lack of such leadership caused many teachers to feel that they are neglected and thus not recognised

in their schools. In part, this explains why some teachers have left teaching in the Capricorn district municipality.

The foregoing summarised the main findings of the study regarding some of the challenges contributing to staff turnover in some schools in the Capricorn District municipality in Limpopo Province. And what is clear from this exercise is that multiple factors contribute to staff turnover in the identified schools; that teachers are divided over the issue of working conditions; and that despite their differing views, all the participants, however, acknowledged the negative impact of staff turnover on service delivery in local schools.

The next chapter analyses these findings to determine their implications for the research problem. This will throw some light on whether or not staff turnover is a big issue in this area.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Raw data collected from the field needs to be organised and interpreted in order to generate meaning about the research problem. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the data presented in the previous chapter. Through this exercise, the researcher hopes to unpack and clarify the challenges that cause teachers to leave the profession in the Capricorn district municipality in the Limpopo province.

5.2 Data analysis process

As indicated in chapter three, data analysis in this research was affected by the narrow scope of the study, which targeted only two rural schools in the Capricorn district municipality. This limited the researcher's ability to make general conclusions about causes of staff turnover across schools in the whole province. However, the triangulation of data sources ensured better interrogation of data in this chapter.

Data analysis in this study was based on the guidelines proposed by Merriam (2002:14), who argues that data analysis is essentially an inductive process. One begins with a unit of data, that is, any meaningful word, phrase, narrative, etc. and compares it to another unit of data, and so on, all the while looking for common patterns across data. Data analysis is one of the few facets, perhaps the only facet, of doing qualitative research in which there is a preferred way (Merriam, 2009:171).

As part of the analysis process, data was organised into three themes, namely working conditions, support systems and processes and retention strategy. By analysing data under these headings, it was possible to locate and conceptualise the challenges that prompt teachers to leave the profession in the Limpopo area. Other tools that were used to facilitate data analysis included graphs and tables.

5.2.1 Conditions of service

Clearly, the conditions of service for teachers have not reached a level that would be described as being satisfactory by world standards. The data has shown that pay remains a big issue for teachers and a major factor leading to dissatisfaction and withdrawal from the profession. Deducing from the findings of the study, there seems to be six factors that make teachers' remuneration problematic:

First, teachers' remuneration is not comparable with other professions. An example was made about teachers versus truck drivers: a truck driver with standard five earns a better salary than a qualified teacher from university or college. This discrepancy and many related factors make teachers assume that teaching is a rather cheap and less dignified profession, which is suitable for desperate people who cannot find decent jobs elsewhere.

Second, pay does not take into account the rising standard and cost of living. An example was made about the low/uncompetitive subsidy grants, which make it difficult for teachers to buy decent middle class houses in suburbs. Consequently, they are forced to stay in low value houses in and around townships, or to remain in the rural areas where there is no running water and electricity.

Third, pay adjustments are too little and sometimes make no positive impact on teachers' lives. An example was made about 6.5 per cent, which was said to be the "usual salary increase" which teachers get from the department of education almost yearly. While this may look better for a senior teacher, it would mean very little for a teacher earning as a little as R5000 a month – given the text implications of this amount.

Fourth, pay does not reward hard working teachers who have consistently produced good results in their schools. Data indicated concerns about the lack of merit pay in the teaching profession.

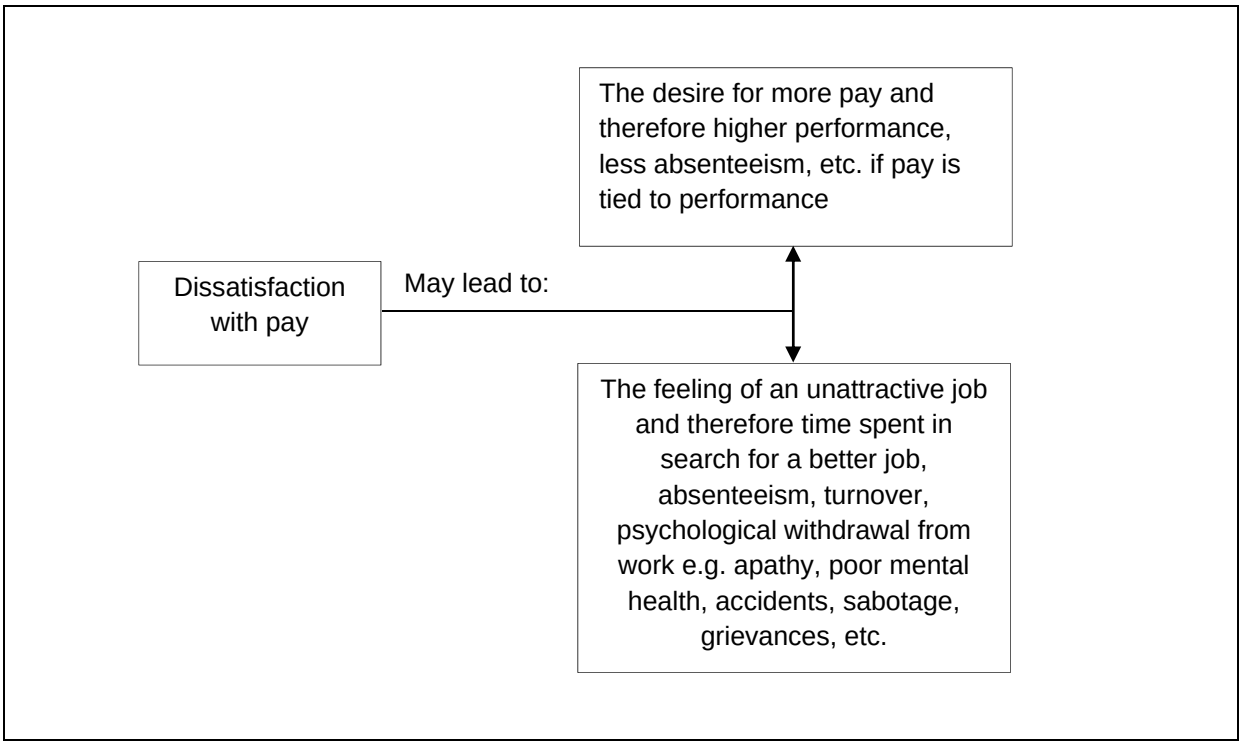
In other words, there is a need for introducing a coherent and fair merit pay system in the teaching profession to ensure that diligent and competent teachers get rewarded for their efforts.

Fifth, it is likely that pay will continue to be seen in a negative light by some teachers because it is not accompanied by meaningful benefits that enable teachers to enjoy a high quality of work life. As evidenced by the findings in chapter 4, half of the respondents were concerned about the disparity that exists between remuneration and benefits. It was this disparity that discouraged many teachers and ultimately forced them to leave the profession.

Last, it was strongly emphasised that teachers have to struggle first before they can get a decent salary increment: “you have to toyi-toyi before you get a salary increase” (Interview, 6 November 2010). This dampens teacher morale and makes them believe that the department of education does not care about them.

The impact of poor remuneration on employee morale and performance is corroborated by literature evidence. For example, Beatty and Schneier (1981:461) provide a schematic representation of some of the possible consequences of pay dissatisfaction, which is shown below:

Figure 5: Possible consequences of pay dissatisfaction



Source: Beatty and Schneier (1981:461).

From figure 5, it is clear that pay affects employees in two ways. On the positive side, pay can motivate an employee to improve his performance at work and reduce absenteeism. On the negative side, poor pay can cause dissatisfaction and cause an employee to lose interest in his or her job. This scenario confirms the findings of the study, which showed that many teachers left the profession due to the perceived low salaries.

Emphasising the link between pay and staff morale, Beatty and Scheiner (1975:458) further argue that organisations should be concerned about the level of pay satisfaction as it can cause applicants to join an organisation and employees to stay and perform effectively. On the other hand, pay dissatisfaction can lead to strikes, grievances, absenteeism, turnover, and the ineffective use of human resource assets.

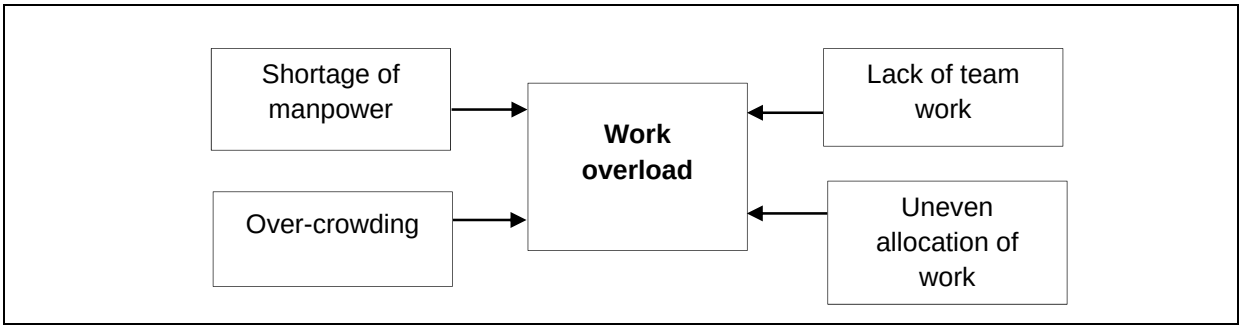
The foregoing statement highlights the significant impact of pay on staff morale and turnover. As indicated in chapter four, respondent D said that sometimes teachers have to “toyi-toyi” before they can get salary increases. In some way, this means that poor pay can be a major source of demotivation, conflict and turnover in an organisation. Given this, it may be argued that poor compensation is one of the major factors contributing to staff turnover in some schools in the Capricorn district in Limpopo province.

5.2.2 Work load

In simple terms, a workload refers to the amount of work that is assigned to each employee under normal circumstances. The research findings showed that teachers’ experience in terms of workload differs from one school to another. For example, while some participants did not have serious problems with their workloads, others complained about abnormal workloads, which were compounded by the lack of computer technology (data capturing and processing systems).

The abnormal ratios of 1:50 and 1:60 identified by the study deserve attention here. Apart from increasing the workload, these ratios also make it difficult for teachers to give individual attention to learners who need more support in the classroom situation. Slow learners, in particular, tend to suffer when they do not receive sufficient, individualised assistance and support from their teachers.

Figure 6: Factors leading to work overload



Source: Own compilation, 2010

Figure 6 depicts four major factors which participants felt contributed to work overload among teachers in the selected schools. These included shortage of manpower, overcrowding, lack of teamwork and uneven allocation of work. These are explained briefly below.

5.2.3 Shortage of human resources

The shortage of manpower in schools highlights the major crisis which faces many public institutions in South Africa, namely capacity constraints. This problem affects not only the service delivery process, but also the quality of the outcomes e.g. matric results, which continue to pose a serious challenge in the economy. When a school runs short of manpower, available teachers are forced to take up large volumes of work, which includes tons of paper work as well. This results in work overload, which tends to cause stress among teachers.

5.2.4 Overcrowding

Due to the limited number of schools in rural areas and the lack of transport, many schools are forced to admit a high number of learners each year. This often leads to overcrowding in classrooms, which in turn increases the teacher-learner ratio and the amount of exercise books that each teacher has to mark every day.

5.2.5 Lack of teamwork

There was a concern that teachers with little work, e.g. those specialising in subjects like music, or home economics often do not give support to those who have to teach different subjects to different grades or standards. As a result, some teachers end up with more work, while others have time to rest.

5.2.6 Uneven allocation of work

In some cases, certain teachers receive more work, while others receive less work. The reasons for this vary from favouritism and lack of planning. Extra work makes it difficult for some teachers to reflect on what they are doing. This usually happens in

schools that adopt autocratic management – where the teacher has little say on work allocation decision

Work overload also breeds other problems. Table 2 below provides a summary of the possible consequences of work overload particularly in Limpopo schools; which also impact negatively on service delivery.

Table 2: Consequences of work overload

Consequences	Implications
1. Disinterestedness	Overworked teachers often lose interest in what they are doing. This in turn affect both the teaching and learning processes
2. Withdrawal	When they lose interest, some teachers simply withdraw from the teaching process
3. Poor performance	Heavy workloads leave some teachers exhausted and thus unable to meet agreed performance targets
4. Bunking of lessons	Heavy workloads cause some teachers to skip or even bunk certain lessons

Source: Own compilation, 2010

Table 2 depicts four possible consequences of heavy work schedules in the target schools, and these include disinterestedness, withdrawal, poor performance and bunking of lessons. All these consequences pose risk to both teachers and learners. For teachers, this means that they cannot enjoy a better quality of work life if they are always faced with highly demanding work schedules. For learners, this means few learning opportunities and thus less chances of coping with national examinations at the end of the year.

Clearly, these findings confirm the point made by Gawel (1997) that certain factors affect people's attitudes about work. These include hygiene factors and the motivators factors.

According to the theory, the hygiene factors can create job dissatisfaction, but their presence does not motivate or create satisfaction. The hygiene factors are company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions and salary.

In the study Gawel (1997) found that motivators are elements that enriched a person's job. The five factors that were determiners of job satisfaction are achievement, the work itself, recognition, responsibility and advancement. The satisfiers were associated with long-term positive effects in job performance while dissatisfies consistently produced only short –term changes in job attitudes and performance.

Overall, the findings of the study also corroborate the observation made by As Smithers and Robinson (1990) that the major reasons for teachers leaving the profession include: workload, new challenges, school situations, salary, and personal circumstances. Among these five main reasons, workload is the most important factor in affecting teacher's turnover, while salary is the least important.

5.2.7 Career development

According to Beatty and Schneier (1981:357), career development concerns the readiness for progression through a series of positions during a person's working life. Career management is a key to effective human resource management in any organisation. Many organisations are turning to career management as a tool for motivating and retaining competent employees. Data has revealed that career management in the teaching profession apparently lacks a coherent approach; as illustrated by the diverse answers provided by participants during the interview.

Table 3: Characteristics of a good career management strategy

Clear goals	The strategy states clearly what it seeks to achieve e.g. motivation, development or retention of employees
Clear roles and responsibilities	The strategy is clear on who should be involved in the career management process and how it should be done
Clear time frames	The strategy defines the time frames for implementing and monitoring career development efforts
Review and adjustment	The strategy is continuously monitored and modified to ensure that it meets the needs of both the organisation and staff

Source: Adapted from Beatty and Schneier (1981)

As shown in table 3above, career management is a process that requires a good implementation strategy. If goals are clear, all employees will be able to buy into the strategy and support its implementation. Teachers need to know how schools plan to help them achieve their career goals. In addition, school heads need to be held accountable for teacher development.

Brown and Harvey (2006:251) corroborate the findings of the study by stating that career planning can provide employees with information that will enable them to make better career decisions. The organisation is ultimately responsible for providing the environment in which people can achieve their full potential, and employees are responsible for developing their own skills.

To some extent, these findings also highlight the need for treating people development as a strategic issue in the workplace. According to Walton (in Armstrong 2006:533) strategic human resource development involves introducing, eliminating, modifying, directing and guiding in such a way that all individuals and teams are equipped with the skills, knowledge and competencies they require to undertake current and future tasks required by the organisation.

The fundamental aim of strategic human resource development is to enhance resource capability in accordance with the belief that the human capital of an organisation is a major source of competitive advantage.

It is therefore about ensuring that the right quality people are available to meet present and future needs. This is achieved by producing a coherent and comprehensive framework for developing people.

The main goal of HRD is to develop intellectual capital that promote organisational, team and individual learning by creating a learning culture and environment in which employees are encouraged to learn and develop and in which knowledge is managed.

Although this may seem quite impossible in the school environment, however, effective leadership may help to create such conditions. As shown in chapter 2, the role of leadership in aligning people's needs and expectations with the mission and vision of the organisation is very important; and can determine success or failure in

staff motivation and retention. Therefore, the possibility of promoting strategic human resource development could be realised in schools.

5.3 Learning culture

The concerns about lack of developmental opportunities in the identified schools highlights a much bigger problem in rural schools and that is, the need to promote a culture of learning and development. According to Armstrong (2006:560), learning is a continuous process that not only enhances existing capabilities but also leads to the development of the skills, knowledge and attitudes that prepare people for enlarged or higher-level responsibilities.

Clearly, this indicates the direct link between career planning and learning and development. Therefore, it follows that teachers in schools would probably be more willing to stay if they had opportunities for learning and development that are linked to their career goals and aspirations.

However, as Armstrong (2006:561) further argues, individuals must be motivated to learn. They should be aware that their present level of knowledge, skills, or competence, or the existing attitude or behaviour, need to be developed or improved if they are to perform their work to their own and to others' satisfaction.

They must, therefore, have a clear picture of the behaviour they should adopt. To be motivated, learners must gain satisfaction from learning. They are most capable of learning if it satisfies one or more of their needs. Conversely, the best learning programmes can fail if they are not seen as useful by those undertaking them.

The foregoing discussion raises three important points: first, teachers themselves need to take full responsibility for their own learning. They need to recognise that the current knowledge and skills they possess need improvement. Second, they need to understand that improving their skills will make it easier for everyone in the school to achieve better results. This suggests that learning and development opportunities benefit both the organisation and employees.

Third, learning and development programmes need to be desired in a manner that meets teachers' needs and expectations; otherwise they may be a waste of scarce public resources. This is could be one of the biggest challenges that rural schools face in relation to teacher development as they limited access to information and learning resources. Therefore, direct intervention of the department of education could possibly assist rural schools in Limpopo to raise teacher awareness about the need to embark on self-directed learning.

5.3.1 Support systems

A crucial factor revealed by the study was that there seems to be a gap in terms of support systems in the identified schools. Teachers need all forms of support in order to be able to do their jobs well. One of the major concerns raised by participants in this regard pertains to induction, stress management, communication, participation of teachers in decision making, leadership commitment and support, computer technology and grievance procedure. These are discussed below.

5.3.2 Induction of new teachers

As stated in chapter two, induction is the process by which new employees learn and internalise the norms and values of the organisation; including its business activities.

Some participants indicated that new teachers soon become discouraged because they are thrown at the deep end without proper induction. As a result, they end up not knowing whether they are doing the right thing or not. Sum of the major benefits highlighted in chapter two are summarised in table 4 below.

Table 4: Advantages of induction

Advantages	Meaning
a. Socialisation	Enables new employees to learn and internalise culture quickly
b. Quick adjustment	Enables new employee to adjust to new work environment
c. Reduced uncertainty	Provides employee with all the required information
d. Better performance	Enables new employee to perform his/her duties well

From table 4, it can be seen that induction plays an important role in enabling new employees to internalise organisational norms and values and to adjust to their jobs quickly. One of the key issues that emerged from the study was that some schools assume that professional teachers, even if they have no teaching experience, can handle things on their own. This assumption compromises the need for induction and as a result, new teachers start work without knowing the mission and vision of the organisations (schools) that they work for.

Therefore, the lack of induction in the identified schools confirm literature evidence in chapter two, which showed that sometimes induction fails in organisations due to poor planning or negligence.

5.4 Link between socialisation and career development

The link between socialisation and career development (induction) is confirmed by Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1988:675**),** who are argue that socialisation and career development processes occur in all organisations, and through them the interests of individuals and organisations are identified and confronted. Socialisation emphasises the interests of the organisation, while career development emphasises the interests of the individual.

The preferred outcome is integration of organisational and individual interests. Judging by the results of the study, it appears that the two organisations under study have not been able to integrate socialisation and career development. This is evidenced by the comments made by Respondent F who said that:

"You end up not knowing whether to continue working or look for better jobs in the private sector, where most people say life is better". In think principals assume that teachers can find their own way in the profession. They don't seem to care much. May be they are scared to talk to junior teachers because some of these teachers have higher qualifications than principals." (Interview, 6 November, 2010)

These comments reveal another important issue regarding opportunities for advancement in schools, namely identification of employees' developmental needs. Goldsten and Ford (in Eramus, Loedolf, Mda and Nel (2006:125), argue that there is

always a temptation to begin training without a thorough analysis of needs. This approach is risky since every organisation, irrespective of its structure, has certain needs that must be satisfied to ensure that the organisation is economically viable and continues to grow. Training needs assessment is the process of discovering precisely what gaps exist between what people know, do or feel and what they should know, do or feel in order to perform competently.

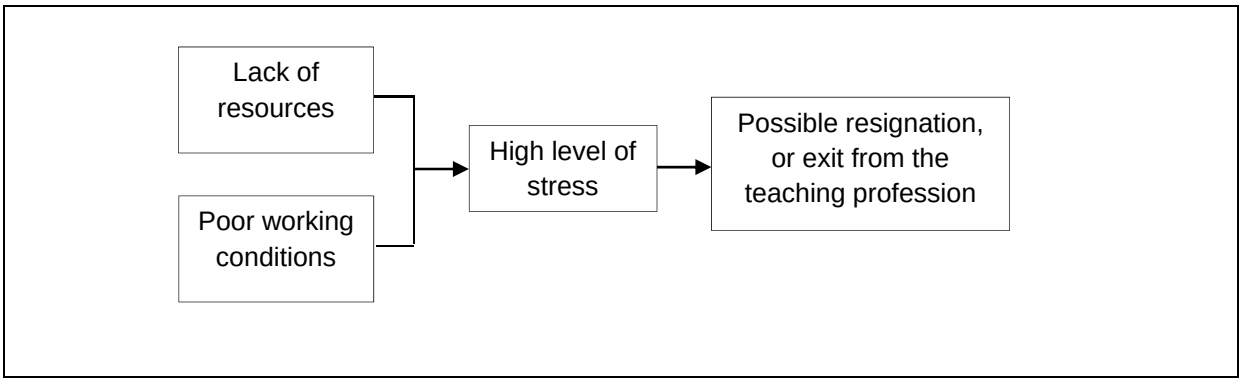
This statement underlines the importance of determining teachers' training and development needs in schools. One of the grave concerns raised by some of the respondents was that there seems to be no determination on the part of school managers to assist teachers in planning their careers. In some way, this explains why some teachers eventually decide to quit or leave teaching.

5.5 Stress management

According to Brown and Harvey (2006:252), stress is an interaction between an individual and the environment characterised by emotional strain affecting a person's physical and mental condition. High levels of stress can cause fear, anxiety, fatigue and tension, all of which can affect an employee's performance at work.

The study showed that teachers in some of the target schools are stressed by several factors, such as the lack of resources and poor working conditions. Therefore, the lack of stress management programmes contributes to the demotivation of teachers and ultimately their withdrawal from the school environment. Figure 6 below provides an illustration of the chain of events that probably cause stress among teachers and compel them to exit the school environment.

Figure 7: Possible causes of stress among teachers



Source: Own compilation, 2010

As indicated in figure 7 above the combination of two factors, namely lack of resources and poor working conditions may cause a teacher to become stressed and eventually to decide whether to resign from that particular school or leave the teaching profession completely.

5.6 Communication

Poor communication was cited as one of the major challenges affecting teacher morale in the teaching profession. According to Flanagan and Finger (2003:146), face to face communication remains the most important form of communicating. The findings of the study on communication are corroborated by Sutermeister (1976:67), who argues that communication affects employees' attitudes and motivation. The purpose of communication is to achieve mutual understanding in the minds of the sender and receiver of the message. Robey and Sales (1994:99) state that open communication channels facilitate the solution of complex problems.

Therefore, the lack of communication in the school system not only affects teachers' motivational levels but also their performance in the classroom. Katz and Kahn (1978:441) state that feedback to individuals about how well they are doing in their jobs is often neglected or poorly handled, even in organisations in which the managerial philosophy calls for such evaluation. In a way, this viewpoint confirms the findings of the study.

5.7 Participation in decision making

Research shows that employee participation in decision making contributes positively to organisational efficiency and effectiveness. The findings of the study indicated that the exclusion of teachers from the decision making process in some schools had a negative impact on service delivery, as teachers felt alienated and therefore not part of the school system. Based on participants' inputs, the need for employee participation may be summed up as follows:

Table 5: Key decision areas for teacher participation

Key Decision areas	Reason for participation
Allocation of work	Teachers know what is possible and not possible in terms of work load, so they must have a say in work allocation
Career planning	Career decisions are personal and therefore require the inputs of teachers. School managers must involve teachers in career planning activities
Further education and training	Teachers know what knowledge and skills they need to enhance their performance and career prospects in schools
Operational planning	Teachers want to be part of the learner admission process as this affects both their work load and their ability to teach effectively

Table 5suggests four key areas in which teachers' inputs may be required during the decision making process, namely: allocation of work, career planning, further education and training and operational planning.

The latter relates directly to goal setting, one of the key management functions discussed in chapter two. The need for involving teachers in goal setting demonstrates a paradigm shift from traditional management practices which attributed every aspect of decision making to managers.

As shown in chapter two, new public management theory requires a strong focus on clear goal setting processes where managers and employees work jointly to identify and agree performance goals, and develop plans for achieving these. Therefore, the

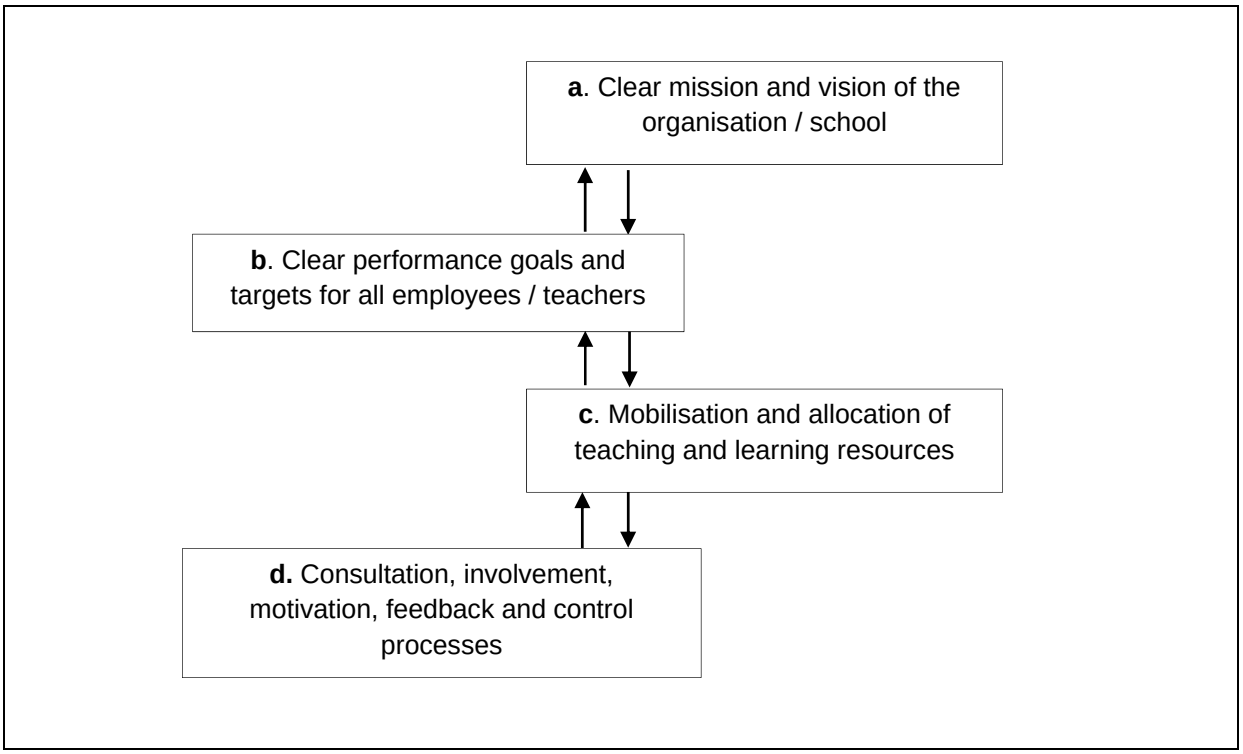
possibility of applying these principles in the school environment to instil a culture of high performance and learning is great.

5.8 Leadership commitment and support

Bartol and Martin (1993:408) define leadership as the process of influencing others to achieve organisational goals. Leaders and managers get things done through people. The same principle applies to managers in schools. One of the concerns raised by some participants in the study was that the lacks of effective leadership in some schools tend to have an adverse effect on teacher moral and performance; more especially if the leader of the school adopts an autocratic leadership style, where all decisions are centred around him/her.

Bartol and Martin (1993) point out that autocratic leaders tend to make unilateral decisions, dictate work methods, limit worker knowledge and goals to just the next step to be performed and sometimes give negative feedback. As will be recalled, some participants were very much concerned about the fact that their contributions to the teaching process was not being appreciated in schools, which ultimately forced disgruntled teachers to leave the profession. Figure 7 below shows the possible ways in which leadership can provide support in an ideal teaching and learning environment.

Figure 8: Possible leadership support initiatives



Source: Own compilation, 2010.

From figure 8, it is clear that leadership can have a positive impact on employees in the school environment if it provides a clear mission and vision that is fully understood by all staff members; set clear performance goals and targets for teachers across all levels; mobilise and allocate materials resources needed to support teaching and learning and, finally, ensuring that processes of consultation, involvement, feedback and control are in place at all times. As indicated in chapter two, the leader's ability to align employee behaviour with strategy is a key to organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

For this to happen, a two-way communication system is needed to facilitate top-down and bottom-up communications.

5.9 Computer technology

Of the issues revealed by the study, lack of computers in the selected schools was regarded as one of the factors that increase teachers' workload, because teachers also have to do paperwork as computers form part of information technology, it may be necessary to start by defining this concept. According to Robey and Sales (1994: information technology refers to all types of computing and communications hardware and software, ranging from independent microcomputers to large integrated management information systems and worldwide telecommunication systems. The benefits of using computer technology in the school environment can be summarised as follows:

Table 6: Benefits of computer technology

Cost-savings /Speed	Large volumes of information e.g. learner assessment records can be processed quickly
Accuracy	Information captured and processed with computer technology is more likely to be accurate
Currency	Information on school matters can be reviewed and update from time to time
Storage	Computer technology makes it easier for employees to record and file essential data

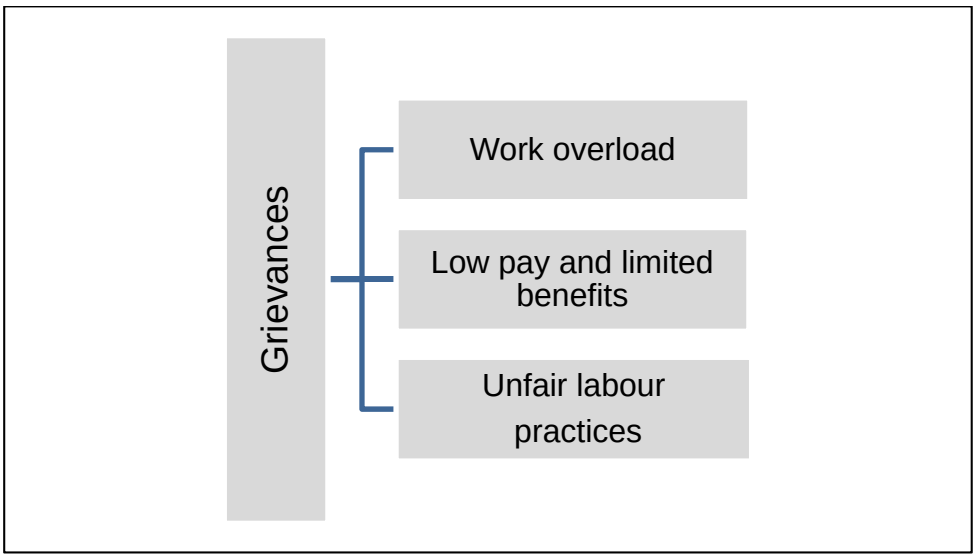
Source: Own compilation, 2010

Table 6 depicts five potential benefits of using computers organisations. These include cost savings resulting from speed; reliability of the information as computers are programmed and therefore precise in their processing of information; availability of information that is relevant and up to date and safe storage of vital information, such as assessment records and service delivery plans. The lack of computer technology in the identified schools, therefore, deprived teachers of the opportunity to master computer skills and to do their administrative work in a more efficient way.

5.10 Grievance procedure

A grievance procedure represents a bottom-up communication channel that enables employees to present their complaints, concerns and frustrations to management in a structured way. While common teacher complaints are dealt with by management and unions, however, some respondents raised concerns about the slow response from the department of education in addressing serious problems that impact the teaching and learning process in schools, such as conflict and unfair promotion based on nepotism or favouritism. Based on this data, the type of grievances which some participants felt contributed to staff turnover are illustrated below.

Figure 9: Unresolved issues leading to staff turnover



Source: Own compilation, 2010

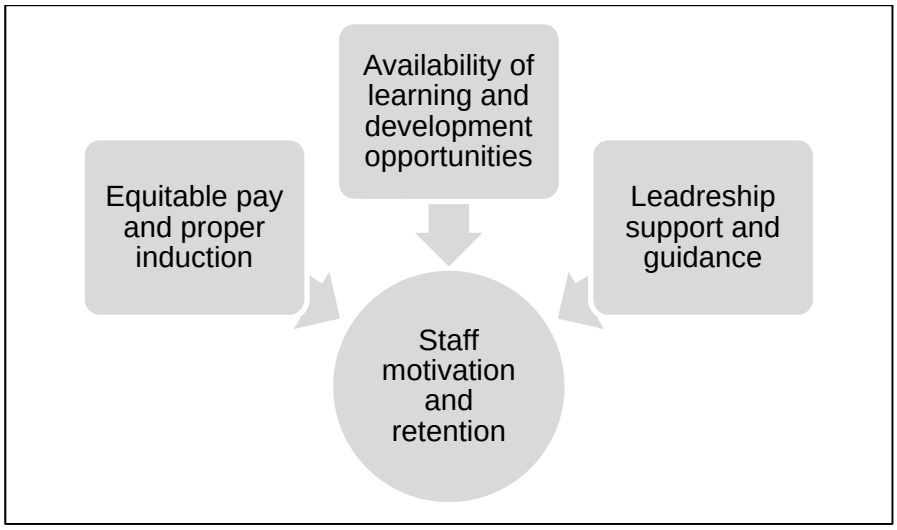
As indicated in figure 9 above, there were three major grievances and/or issues which some of the respondents felt the department of education had failed to address adequately. These included work overload; low pay and limited benefits and unfair labour practices, such as favouritism, for example. The overall impression was that if these issues were resolved, many teachers would stay in the teaching profession.

5.11 Staff motivation

To some extent, the findings of the study also raise serious questions on whether schools do have effective people motivation and retention strategies. A retention strategy spells out clearly how an organisation plans to attract, develop, reward and keep talented employees. The persistent staff turnover in Limpopo schools, therefore, might be an indication that retention strategies are either missing or not properly implemented in these institutions. Common sense suggests that organisations that keep good employees are more likely to experience higher productivity than those faced with acute levels of staff turnover.

Based on the data analysed so far, the key factors that probably play a greater role in teacher motivation and retention may be illustrated as follows:

Figure 10: Some of the key factors contributing to staff motivation in schools



Source: own compilation, 2010.

Figure 10 above shows three important elements that may lead to better staff motivation and retention in schools. The first factor is the availability of learning and development opportunities. Nearly all the respondents interviewed indicated that career development could play a major role in enabling schools to keep teachers for a long time.

The second factor is conversely, lack of such opportunities may force many teachers to leave the profession. The role of leadership is very important here. As will be recalled, one of the key points made in chapter two was that leaders or school managers must have the ability to align individual and group performance with the mission and vision of the organisation; and to ensure that people receive enough guidance and support so that they can perform their jobs better.

Thus, the lack of leadership support may cause frustration and stress among teachers, as illustrated the comments made by the comment that “when you get to school, the only reality that you face is the time-table, which shows that you will teach the whole day…and there is no time to talk about other issues that affect your own life,” and, that “the reason why some teachers leave is because they are neglected.”

Together, these comments illustrate the importance that employees attach to leadership support and guidance in schools. Leaders are expected to provide both moral and material support to teachers, and to ensure that their needs and expectations are met, including family needs. To some extent, this confirms Maslow’s theory about the need to meet people’s social needs in the workplace.

5.12 Linking career development with performance management

The findings of the study revealed that teacher orientation towards work varies greatly in the identified schools. For example, one concern was that some teachers are only concerned about their salaries. Consequently organisational performance and morale suffers. Since performance management identifies learning and development needs, it follows that this process can be utilised to support career development in schools.

The link between performance management and career development is confirmed by Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1988:639), who argue that performance evaluation is used for motivational, improved knowledge, research, promotion, and training and development purposes.

What this means, therefore, is that performance management may be used in schools as the basis for identifying not only teachers' performance problems, but also training requirements and career needs. In this way, the challenges leading to low staff morale may be mitigated.

5.13 Major highlights of the study

The data analysed so far has revealed a number of interesting issues in relation to staff turnover in some schools in the Capricorn district municipality. Some of these issues are striking because they were never anticipated at the beginning of the research project, but they have a significant bearing on the research topic. These are summarised below:

a. "Staff turnover is not necessarily a bad thing in schools"

Initially, this research was based on the assumption that staff turnover has an adverse effect on service delivery in schools. But the results contradict this assumption by showing that staff turnover also brings certain economic benefits such as, for example, job opportunities for new and unemployed teachers in local communities.

b. "Teachers must be part of change"

A concern was raised about the tendency of some teachers to complain about working conditions and yet fail to contribute to the alleviation of such conditions. The striking point here was that teachers must avoid negative thinking and start seeing themselves as key role players in the change process. This shows the widely differing views held by teachers on how to change the situation.

c. "Travelling long distances to and from school affects teacher morale"

Several respondents alluded to the fact that travelling long distances to work every day had an adverse effect on both teaching and learning. This suggests that geographical constraints have an indirect effect on staff turnover.

d. "The soft approach to discipline is not helping teachers at all"

There was a strong feeling that lack of discipline is still a big problem in some rural schools. This made teachers vulnerable to many life-threatening situations, such violent learners who cause bodily harm to teachers (e.g. stubbing them with knives). Lack of discipline among learners makes teachers' work difficult.

e. "Teachers must take full responsibility and ownership of their own learning and development"

Perhaps of all the issues revealed by the study, this was the most emphatic and instructive comment from some of the participants. It suggests two things: first, there are opportunities for teachers to learn and improve their careers in education. Second, unless teachers take the initiative to show interest in their own learning, career development will not work in schools. This means that both the organisation (school) and the employee (teacher) must work together to achieve developmental goals – hence it benefits both parties.

f. "Reasons for staff turnover in schools are hard to explain because teachers have different motives"

Besides revealing the complex nature of staff turnover, this comment also says something about the kinds of attitudes that teachers bring to the work environment, which ultimately determine whether or not they will stay for a long time. This issue was neatly summed up by respondent C regarding (i) development opportunities and (ii) salaries, as follows:

"You see, people are different. Some people are willing to come forward and ask you if you have some useful information on further education and training. Others will wait until you tell them that such information is available. Then you have a group of people who just do not want to hear anything about that, because they are only concerned about getting a better salary, and not career issues. Can you see how difficult our situation is?" (Interview, 6 November 2010).

Three important points can be deduced from these comments about the different attitudes displayed by teachers in schools: first, some teachers are go-getters – in other words, they are responsible for their own development. Second, other teachers depend on their managers for assistance and advice. Third, some teachers are not interested in career development. To some extent, the latter explains why many schools complain about poor performing teachers; and this problem is not just confined to the Capricorn community, but affects the country as a whole.

What this also shows is that teachers are divided in terms of their orientation towards work. For example, while some may be willing to work harder and to improve their career prospects, others are only concerned with money. This is revealing in terms of the motivational theories discussed in chapter two, which showed that people are motivated by different things, and pay seems to be the most influential factor.

In terms of staff turnover, this means that some teachers would leave the organisation if there were no opportunities for self-development; while others would leave due to poor pay. What this means, therefore, is that the lack of both developmental opportunities and adequate compensation contributes to staff turnover in schools.

g. "When you start work, you hardly know what the school is trying to achieve in terms of service standards and results"

This statement highlights the dilemma that many teachers face when they start work without some form of induction, particularly in rural schools. Secondly, this comment also highlights the need for aligning induction programmes with the mission and vision of the organisation – since there is a need for teachers to "know what the school is trying to achieve in terms of service standards and results". Essentially, these comments underline the need for communicating the mission and vision of the organisation to new employees as soon as possible – so that when they start work, they know exactly what to do and how to do it.

h. “Unmet promises make some teachers lose hope in the system”

This statement reveals a serious problem in terms of policy implementation, particularly in the education system. For years, government has made many promises to teachers on how it plans to improve their working conditions. Teachers are divided on whether progress is being made in this regard. For example, nearly half of the respondents indicated that the department of education has not kept all its promises to teachers, which is why many of them are leaving; while others felt that slight improvements have occurred in salaries and developmental opportunities.

i. “Take the 2900 bicycles given to learners who travel long distances to and from school. That is a great improvement”

Although the bicycles benefit learners, however, they also make it easier for teachers to do their work on time, as they are able to overcome late coming, which is a big problem in rural schools due to the long distances that some of the learners have to travel every day. So the bicycles also play a big role in alleviating some of the severe challenges facing educators in rural schools in the Capricorn District municipality.

j. “The reason why some teachers leave is because they are neglected”

This statement highlights the challenge that some schools in the Capricorn district faced in terms of leadership. This suggests that in some situations, teachers get demotivated due to the lack of effective leadership in their schools. This is even worse for new teachers, who still need a lot of guidance and support. Therefore, the lack of leadership support puts the spot light on the role of principals and heads of department as leaders and managers of schools.

k. “If you give a less experienced teacher more work, he will end up bunking classes or even skipping some lessons; not because he wants to, but because he is tired”

This statement is striking in two respects: first it highlights the danger of giving teachers too much work in schools. The idea that a teacher may end up skipping certain lessons as a result of fatigue is important because it shows the negative

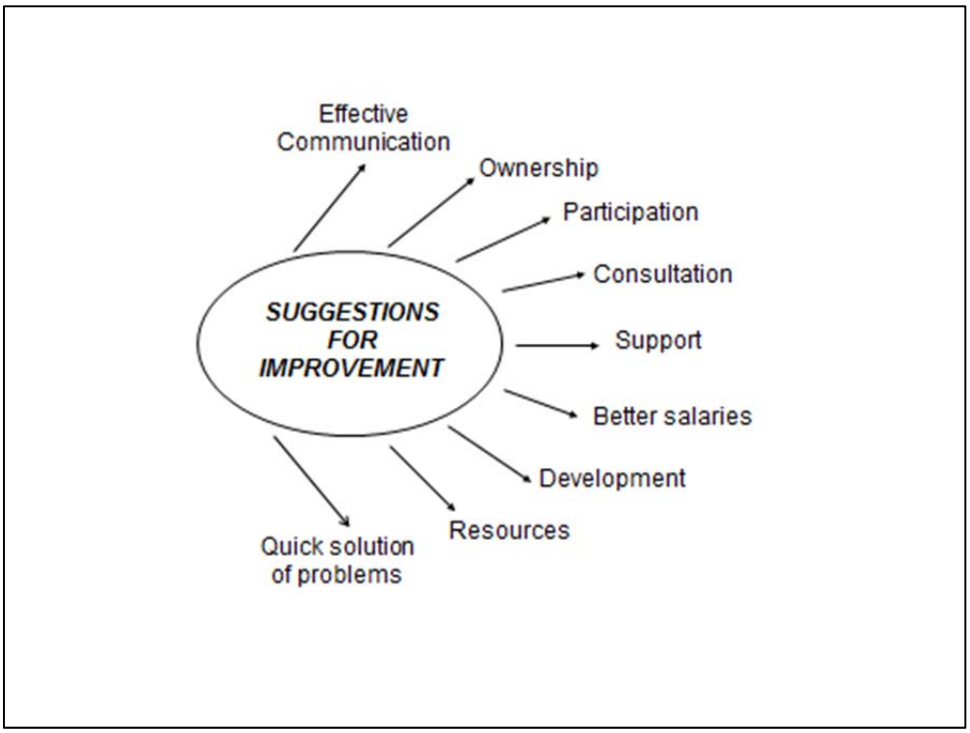
impact of abnormal workloads on teachers' lives. In other words, heavy workloads make it difficult for teachers to enjoy a high quality of work life. The second vital issue revealed by this statement is that fatigue resulting from demanding work schedules may lead to absenteeism and, ultimately, resignation from the school.

Having highlighted some of the major highlights of the study, attention will now be focused on some of the inputs that participants gave on what can be done to improve working conditions for teachers. These suggestions are important as they reveal a number of underlying problems that make it difficult for teachers to enjoy their work.

5.14 Suggestions for improvement

As indicated in chapter four, participants were asked to suggest ways in which conditions of service for teachers could be improved. The inputs were striking in both in their content and scope. The following diagram provides an illustration of the most important contributions made by participants in this regard.

Figure 11: suggestion for improvement



Source own compilation, 2010

As depicted in figure 11**,** participants suggested a number of ways in which the conditions of service for teachers could be improved. These ranged from effective communication, support, better salaries to quick identification and solution of problems in the workplace.

To some extent, these suggestions provide clues in terms of the major challenges facing teachers in the Capricorn District municipality. Although not easily generalizable across the province, these issues however, epitomise the severe working conditions under which teachers in many schools in the Limpopo province serve. And, what is striking about these suggestions is that they all highlight the need for effective human resource management in schools. This has implications for principals and heads of department.

More importantly, these suggestions also reveal the need for effective, on-going communication between school managers and employees; which must be supplemented with consultation and participation processes. The inclusion of resources as one of the most critical factors in driving teacher learning and development is important here. Any attempt to improve working conditions for teachers without adequate resources is likely to fail.

Up to this point, attention has been focused on the interpretation of the research findings on the challenges leading to staff turnover in schools. The following chapter deals with conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an integrated discussion of the findings of the study and proposes some of the remedies that can be initiated to mitigate staff turnover among teachers in some Limpopo schools. It also suggests the area where future research may be undertaken to help improve the plight of teachers in the province.

6.2 Conclusions

Conclusions represent the most crucial aspect of research, as they demonstrate how the findings of the study can be judged in order to determine their underlying meaning in relation to the research topic. After consideration of the challenges linked to staff turnover in some Limpopo schools, the following inferences were derived:

In terms of working conditions, the findings revealed mixed reactions, with some participants claiming that the teaching profession has improved significantly over the last ten years, while others maintained that the conditions of service have actually worsened in that there are no financial incentives for teachers who acquire further qualifications. This situation makes it difficult for such teachers to remain in the profession.

More importantly, the exclusion of teachers from the decision making process appeared to be one of the major factors contributing dissatisfaction among teachers. The overall feeling was that teachers are at the “coal face” and therefore need to be part of the decision-making process. A specific example was made about curriculum development, which had been driven mainly by policy makers at national level.

The study further showed that the challenges leading to staff turnover in the teaching province vary greatly, ranging from personal motivation, unsatisfactory conditions of service, limited support from the employer and environmental factors. Some of these findings tally with the observations made in the literature review section, especially the issue of poor salaries; which was seen as the most frustrating factor.

Research results have indicated that some teachers are prepared to remain in the profession, provided that the government improved the conditions of service. This shows that the level of job satisfaction among teachers in some Limpopo schools remains stable despite the challenges cited in chapter 4 of this report. It is this crop of teachers whose talents and skills need to be harnessed to ensure that the province have the capacity required to deliver high quality services in schools.

Discrepancies in terms of teacher support systems varied across schools and this implies that there might be gaps in terms of HR practices in the school system, particularly in the Capricorn district in Limpopo province; which further contributes to staff turnover. For example, while some schools had proactive HR policies that encouraged teacher participation and involvement, others relied on autocratic management practices that promoted a culture of conformity, as opposed to creativity and innovation.

To some degree, staff turnover in teaching represents both opportunities and threats. On the positive side, teacher turnover implies better career prospects for those who remain behind as the career leader is severely limited in the school environment. On the negative side, sustained teacher turnover has adverse effect on service delivery as some schools end up with a low skills base, which normally results in poor performance. Thus, to extent, staff turnover affects teacher quality and results.

To conclude, multiple factors are responsible for staff turnover in the Limpopo province. The situation is characterised by both scepticism and optimism. Expectations are high in terms of what government needs to in order to improve the situation. At the same time, it is widely recognised that teachers should change their attitudes and start seeing themselves as key stakeholders in the change process.

6.3Future Research

The rising trend in staff turnover in some schools in the Limpopo province might be an indication of a much bigger problem concerning the management of human resources in these institutions. A critical question that needs to be addressed by future research, therefore, is whether rural schools have proper talent management plans in place to ensure that teachers are groomed, rewarded and retained. This would help mitigate the sustained rate of employee turnover and bring about stability and improved service delivery in schools.

6.4 Recommendations

Looking at the inputs provided by respondents and the conclusions reached in the foregoing, it appears that the major challenges that contribute to staff turnover among teachers in the Limpopo province relate to the lack of support; adverse working conditions and limited career options. The following interventions are proposed to help mitigate these challenges.

6.4.1 Aligning human resource activities with operational plans

The HR practices used in the business sector need to be introduced in schools as part of new public management. One such principle is the alignment of HR plans with business strategy. In the school situation, this would entail factoring employee issues in strategic planning.

For this to happen, principals and HODs need to be trained on basic principles of strategic human resource management so that they can see and appreciate its value in the service delivery chain. This should be supplemented with relevant literature, i.e. schools should be given adequate reference materials to ensure that leaders and managers improve their knowledge and skills on strategic human resource management. This could have a positive impact on staff retention.

6.4.2 Providing on-going career planning workshops

One of the major concerns that emerged from the findings of the study was that career planning in some schools still regarded as an individual choice. In other words, there are no proper systems in place to support staff learning and development. This call for the introduction of formal career planning workshops for teachers. This process should be led by circuit managers and principals.

These workshops should provide a plat for teachers to discuss their career goals and aspirations with their leaders, managers and colleagues. Career expects should be invited to drive the process and to provide the necessary career guidance to teachers across all occupational levels and categories. This can be done at least semi-annually in order to avoid disruption of work in schools.

6.4.3 Rewarding competent teachers who produce good results

As evidenced by the results, pay has always been and remains a thorny issue in the teaching profession. Half of the respondents interviewed raised serious concerns about the uncompetitive nature of the salary packages offered to teachers. It needs to be bone in mind that talented teachers ("high flyers") will not remain in the teaching profession unless they receive attractive compensation packages, as their counterparts do in the private sector. Various options on merit pay need to be considered so that high performers can be rewarded for their efforts.

6.4.4 Raising teacher awareness about available support services

The study also revealed lack of two-way communication as one of the major challenges that cause teachers to leave the profession. It is not enough to have good support systems in place if these are not known by teachers in the classroom situation. Therefore, it is vital that heads of schools inform teachers about available support systems and career options, as opposed to just issuing pamphlets, circulars and brochures and leaving teachers to fend for themselves. Self-help strategies are good when the target audience stays closer to resource centres, but they can be very cumbersome in places like Limpopo, where most people live in rural areas.

6.4.5 Encouraging a culture of life-long learning among teachers

This should be a joint responsibility of principals, governing bodies and department heads. Special talks led by motivational speakers must be organised regularly to help teachers see the value of self-learning. This is important in a place where information on education and training opportunities is hard to come by. Depending on the situation, life-long learning talks could form part of the career mapping workshops suggested in the foregoing.

6.5 Success factors

The success of the interventions proposed in this section hinges on a number of factors, including: leadership commitment; availability of resources; direct involvement of representatives of the provincial department of education in processes such as teacher career planning workshops; effective two-way communication and feedback; effective engagement of all key stakeholders; and, finally, the ability of school managers to actively encourage teachers to participate in learning and development programmes in their schools.

6.6 Implementation guidelines

The following guidelines are proposed as additional measures that may be utilised to speed up the implementation of recommendations:

- Prioritisation of teachers' needs in light of scarce resources and support infrastructure and demanding work schedules
- Clear and specific guidelines on the allocation of resoles and responsibilities for each of the recommended course of action
- Adoption of a gradual approach to implement the recommendations – this would help ease the pressure on school budgets
- Ensuring that turnover alleviation efforts are aligned with the broader human resource development goals of the organisation
- Marketing the benefits of learning and development inside the organisation with a view to create a learning culture

- Ensuring that teacher development efforts are linked to critical HR processes such as induction, performance management, training, and rewards.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the working conditions for teachers?

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2. What is your opinion about teachers' remuneration?

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3. What support does the department of education provide for teachers with social health problems?

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4. Why do you think many teachers leave the teaching profession?

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5. How would you describe teachers' work load?

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6. What is your opinion on career development for teachers?

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7. What can be done to curb the exodus of teachers?

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