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# **APPROACHES TO MANAGING TEACHER ATTRITION IN MOPANI DISTRICT**

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Management in the field of Public and Development Management.

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any other university.

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Mikateko Maria Mabasa

## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved husband, my loving mother, my sisters, my two sons Mangaliso and Rifuwo and my only daughter, Thembeke with love.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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And most importantly, the district manager, circuit managers and school managers for their availability and willingness to share with me the challenges they are facing as managers in the education department.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study explores the challenges facing the department of education in trying to retain teachers in Mopani District. It examines whether the department of education is coming up with the best approaches and/or strategies to regain teachers' confidence and pride with regard to their profession. The study identifies different approaches and/or strategies that the department of education is putting in place to keep quality teachers in schools. The study also reveals that there are a lot of problems in implementing these strategies. During the in-depth interviews I conducted with the District Manager, Circuit Managers, a Human Resource Manager and School Managers it emerged that there is a real need for the retention teachers with much needed expertise as well as the recalling of some of those who have already left the system. Accordingly, the study argues that if best and strategic approaches could be used to address the issue of teacher attrition / turnover, such a measure could go a long way in arresting the exodus of good teachers in the system.

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## **ACCRONYMS**

|       |                                            |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|
| AIDS  | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome        |
| APEK  | Assosiace pro Elektronickou Komerco        |
| DoE   | Department of Education                    |
| ELRC  | Education and Labour Relations Council     |
| ESKOM | Electricity Supply Kommission (commission) |
| GDP   | Gross Domestic Product                     |
| HIV   | Human Immunodeficiency Virus               |
| HOD   | Head of Department                         |
| HRM   | Human Resource Management                  |
| IQMS  | Integrated Quality Management Systems      |
| NCS   | National Curriculum Statement              |
| OK    | All Right                                  |
| R & R | Restructuring and Redeployment             |
| SARS  | South African Revenue Services             |
| SASA  | South African Schools Act                  |
| US    | United States                              |

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The role of teachers and their strong influence in student learning for development should not be underestimated. Teachers both impact how students learn and determine whether students' academic success will bring development in their communities. A number of countries have demonstrated their efforts in producing and retaining good teachers in their schools. Goldrick (2009) cited Teaching's "Three Simple Premises" that need to be considered when dealing with the role of teachers in development for American schools. The premises include what teachers know and can do as the most important influence on what students learn; recruiting; preparing and retaining good teachers which is the central strategy for improving schools and the focus on the creation of the conditions under which teachers can teach and teach well to enhance the success of school reform.

Something can be learned from countries like Singapore, Finland and South Korea. They have strategic and systematic approaches to attract, develop, reward or retain, and ensure the efficacy of the most talented educators. They also make sure great teachers serve students of all economic backgrounds. However, this kind of approach did not work for the U. S. due to factors like chaotic mix in the labor market trends, university economics and local school district dynamics. It uses 'teacher effectiveness' as a major theme for reform to lift students' achievements. What is the situation in South Africa?

It is a known fact that South Africa has had a difficult past whereby inferior education was consistently dispensed to the black population. The imbalance in the education system manifested itself through the unequal distribution of state resources pertaining to education matters. Our society was deeply divided. The cumulative effect of systematic oppression, compounded by large scale illiteracy, led to gross inequalities for black people. It is against such background that the new democratic government is attempting to undo what came to be known as Bantu Education. Among the many problems to be overcome was the proliferation of teacher training colleges by the former government. It

is a sad reality that most teachers were forced take up this profession by circumstances beyond their control and no proper teacher ratios were maintained over the decades.

The Education and Labour Relations Council (ELRC) was established in terms of section 37(3) (b) of the Labour Relation Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995) to come up with strategies to rectify the imbalances of the past. The council came up with a strategy that shook teachers from their comfort zones as the strategy resulted in some of the teachers being declared to be in excess and were to be moved to other schools so as to balance the teacher-pupil ratio.

Most of the teachers that are presently serving the department of education are the products of the apartheid era and were thus confused by the transformation process in education as they were used to the ways of the past. The generation of teachers that is being produced today is the first to experience the new non-racial democratic transformation of the education system (Department of education, 2005:6). The department expects teachers to cope with the rationalization of the education community into a single national system, the introduction of the new curriculum, which emphasizes greater professional independence and require a teacher to use new technologies and radical changes in demographic, cultural and linguistic compositions of classrooms. This became a challenge to most educators since transformation and democracy meant piles of workloads, lots of administrative work, and freedom for learners. This set of circumstances also accelerated teacher migrations to other industries.

This is a report of a research study into the strategic approaches of the department of education in Mopani District in Limpopo in its efforts to managing teacher attrition and resultant teacher shortages. The next section looks at the background of the study. This will be followed by the statement of the problem, the aim of the study and the research questions, the rationale of the study and finally, the structure of the study.

## **1.1. Background of the study**

Limpopo Province is one nine provinces in the Republic of South Africa. The province is comprised of five districts, which are Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, Sekhukhune and Waterberg. Mopani District, as the centre of this research, is itself divided into five circuits namely; Man'ombe, Shamavunga, Groot Letaba, Nsami and Klein Letaba. The department of education in Limpopo has raised a concern about the shortage of teachers in the province. Statistics show that there is a shortage of approximately 15 000 teachers and the department is considering to borrow at least 2 000 teachers with scarce skills from other countries in the region (Department of education, Limpopo, 2008).

Mopani District is deeply experiencing a problem of teacher shortages to an extent that schools even fight for teachers with scarce skills. The number of teachers who are resigning from teaching is forever increasing. Between the period of 2004 and 2008, 402 teachers have resigned from teaching, where 79 teachers resigned in 2004, 90 in 2005, 120 in 2006, 97 in 2007 and 16 during the first three months of 2008 (Department of Education, Mopani, 2008). The reasons for their resignation vary from death to looking for greener pastures. Most of the teachers who resigned were young and bright and were the future of the teaching career.

Hence the study focused on the Department of Education's approaches to managing the situation of teacher attrition. Most schools in Mopani District are badly affected by teacher shortages and as a result their performance is poor. Sixteen out of twenty four schools are regarded as dysfunctional, and among the causes, teacher attrition is rated number one.

## **1.2. The statement of the problem**

By virtue of the legacy of the past, the new government is faced with a massive challenge of arresting the exodus of good teachers from the system. There are more teachers leaving the system than there are those who are entering it. Bright young teachers qualified in mathematics and sciences are being attracted by well-paying organizations like ESKOM and TELKOM. Recently, two principals from Mopani District have resigned from teaching, where one is now working for ESKOM and the other one for SARS. Other good teachers are constantly finding jobs in high positions in the government as well as outside of it. Another major source of attrition is the many deaths that are HIV&AIDS related being recorded on an ongoing scale. Very few teachers are ready to enter the system on a yearly basis. The reasons for exiting vary from deaths to resignations. This leads one to question the department's action in handling the challenge of teacher attrition. The department has to immediately find ways and best approaches to alleviate the situation.

## **1.3. Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to explore the challenges facing the department of education in Mopani District regarding the retention of teachers in schools. The study intends to examine whether the department of education is coming up with best approaches and/or strategies to regain teachers' confidence and pride with regard to their profession. The study further identifies different approaches and/or strategies that the department of education is putting in place to keep quality teachers in schools. The study will:

1. Investigate factors leading to teacher attrition.
2. Present findings on the challenges of teacher attrition in schools.
3. Give an interpretation and analysis of the findings.
4. Recommend strategies for consideration in dealing with the teacher attrition.

#### **1.4. Research questions.**

1. What are the factors leading to teacher attrition?
2. What are the trends in the teacher movements in the education system in Mopani Districts?
3. How is the department of education handling teacher attrition?
4. What are the strategies for consideration in dealing with teacher attrition?

#### **1.5. Rationale of the study**

Research on teacher attrition in South Africa was conducted by Hall, Altman, Nkomo, Peltzer and Zuma (2004) and was aimed at determining the impact of job satisfaction, morale, workload and HIV/AIDS. Notwithstanding that research has proven that factors such as workloads, pupils' behaviors, and low morale contribute to the high levels of attrition, this study sees this as a phenomenon which could be managed. In spite of the knowledge of the underlying factors, strategic initiatives that would best address the issue of teacher shortages in Mopani District are lacking. Therefore, this research sees teacher attrition as a phenomenon that needs investigation. The study hopes to come up with best approaches and/or strategies to manage the exodus of teachers from the profession and thereby coming up with recommendations on how this issue can be addressed.

#### **1.6. The structure of the report**

This report comprises of six chapters. Chapter one serves as an introductory chapter of the research report that also gives a background from which the study was directed. It covers the following areas: the statement of the problem, the aim of the study, research questions and the rationale of the study.

Chapter two reviews literature related to the topic, which includes the definition of the concept of teacher attrition, human resource management in education, human resource and policy change, the implications of teacher attrition/ turnover, factors that contribute to teacher attrition as well as retention and recruiting strategies.

### **Chapter 3**

The research methods to be used were discussed. It also reflected on the research questions, research methods used for data collection.

### **Chapter 4**

Data presentation and the findings on data collected were presented.

### **Chapter 5**

The data collected was analyzed. Data analyses were integrated with the literature review to make meaning of the findings.

### **Chapter 6**

This last chapter made a conclusion on the findings and further gives recommendations based on the data analysis.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the research report by comparatively discussing the role of teachers in development. It looked at the success stories for teacher retention and the best strategies used by Finland, Korea and Singapore from which South Africa can learn. The report also gave the background of South Africa whereby Mopani District in Limpopo province was the main focus. The background of the study, the statement of the problem, the aim of the study and the structure of the report were presented in this chapter. The structure of the report outlined the six chapters involved whereby a step by step explanation of what each chapter contains is uncovered to guide the reader throughout

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

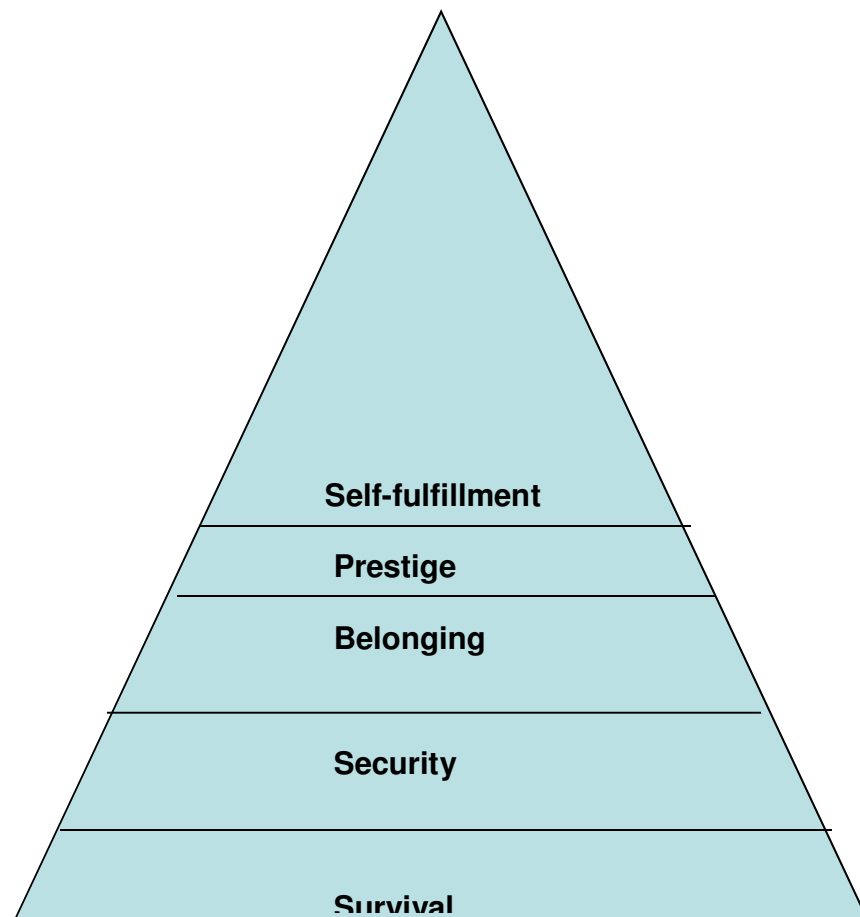
#### **2.1. Theoretical perspectives underpinning the concept of teacher attrition.**

This study is underpinned by motivational theories. They are Maslow, McGregor and Herzberg. Maslow (1970) argues that motivation is related to meeting a hierarchy of needs. The most important aspect of this theory is that the satisfaction of needs is sequential and that people will not be motivated by self-actualization needs when lower needs levels are unmet.

Furthermore, those who are hungry or cold, for example will not be motivated to fulfill their professional obligations until their physiological needs are met. (Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe 2003:157). They further indicated that if security is threatened by inadequate pay, the self-esteem related to being a good teacher will not be activated.

From the above theory, the conclusion is that meeting the needs in the order that they appear in Maslow's hierarchy of needs is of great importance because the satisfaction of the first lower need will give rise to the satisfaction of the second need in the level and so on. There is a great work to be done in terms of meeting the needs of teachers so that they are self-fulfilled and, therefore, enthusiastic about their work.

**Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of need (Maslow 1943)**



MacGregor (1970) built on Maslow's ideas by suggesting that there were two ways of viewing the motivation of people- the "X" theory and "Y" theory. Theory "X" suggest that people generally seek to avoid work and must be pressured by managers and/or driven by the need to make a living. Theory "Y" views people as wanting to take responsibility for them and be self-directed. The assumptions underlining these theories are best explained by the models below.

**Figure 2: Theory “X” and Theory “Y” (McGregor 1970)**

|                         | <b>Theory X</b>                                                                                                          | <b>Theory Y</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Assumptions</b>      | Humans inherently dislike working and they will try to avoid it if they can.                                             | People view work as being as natural as play and rest. Humans expect the same amount of physical and mental effort in their work as in their private lives.               |
|                         | Because people dislike work they have to be coerced or controlled by management and threatened so they work hard enough. | Provided people are motivated, they will be self-directing to the aims of the organisation. Control and punishment are not the only mechanisms to let people perform.     |
|                         | Average employees want to be directed                                                                                    | Job satisfaction is the key to engaging employees and ensuring their commitment.                                                                                          |
|                         | People don't like responsibility.                                                                                        | People learn to accept responsibility and seek responsibility. Average humans, under the proper conditions, will not only accept, but even naturally seek responsibility. |
|                         | Average humans are clear and unambiguous and want to feel secured at work                                                | People are imaginative and creative. Their ingenuity should be used to solve problems at work.                                                                            |
| <b>Application</b>      | Shop floor, Mass manufacturing, Production workers                                                                       | Professional services, Knowledge Workers, Managers and Professionals.                                                                                                     |
| <b>Conducive to</b>     | Large Scale efficient operations                                                                                         | Management of Professionals Participative Complex Problem Solving.                                                                                                        |
| <b>Management style</b> | Authoritarian, Hard Management.                                                                                          | Participative, Soft Management.                                                                                                                                           |

McGregor sees Theory “Y” as the preferable model and management method. In his book ‘The Human Side of Enterprise’ McGregor shows how the Theory “Y” affects the management of promotions and salaries and the development of effective managers and regards this theory conducive to participative problem solving. The thinking behind

Theory “Y” encourages working together in problem solving by all concerned groups (employees and managers) which in this study are managers, teachers and the Department of Education itself.

Herzberg (1966) approached motivation from a different angle, arguing that managers must work in two ways: to make staff positively satisfied and to remove factors which dissatisfy. He called his theory “The Two Factor Theory” where the first factors in the theory are hygiene factors- needed to ensure that an employee does not become dissatisfied. They do not cause a higher level of motivation, but without them there is dissatisfaction.

The second factors about this theory pertain to; working conditions, the quality of supervision, salary, status, safety, company, job, company policies and administration and interpersonal relations. Furthermore, the second factors in the two factors theory are the motivational factors needed in order to lift an employee into higher performance. These factors act as internal generators in employees and they also include achievement, recognition for achievement, responsibilities for the task, an interesting job, and advancement to higher level tasks and growth.

12 Manage (2008) discussed four scenarios that result in combining the hygiene and motivation factors as follows:

- High Hygiene + High Motivation: The ideal situation where employees are highly motivated and have few complaints.
- High Hygiene + Low Motivation: Employees have few complaints but are not highly motivated. The job is perceived like paycheck.
- Low Hygiene + High Motivation: Employees are motivated but have a lot of complaints. A situation where the job is exciting and challenging. However the salaries and work conditions are not OK.
- Low Hygiene + Low Motivation: The worst situation. Employees are not motivated and have lots of complaints.

Herzberg further suggests that often work can be arranged and should be arranged in the following ways: job enlargement, job rotation and/or job enrichment. This could be a process of developing teachers qualitatively in their areas of expertise as well as improving their teaching practice. Job rotation and enrichment could be necessary for the removal of boredom on the side of a teacher who changes the environment in order to learn new things to enrich himself/herself. From the two factor theory, the understanding is that the impact of motivators will be achieved if the hygiene factors are taken care of. The responsibility of the Department of Education is to see to it that the hygiene factors are cured.

Wholly, the theories of motivation outlined above influence this study to believe that there is a future in the teaching profession provided that proper motivation is given to teachers. The exodus of teachers out of the profession could be reduced and/or managed if strategies to motivate them could be strategically applied.

## **2.2. The concept of teacher attrition**

The concept of teacher attrition has been a subject of debate amongst districts, Provinces, Countries/ Nations as a result of the undesirable effects this has on the quality of education. The debate revolves around the rate and patterns at which teacher attrition is occurring and the need to identify other factors associated with it. On the basis of current teacher attrition patterns, the annual requirement to replace teachers leaving the public school system is 21 000. A more realistic estimate could be at least 25 000 (Mail Guardian, 2007, 06 November).

The system falls seriously short in terms of meeting this target. Estimates of the annual National production of teachers vary as it is estimated that the system currently produce in the region of 8 000 new teachers annually (abid). (The concept of teacher attrition has been defined by literature so as to bring out a clear understanding of what it means. Contrasting the concepts of attrition and turnover, Williams (1970) as cited in Hall et al (2005) refers to teacher turnover as 'the rates at which workers are being taken into(replaced) and move out (lost to) of employment, while attrition pertains only to people leaving employment'.

Boe, Bobbitt and Cook (1993) see teacher attrition as a component of teacher turnover (i.e., changes in teacher status from year to year). They indicated that teacher turnover may include teachers exiting the profession, but may also include teachers who change fields (i.e. special education to general education) or schools. Therefore it is believed that the rate of attrition often depends on this definition and this study looks at teacher attrition as a tendency of changing fields /schools or Provinces and leaving the profession in search of greener pastures. This tendency has a serious impact in the education of the child.

### **2.3. The Implications of Teacher Attrition**

The implications of teacher attrition for the coming years revolve around several issues. These issues include not only supply and demand, but the underlying questions of teacher quality. If schools want the best teachers working with students, then both the demands and quality of teachers need to be addressed (Horizon site, 2006 February).

In the past decade, faculties and schools of education have experienced significant declines in enrollments, which have raised serious concerns about the impending shortfall in teacher supply (Learning Point and Associate, 2005). Crouch and Perry (2005) indicated that they foresaw a threatening imbalance in teacher supply and demand. They further suggested that between 11 000 and 19 000 teachers should have graduated in 2006 for the sake of meeting the current needs of the system. However, rough estimates by the Ministerial committee on education (2004) show that 26 institutions produced 6 000 and 9 000 graduates in 2004.

‘Most research studies indicate an impending shortage of teachers in the country, although the exact magnitude and timing is a matter of debate. The educator supply and demand report projected a shortfall of around 15 000 teachers by 2008, with certain assumption about enrollment trends and learner-teacher ratios’ (Department of Education, 2006:11).

‘There is clearly a lack of fit between overall demand and supply of teachers and also between the demand and supply for particular skills, where there is an over- supplier in

some subject areas and undersupply in others. Rural schools are particularly badly affected and shortages are being experienced in scarce skills areas such as mathematics, science and technology, in languages and Arts and in the Economic & Management science' (Department of Education, 2006:11).

Moreover, both the exiting of teachers from the profession and the movement of teachers to other schools are costly phenomena. This is very detrimental for the students who lose the value of being taught by an experienced teacher, and to the schools as well as the districts, which must recruit and train their replacements (Issue brief, 2005, August).

The implications that results from teacher attrition should not be taken for granted for the sake of the child in the classroom as well as the value of teaching as a profession. The department of education has the challenge of balancing the equation of the demand and the supply of teachers.

#### **2.4. Human Resource Management in Education and Attrition**

Human resource management can be strategically used to reduce high attrition rates in education aimed at maintaining the balance between teacher supply and demand. Cumming (1993:2) regards personnel management (HRM) as being concerned with obtaining the best possible staff for an organization. It is his assertion that having obtained this staff, the department of education has the responsibility of looking after them so that they will want to stay and give their best to their jobs. This implies that teachers who are intending to leave could change their minds and stay in the profession.

A concern on human resource management in education was expressed by American President Bill Clinton in his 1997 state of the Union address when he challenged all the Americans to make sure,

*that there is a talented, dedicated, well prepared teachers in every classroom across the country. He also said that with the increasing complexity of today's technological society, it is imperative that children have well-prepared teachers who know how to teach*

*effectively and urged the Americans to be able to recruit and hire qualified teachers and keep them in the profession, (Horizon site, 2006).*

Andrew (1993: 4-5) also defined the personnel function of management as an umbrella term that describes a network of activities like personnel provision, utilization, remuneration, training and development and retention. In terms of retention of personnel (teachers), Van Standen (2000: 5) stressed that it involves determining conditions of service and remuneration as well as issues like record keeping, staff turnover, counseling, employer, employee relations, behavioral research and personal services.

Teachers who can teach effectively are those that are highly motivated with their hygiene factors cured or catered for (Two Factor Theory) and well developed. Emphasis is made on the responsibilities of managers and the entire department of education to uproot those factors that might hinder or hamper the working conditions of teachers.

## **2.5. Teacher attrition and change in Education and HRM Policies**

The transformation process in South Africa has resulted in the changing of roles for teachers as well as learners. Teachers have changed from being instructors to facilitators of the learning process. If an organization is to survive, it must respond to changes in the environment. It is believed that the HRM function plays a significant role in managing change and this includes managing change in the behavior of employees for them to meet the challenges of the 21 century.

Policies that seek to provide an overall development of teachers to meet the social and economic needs of the country have been formulated. The objective of the policy is to achieve a community of competent teachers dedicated to provide an education of a higher quality with high levels of performance as well as ethical and professional standards of conduct (Department of Education, 2006).

The principles underlying the policy include policing of educators, as expressed in the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) which require a teacher to be a specialist in a particular learning area, subject or phase; a specialist in teaching and learning; a specialist

in assessment; a curriculum developer; a leader, administrator and manager; a scholar and lifelong learner, and a professional who plays a community, citizenship, and pastoral role.

Barack Obama (2005:5) once said

*From the moment our children step into a classroom, new evidence shows that the single most important factor in determining their achievement today is not the colour of their skin or where they come from; it's not who their parents are or how much money they have, it is who their teacher is. It's the person who will brave some of their difficult schools, the most challenging children, and accept the most meager compensation simply to give someone else the chance to succeed.*

It entails that teachers are the most important assets that need to be retained for continuity in education and this is a clear indication that there is a need to come up with strategies that will keep them. The report of the task team on Education Development as cited in Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2003) asserts that

*It is people who make organizations work. Education quality and the process of change and redress therefore depend on the competences of everyone in the education service. People who work on the environment that constantly change need support.*

It means that teachers need to be supported and developed in order for them to cope with the unstable changing curriculum. Efforts to reduce attrition should be based the understanding of factors that contribute to special educators' decisions to leave the field.

## **2.6. Factors that contribute to teacher attrition in South Africa**

Recent research on teacher attrition provided a number of driving forces that relate to teacher attrition. Crouch and Perry (2003: 496) in their study on educator supply and demand in South Africa identified a looming shortage in the teaching profession, which they attribute to factors such as the impact of HIV/AIDS, a rush administrative planning process to control educators training capacity in the 1990's, and a lack of interest in the profession among young people.

Xaba (2003) pointed out that some of the reasons that have caused South African educators to leave the profession include professional stress, an increased workload and the restructuring of the education system, especially by government's financially driven trimming of the educator corps and the decision to retain an estimated 100 000 under qualified educators rather than recruit new ones'.

In a discussion about factors that cause the attrition and turnover of teachers, Xaba (2003) said that turnover of staff in Education is also caused by organizational factors such as retirement, school staffing action, family or personal pursuit of other jobs and dissatisfaction, an ageing workforce and possible retirement, low salaries and demands for even more complex teaching abilities.

He further indicated that

*for educators who are leaving within the first five years of their working lives, turnover is attributed to poor working conditions, the lack of educator mobility, inadequate inductions programmes, and a growing salary gap between educators and other college graduates.*

Among teachers who transferred schools, lack of planning time to heavy workloads, problematic student behavior and a lack of influence over school policy were cited as common sources of dissatisfaction (Issue Brief, 2005, August).

APEK and Holman (1998) as cited in Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2003) highlighted that a plethora of new legislation and policy has threatened educators with innovation overload. Inadequate consideration of the implementation implications of new policy has generated uncertainty. They further show that this has been compounded by a sense of insecurity generated by staffing policies and the overall effect of these and other factors resulted in the reported lowering of morale

The relationship that exists between low/high morale, job satisfaction and attrition is shown by literature. Lawless (1979) stressed

*that the internal cohesiveness that is present in a group of workers with high morale increases job satisfaction and reduces absenteeism and turnover, while low moral impacts on employee performance, this contributing to attrition.*

He also indicated that attrition itself may be responsible for lowering the morale of employees who remain in an organization- such as the disruption of performance and social communication pattern- and may lead to more attrition.

Mwamwenda (1995: 85) review what had been learned in other countries as follows:

*In Poland, Wisniewski (1990) reported that a teacher's job satisfaction was associated with the following factors: freedom to do what they wanted, encouragement received from those in authority, participation in decision making, adequate supply of learning and teaching resources, good salary, co-operation from pupils, parents and teachers, and participation in school management*

Turnover itself may stimulate more turnovers because of the enduring effects of social networks and negative effects on the workers who remain as well as making employees aware of possible job opportunities elsewhere (Moore and Burke (2002: 75).

The many causes of teacher attrition discussed by the literature above are the obstacles which need to be removed in order to improve the working environment of the teacher. The strategies to be used to reduce and manage teacher attrition should be based on and developed against these factors.

## **2.7. Retention and Recruiting Strategies**

As shortages of teachers are being felt in Mopani District, it is necessary to find best ways to eliminate such. Elimination of these shortages requires both recruiting talented individuals to teaching and making sure that good teachers stay in the profession once they are recruited. In today's education environment, the odds are not favorable that a school will see significant returns on efforts and money dedicated to recruiting, hiring, training and supporting new teachers. (Haselkom & Fiedler, 1999).

Fortunately enough, however, there are effective strategies for keeping as well as attracting good teachers in the profession (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1998 and 2000; Odden, 2000). These strategies include the availability and success of induction and mentoring programmes for beginner teachers. Rosenholtz (1984) suggested that the decisions to leave teaching are mostly attached to lack of professional success in the early stages of teachers' careers.

Austin (1987) also asserted that successful mentoring programmes are characterized by pairing a new teacher with an experienced teacher in the same field who is also in close contact with him/her and where they are able to share a common planning time together. Another key successful mentoring programme is suggested by Christensen and Conway (1990) as the self-selection of mentors as opposed to assigning partners. A study by Huling, Odell, Ishle, Kay, & Edelfelt (1989) proved that beginner teachers who took part in a mentoring programme were able to move beyond basic skills such as classroom management to higher levels such as student needs and the study also concluded that teachers in mentoring programmes are more likely to stay.

Similarly other retention strategies as suggested by Hare, Heap with Raack (2001) include new teacher support programmes; restructuring schools to make them smaller; growing your own teachers and treating teachers as professionals. They further outlined six recruiting strategies that were rated "very successful" by superintendents in the Midwest and they are: placing high-demand teachers above entry level on the salary scale; aggressively recruiting from teacher-preparation institutions; retraining current staff; offering support to beginning teachers; providing salary-schedule credit for higher education experience and providing salary-schedule credit for professional experience from outside teaching. These strategies bring forth the responsibilities of the department of education together with the school managers to improve the conditions of work for teachers and respect for its employees.

Similarly, Seifert and Kurtz (1983) maintained that activities to retain personnel start the day after hiring and include the following: providing orientation information about the school and the district; involving the community in welcoming the teacher; pairing the

new teacher with a master teacher; visiting the teacher's classroom; helping the new teacher define professional development needs and appropriate activities; allowing sabbatical and professional leave for career development activities and development and reimbursing professional dues. The application of these activities would make a teacher part and parcel of the community in which he/she is working and in this way be motivated to stay. By being deeply involved with the community they are working with, teachers would be in a position to understand the learners they are working with.

On the same note, Darling-Hammond and Ducommun Professor (2007) suggested, in their discussion about recruiting and retaining teachers, that increasing the supply of quality teachers targeted to high need fields and locations can be achieved through service scholarships for entering teachers, with special focus on high-need schools and locations; recruitment incentives for expert, experienced teachers to teach in high-need schools and improved preparation for teaching high-need students and for programs in high-need areas. They further suggested that retention and mobility of well-qualified teachers can be improved through mentoring for all beginning teachers through investments in state and district mentoring programs and high quality, nationally available teacher performance assessments to guide training, improve quality, and facilitate interstate mobility. These are some of the strategies that need to be applied in Mopani District and that need government intervention because it is costly in nature.

Again, Lisa with Foss (1999: II-12) said:

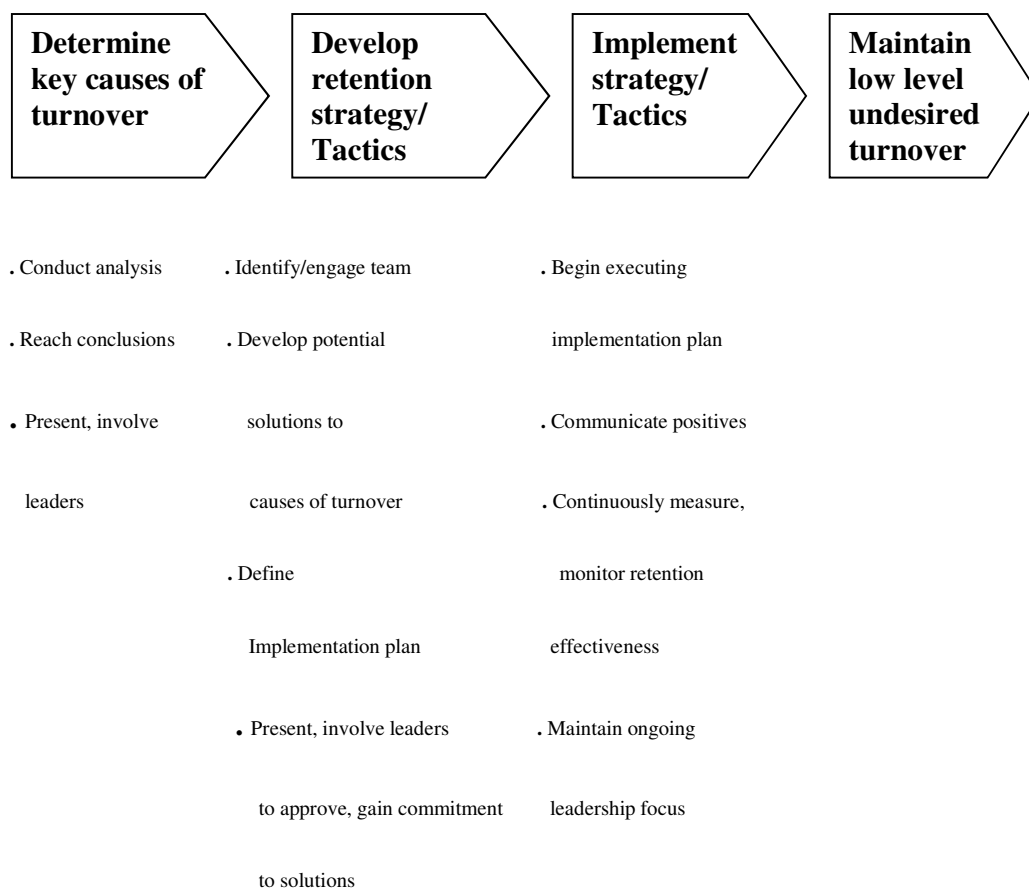
*It is important that high quality professional development be provided throughout a teacher's career. This includes offering support to the beginning teachers as well as making learning opportunities available to experienced teachers.*

A study on professional development by Hawley, Willis, Smylie, & Evertson (1985) indicate several components for teacher development that cater for new teachers as well as veteran teachers in their career life. The components include: emphasis on teaching skills that are directly related to content standards; training that is balanced enough between theory and practice that it can be to be adapted to teachers' specific needs;

professional activities designed to address problem areas identified by both teachers and administrators; training activities that provide opportunities for practice, objective evaluation, and concrete feedback; technical assistance that helps teachers and administrators implement new strategies; administrator support for and involvement in training; continuous staff development activities integrated into the regular daily activities and routines of the school and commitment to sustaining teachers' development over a period of years, including follow-up reviews acquired skills and knowledge.

Furthermore, Shaw (1999) developed a model for developing an employee turnover and retention strategy as outlined in figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Managing turnover (Shaw, 1999)**



The above model is based on the assumptions that:

- turnover is rarely due to one, easily-fixed cause and thus solutions require organizational focus and commitment;
- executive accountability and responsibility are critical;
- a successful retention strategy must be built bottom-up, that is, identifying causes of voluntary turnover and reasons for retention and addressing identified causes of turnover, reasons for retention;
- reducing undesired turnover takes time and effort- no quick fixes and
- an ongoing focus and measurement of retention/turnover is integral to sustaining low voluntary turnover levels.

From the above model, an inference can be drawn that the starting point is the analysis of the causes and the extent of the impact/ implications of teacher turnover/attrition. It would also include the analysis of the rates as well as patterns of turnover /attrition. Shaw (1999:2) sees increased costs; lower productivity; and profitability and lower customer satisfaction as manifestations of the impact of teacher turnover/attrition.

Similarly, the step by step application of Shaw's model leads to the development of strategies to help the Education Department to handle or manage teacher attrition better. According to Shaw (1999:8), the strategies include setting turnover benchmarks and selected retention practices, which include holding the executive for employee retention and satisfaction, recruitment and selection practices accountable, providing opportunities for input to operating decisions, allowing significant autonomy in job responsibilities creating a work environment that is preferred by top employees with propensity to stay and analyzing turnover by tracking reasons for leaving. He also pointed out that a team should be established to develop possible solutions, define implementation plans and gain approval and commitment of the organization's executives to the solutions.

In relation to implementation, Shaw (1999: 58) indicated by saying:

“Implementation of the strategy requires constant and rigorous measurement and monitoring of the strategy's effectiveness and the maintenance of leadership focus on the implementation of the strategy”

Since schools are managed from various levels of management there is a need for these levels to work together in the implementation process. An approach to be used in this regard should therefore involve all concerned stakeholders in the department of education.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed literature on teacher attrition looking at the theories that underpins the study, the definition of the concept teacher attrition, Human Resource management in Education, attrition and the changes in education and Human Resource policies and the factors that causes teacher attrition. From the above literature, the problem of teacher attrition which defines how teachers in Mopani District in Limpopo Province exit the profession to other fields, schools in other provinces cannot be ignored. When looking at Limpopo Province which is mostly comprised of rural schools, the rate and patterns of attrition are of a serious concern.

Similarly, the above literature puts it clearly that there are factors that contribute a lot in causing teacher attrition. The literature has also classed these factors into hygiene factors and motivation factors, the curing of which might enhance effective teaching with fewer complaints. The literature also outlines the activities that need to be done for retention and recruitment purposes. This makes managers at all levels in the department of education to be in a position of knowing the right things when recruiting teachers with the aim of keeping them in the profession as well as in their schools.

The chapter closed off with a review of motivation strategies as outlined by theories of motivation such as Maslow who believes that the satisfaction of a certain hierarchy of needs in order to reach self-actualization or self-fulfillment is the key to retaining employees in organisation. It also reviews a model for managing employee turnover/attrition as developed by Shaw (1999). This model gives a step by step procedure practicable step by step on managing teacher attrition.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Qualitative Research**

White (2003) refers to research design as an overall approach and justification of the use of such an approach with regard to the problem under investigation. The researcher in this study used a qualitative method of doing research. According to Merriam (1998), “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their work and the experiences they have in the world. She further indicated that all types of qualitative researches are based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world (Merriam, 1998).

From the commonly used types of qualitative research designs, which include, basics Interpretive qualitative study, ethnography, narrative analysis, critical and postmodern-post-structural, this study employed basic interpretive qualitative study, which is fundamentally concerned with the understanding of the meanings given by people in the interpretation of their experiences or situations. Neuman (1997: 335) refers to the interpretation of the actions that the people being studied demonstrate as the first order interpretation. The basic interpretive study was of value in this study in that it was able to give first-hand information on how the DoE is managing teacher attrition in Mopani District. The approach helped the researcher to understand why the exodus of educators from the teaching profession in Mopani District is increasing instead of being maintained from the point of view of the interviewees.

The nature of this study was exploratory and its outcomes provided clear interpretation of the teacher’s attrition rates and patterns in Mopani District and as a result managed to come up with relevant approaches to managing the situation. Exploration is of necessity in this study because there is no prior research undertaken the approaches to managing teacher attrition in Mopani District. Basic Interpretive qualitative study is based on a particular theory.

### **3.2 The theoretical/ Conceptual Framework**

There are a variety of theoretical or conceptual frameworks under which resources are framed or positioned. These theoretical frameworks include an interpretive framework, a critical framework as well as a deconstructivist framework. Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smith (2004) refer to the theoretical frameworks as lenses through which the researcher view the world. The interpretive researcher looks for the frames that shape the meaning and it also considers the important role played by the context in this paradigm as already indicated. This study was informed by the interpretivist framework which holds that knowledge is constructed not only as observable phenomena, but also by the description of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self

The phenomena in this study was the increasing rate of teacher attrition that needed interpretation that would lead to best management approaches which would then be successfully managed.

### **3.3 Data collection Techniques**

#### **3.3.1 Interviews**

Qualitative research approach uses observations, interviews and document analysis as a means of data collection in order to obtain the necessary data. This study used interviews as a means of collecting data. Kvale (1996) defines an interview

*as an inter-subjective enterprise of two persons talking about common themes of interest.*

The common theme in this study is the “approaches to managing teacher attrition in Mopani District”. Interviews are categorized into structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Since both primary and secondary data were needed in this study, primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with a district manager, a human resource manager, circuit managers and school managers.. A semi- structured interview was of great importance in this study in that it gave room for asking additional questions during

the interviewing process in order to gain deeper insight into specific aspects of the topic under investigation.

All the interviews, except the interview with the district manager, were done face-to-face with the individual respondents. A telephone interview was conducted with the district manager in education because of her tight schedule. It was a more convenient way of interviewing since the researcher and the respondent were both free to exchange words in their respective places and no travelling fees were involved. Questions for interviews were prepared for each respondent in relation to his/her managerial position. Possible procedures for eliminating biasness during interviews were taken into consideration when the questions for interviews were designed. The questions were designed clearly and unambiguously.

### **3.3.2 Document Analysis**

A secondary method intended for this study was documentary analysis where documents such as the Policy Handbook for Educators, South African's Schools Act (SASA) as well as documents on Human Resource Management (HRM) in education were analyzed. Documentary analysis was chosen as a method of collection because it is usually non-reactive as no one is interviewed and, as such, the process is free of response biasness. This method also tends to be inexpensive and the materials for content analysis are readily available.

The significance of document analysis was seen in this study when it enabled the researcher to obtain information that was not easy to access from the interviewees. Secondary data enabled the researcher to gain better insight into the problem situation as well as the research methodology used for the research and helped in the validation and evaluation of the data collected.

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

Neumann (1997: 201) defines sampling as a process of systematically selecting cases for inclusion in a research project. There are various types of sampling and this study used purposive snowball sampling to select a district manager, a human resource manager,

school managers and circuit managers to participate in the research. The researcher made use of purposeful sampling which looks for people who can help to build the substantive theory further. Merriam (1998:61) sees purposive sampling as based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned. This current study, therefore, saw managers of schools from various levels in the education department to be the best candidates to provide the necessary information about the issue under investigation.

The researcher used a network of managers from various levels in the education department and this constituted a snowballing technique as interviewees were able to provide the necessary information for the study. Snowball sampling starts with one or few people or cases and spreads out on the basis of links to the initial cases (Neuman, 1997:207).

A district manager, a human resource manager, four circuit managers from four different circuits and eight school managers from different schools in Mopani District were interviewed. The first interviewees were the school managers who are mostly affected by teacher shortages in their schools. The interviews followed in that hierarchy until the district manager.

### **3.5 Data analysis and interpretation**

This is a very crucial step to take as it is where the researcher attempts to attach meaning to the data collected so as to answer questions set forth by the study. The result of this research is presented in the form of themes where the researcher will organize the raw data into conceptual categories and create themes which will be used to analyze data. Data analysis can take various forms namely: content, global, grounded theory, discourse, narrative, conservation and ethno methodology analyses (Henning et al (2004:138). This study adopted a qualitative content analysis, which is comprised of three phases. The three phases include orientation into data where the researcher read and studied the content, on the way to working with data. The researcher also coded segments of

meaning and final composition of data where the researcher wrote final themes of sets of data.

Neumann (1997: 421) indicated that a qualitative researcher analyzes data by organizing it into categories on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features. He or she develops new concepts, formulate conceptual definitions and examines the relationships among the concepts.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability are the most valuable concepts in research studies. Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research. Field and Morse in Patton (1990) refer to validity as the extent to which the research findings can present reality. That is an extent to which findings can be trusted or whether they become a sensible portrayal of the actual situation.

From the historically divided descriptions of validity which includes content validity, criterion-related validity, predictive validity, concurrent validity and construct validity, this study was based on content validity that shows how well the test content samples the subject matter of interest..

Both internal and external of validity have been satisfied by the study. Internal validity was satisfied by the good match that was created between the findings and the theoretical ideas they develop. External validity on the other hand was satisfied by making conclusions about the findings to be a representation of reality.

Moreover, validation of data emanating from this study was done skillfully by the researcher with the help of the supervisor by continuously, checking and questioning every step of the way to ensure quality. According to Kvale (1996: 309), “Validation depends on good craftsmanship in an investigation, which includes continuously checking, questioning and theoretically interpreting the findings”.

Furthermore, two methods were used to validate data emerging from this study and these methods include semi-structured interviews and content analysis. Semi-structured

interviews opened room for communicative validation where the researcher was allowed to ask further questions during the interviews for clarity purposes. Content analysis was used as a mirror or gauge with which the findings were evaluated. In other words, content analysis was used to verify the claims emerging from the data.

Reliability of data on the other hand refers to the “dependability or consistency” of an instrument or a measure to produce consistent results (Neuman, 1997:368). The study managed to ensure both the internal and external consistency. Internal consistency, which, refers to whether the data was plausible given all that is known about the event is ensured by the use of tape recorder to record interviews. External consistency is also ensured by cross-checking the findings with the participants as well as with the supervisor and comparing the results with what the documents are saying.

### **3.7 Limitations of the study**

In this study most of the data was obtained from a district manager, circuit managers and school managers through semi-structured interviews that were conducted with them. It took time to get some interviews done due to tight schedules that some of the interviewees work under. It was not easy to get hold of the district manager until an arrangement was made with her to conduct a telephone interview. The human resource manager was not available to answer most of the questions related to his work and this too limited the scope of the findings.

Another limitation related to the interviews was that some of the interviewees did not open up and bring out all the necessary information due to fears of exposing some of the confidential matters of their departments. Such practice was manifested by both school managers and circuit managers who referred the researcher to the district manager for more information. Other critical factors that limited the study were time and funds which constrained the researcher’s choice of sample in terms of quantity and distance.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

The methodology used in conducting research has the ability to make or break the aims of the study hence it is imperative to consider this when making choices. Qualitative research methodology as the method employed in this study is well presented in this chapter. The choice of research methodology informed the data collection techniques used (interviews and document analysis), data analysis and interpretation thereof. The choice made by the researcher made it possible for the study to be a success.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The focus in this chapter is based on the data collected from managers in the various levels of education departments in Mopani District (from district managers to school managers). The data presents information on how the department of education in Mopani District is approaching the challenge of managing teacher attrition. It gives information on how widespread is teacher attrition and the impact it has on teaching and learning, the strategies being put in place to manage the situation, the teacher development programmes available for professional development of teachers, mentoring program to support beginner teachers, policies affecting the working conditions of teachers and how these policies are implemented and the availability of monitoring and evaluation programmes during policy implementation process.

The chapter further outlines the profiles of the circuits where the research was conducted. The data is presented in accordance with the themes revealed for analysis purposes and the themes include: motivation and loss of confidence, HRM policies, and retention strategies, workloads of teachers and monitoring and evaluation.

#### **4.2 The profiles of the circuits**

The profiles of the circuits involved in the research projects are given in order to give a clear indication of the impact that teacher attrition is bringing in schools. It is a way of giving readers understanding about the correlation that exists between the movement of teachers to and from schools to other departments and the performance of the learners in schools.

The data was collected from three out of the five circuits in Mopani district. These circuits are: <sup>1</sup>Nhlalala, Nyeleti and Masana. Nhlalala circuit is situated in the southern part of Mopani and has twenty four schools of which fourteen are high schools. Most of

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<sup>1</sup> The names used are not the real names of the circuits involved in the study.

the fourteen high schools in these circuits are regarded as dysfunctional due to consistent dismal performances. Nhlalala circuit has the highest percentage of teachers who are leaving the profession to look for better pastures. Nyeleti and Masana circuits are also experiencing shortages of teachers and, as a result, perform badly. Nyeleti has twenty six schools, amongst which, ten are high schools whereas Masana has twenty one schools and eight of them are high schools. The percentage of teachers leaving the profession at Nyeleti is less as compared to that of Masana.

In the whole, these circuits are experiencing great challenges of teacher shortages due to teachers' exodus from the teaching profession. These kinds of movements affect performance in a great way. The recent release of the 2011 grade 12 results has revealed how the circuits are performing compared to that of 2010 as shown below.

|   |                 | NW   | PB  | PD   | PSC | TP   | TF   | %P   | %F   | INC | %INC | %B        | 2010      | INC/<br>DEC |
|---|-----------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 1 | MAN'OMBE        | 990  | 227 | 335  | 184 | 796  | 194  | 80,4 | 19,6 | 6   | 0,6  | 34,8      | 75,1      | 5,3         |
| 2 | KLEIN<br>LETABA | 712  | 77  | 190  | 202 | 469  | 243  | 65,9 | 34,1 | 7   | 0,98 | 16,4      | 50,5      | 15,4        |
| 3 | GROOT<br>LETABE | 789  | 111 | 213  | 187 | 511  | 278  | 64,8 | 35,2 | 8   | 1,0  | 21,7      | 57        | 7,8         |
| 4 | SHAMAVUN<br>GA  | 1003 | 97  | 233  | 241 | 571  | 432  | 57,5 | 43,1 | 22  | 2,2  | 17,0      | 46,3      | 11,2        |
| 5 | NSAMI           | 792  | 127 | 145  | 142 | 414  | 378  | 52,3 | 47,7 | 0   | 0,0  | 30,7      | 45,2      | 7,1         |
|   |                 |      |     |      |     |      |      |      |      |     |      | 120,<br>6 | 274,<br>1 |             |
|   | TOTAL           | 4286 | 686 | 1116 | 956 | 2761 | 1525 | 64,4 | 35,6 | 43  | 1    | 24,1      | 54,8<br>2 | 9,6         |

### Key

**NW:** Number Wrote

**TP:** Total Pass

**INC:** Inclusion

**PB:** Performance Balance

**TF:** Total Failed

**%B:** Percentage Balance

**PD:** Performance Doubled

**%P:** Percentage Pass

**INC DEC:** Includes decimal

**PSC:** Performance per school

**%F:** Percentage Fail

**Source: Department of Education, Limpopo (2011)**

The analysis of the results demonstrated that schools performed very badly in killer subjects such as mathematics, sciences and commerce. Lack of funds for enrichment classes, poor working environment and a shortage of teachers in killer subjects were said to be the cause of poor performance. The results show clearly how the district is struggling to produce better results which would not be possible if the teachers were stable in their postings.

### **4.3 Data presentation**

#### **4.3.1 Motivation and loss of confidence**

The government will do well to channel its resources towards ensuring that teachers are sufficiently motivated in the classroom. The respondents overwhelmingly indicated lack of motivation as a problem in the teachers' corps. They indicated that the way things are being done in the department of education, more importantly since the inception democracy left a lot to be desired. They also said that most bright young teachers were planning to move out of the profession for better jobs elsewhere.

One school manager said:

*I do not think there is any happy teacher given the difficult conditions in which we work. There are no resources, no incentives and the learners that we teach are very difficult to control due to number of factors. We do not get the remunerations that we deserve. So, it is not a happy situation.*

Another school manager strongly said:

*Educators are not happy at all in many schools in the entire country. The reason being that educators are undermined by government. For example, for educators to get a raise in their salaries they need to go on a strike before. The government does not take*

*educators seriously because teachers are risking their lives because of the government ignorance where they are held accountable for anything about learners.*

In terms of their reactions towards regaining the existing loss of confidence among teachers, they do try to motivate teachers to stay with the hope that things will improve with time, but only those who want out of the profession could understand these kinds of sentiments.

One participant said:

*I motivate educators to understand that we are building the future leaders in the education department so that when they grow up and take upper positions in government they should not be angry about what we did to them. Otherwise it will be a chain of disgruntled people after the other.*

Furthermore, all the school managers commonly said that the only thing they are trying to do is making teachers aware of their role as a source of inspiration and knowledge for learners.

#### **4.3.2 HRM policies in education**

This section looks at the policies that govern the HRM in education. It also looks at how these policies are implemented as well as the availability of evaluation and monitoring programmes in the implementation process.

The rising mobility of teachers from the profession widens the gap between teacher supply and teacher demand. This high degree of teacher mobility compelled the researcher to question even the policies around this kind of movement as well as the working conditions of teachers.

The quality of teaching is also dependent on the policies surrounding the profession. The district manager indicated that the department of education has to operate within the state

policies as a matter of strict protocol. The District Manager further indicated that the state is responsible for making those policies to promote quality teaching and ensure that such policies are able to create a context in which teachers are able to work with and learn from one another.

One school manager showed her concern about policy issues by stressing that as school managers, they are entitled to execute their duties according to the policies irrespective of whether the policies are favorable to teachers or not they have to comply. She further said that any action that is against the policy is regarded as misconduct and they are held accountable for that.

In relation to teachers' mobility and demand and supply of teachers, the district manager said:

*The teachers have more powers to their movement because even if we want to conduct Restructuring and Redeployment (R &R) we need to take into considerations the social aspects of the educator. In case of demand, the department, after conducting a survey and considering the budget can hire more teachers but the supply depends on the availability of teachers and now there are few teachers available especially for scarce skills.*

When responding to the question about the policies for incentives to recruit minority teachers with scarce skills, the district manager showed that there are no such policies at present, but school managers in various communities are given the mandate to use any strategy to get such teachers. One school manager showed the difficulty they are experiencing in using such strategies when he said:

*The mandate given to us as school managers to use any strategy to recruit teachers with scarce skills is not an easy task because many schools are competing to get such teachers and colleges of education are producing few numbers of them.*

The circuit manager pointed out that the district has even hired teachers from Zimbabwe on contract basis to try and close the gap that exist between teacher supply and teacher demand. She added by saying:

*The government had plans to consider teachers with scarce skills in terms of incentives to encourage them to work harder and attract more students to enroll in these scarce subjects, but the issue was politicized. The trade unions could not buy the idea and indicated that it is discriminatory and as a result it was not implemented.*

Commonly, the circuit managers and school managers pinpointed that hiring candidates that have taken alternative route to teaching is not a solution because almost all those who have done so have sworn that they will never come back to teaching. They also indicated that the government has taken a step to attract students who are doing scarce subjects to enroll and study for free in some colleges of education and universities and only few are interested.

The question of compensation for educators is best explained by the Employment of Educators Act 76 Of 1998 as outlined in chapter four of the Policy Hand Book for Educators, Education Labour Relations Council (elrc). It outlines that educators compensation include medical assistance; state housing; subsistence allowance; official journeys and transport; house owner allowance; service bonus; long service recognition and resettlement expenditure.

#### **4.3.3 Retention Strategies**

Keeping quality teachers in schools should be the most important thing governments need to fight for. The big responsibility for the department of education is to come up with best strategies to achieve that. The respondents mentioned some of the strategies they are using to manage teacher attrition and the strategies include mentoring and induction programmes, teacher development programmes and the formation of clusters for different subjects and workshops as well as compensations for tea.

In connection with induction and mentoring, a circuit manager stated:

*Induction is done at school level by the school manager and the school management team. Teachers are welcomed and policy documents are given to them. The head of department (HOD) of that particular subject is given responsibility of taking the new teacher step by step to what he/she is expected to execute on a day to day basis.*

A school manager responded and said:

*Our beginner educators at our school were blank when they first arrived. The majority of them were teaching for the first time. It was imperative for us to workshop them on many issues about the workplace which begins with the staff and then to the class. They had to adjust to the new environment.*

When asked about the evidence of whether induction and mentoring are properly done, respondents indicated that the evidence of whether a departmental head of the subject concerned is doing the job would be seen if a uniform template was provided to schools for the execution of such a task. They also said that the HODs are also held responsible for mentoring in their fields. For example, an HOD would be responsible for managing sciences and will be expected to look at both natural and social sciences which is a difficult task considering that he has to manage a lot of teachers.

Furthermore, in responding to the question related to teacher support programmes, the school managers asserted that schools do not have any programmes so far. They solely rely on departmental programmes if they are initiated. The circuit manager mentioned some of the programmes they usually conduct to support and develop teachers which include workshops such as National Curriculum Statement (NCS), seminars and cluster meetings which are arranged by curriculum advisors. One school manager asserted that those programmes were not beneficial to their teachers since little time was scheduled to run them and even the presenters were not competent enough.

#### **4.3.4. Workloads of Teachers**

Among the many reasons for teacher attrition workloads seem to be one of the serious concerns especially when compared with the remuneration they receive. The question on equitable distribution of workloads among the staff was asked to school managers. One school manager answered by saying:

*We follow guidelines as provided by the department of education. It might not be necessarily possible to have equity but we try our best.*

Another school manager stated:

*We try by all means to strike a balance on educators' workloads by adhering to the educator's policy handbook of policies. Educators are allocated workloads that they are able to manage it and also by making them to understand the situation in which they are working.*

#### **3.4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Teachers**

Monitoring and evaluation is the best support that can be given to employees in the work place for the benefit of both the organization and themselves. In responding to the question of the availability of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work and working conditions, the respondents indicated that there is a tool known as Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which if well managed could improve the situation.

One respondent casted doubt on the on proper management of the tool and indicated that if they had serious monitoring and evaluation on using IQMS, teachers would not have had doubtful thoughts about their profession as they are having because the proper use of the tool would provide answers to most of the problems experienced.

Another one stressed that the district is not yet in the position of monitoring and evaluating most of the things that are being introduced in schools because most of them are new and are still in the piloting stage. He also indicated that even people who are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation process are still being trained on the how about of doing the job.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

It was clear from data collection period that managers in the education department are not comfortable with teacher movements as they affect learners' performance. The researcher could see that managers especially at school level need assistance when it comes to retention strategies that would help them keep the few teachers they have. What is not clear in this study is the level given to managers especially at school level to influence policies in education. This could help the department of education in designing suitable strategies to alleviate the situation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Retention of staff has been taken seriously by many successful companies and institutions. They hardly ignore fact that their institutions succeed because of the experience of the staff available. The experience of the teacher is a valuable asset (Sing Kong Lee as cited in Auguste, Kihn and Miller (2010). When employees leave, your company/institution loses its knowledge and acquired skills (Harvard Business Review, 2010). There is need to revisit employee retention techniques and strategies in The Department of education.

The findings from the study seem to be consistent with what is suggested by literature. Most teachers are seriously leaving teaching and as a result the image or status of teaching as a profession is deteriorating. A shortfall is more than what was projected by the educator supply and demand report which was around 15000 teachers by 2008 with about enrollment trends and learner teacher ratios (Department of Education, 2005). The study found that the whole of Mopani district as highly experiencing this kind of teachers' movement from teaching to other department.

The causes of their exodus include among others those suggested by Xaba (2003) which are poor working conditions, lack of educator mobility, inadequate induction programmes for beginner teachers, a growing salary gap between educators and other college graduates. The study managed to come up with what managers in the various levels of education department are doing to manage teacher attrition. The findings revealed the challenges faced by managers in their approaches to manage teacher attrition.

## **5.2 Motivation and loss of confidence**

The study found that motivating and regaining the loss of confidence of teachers is a challenging task for school managers. Most school managers find it very challenging to convince someone who is demotivated to stay. The DoE has overlooked the importance of motivation as the engine for anyone to excel in whatever he/she does.

Maslow (1943) argues that motivation is related to meeting a hierarchy of needs and the most important aspect is the sequence in which these needs occur. He argues that there is a need to meet the needs in the lower level of the hierarchy so as to give rise to the satisfaction of the upper ones. McGregor (1970) also stressed the importance of motivation in his Theory Y by indicating that provided people are motivated, they will be self-directed to the aims of the organisation and that job satisfaction is the key to engaging employees and ensuring their commitment. It is clear from the findings that teachers are not getting the satisfaction they need in their jobs and are, therefore, opting to leave in great numbers in search of job satisfaction.

Lessons on how to attract, train and retain the best people to the teaching profession can be learned from the best performing nations like Finland, Singapore and South Korea. Finland gives teachers a notable degree of autonomy, trusting them to deliver great students outcomes and giving those teachers modest salaries starting around 81% GDP per capita.

Singapore, on the other hand, uses an integrated approach and starts with compensation and with a particular philosophy of what compensation is designed to accomplish. Lu Chang Yang as cited in Auguste et al (2010: 16) said: “Compensation matters when you want to get those people who are high quality have some interest in teaching but also many other career choices”. It is the case in South Africa, particularly in Limpopo province where Mopani District is found and where teachers with scarce subjects are leaving teaching to other careers of their choice. The factor of compensation is necessary

to alleviate the situation in this province. Singapore also monitors starting salaries in the market to assume that teachers are paid competitively.

South Korea's strategy dwells in salary and security. They combine job security; attractive salary; good vacations and social prestige to help explain why teaching is the most popular career choice among young South Koreans. If Mopani District can try to apply these strategies, the possibility of getting strategies that are suitable for their situation is high.

### **5.3 HRM Policies in Education**

The study found that policies that are used for Human Resource Management are state policies that need not be questioned. Managers' responsibilities at the various levels of education departments are to see to it that these policies are implemented as they are. Most of these policies overlook the importance of hygienic factors from Herzberg (1966) Two Factor Theory. He argues that managers must work in two ways, to make staff positively satisfied and to remove factors that dissatisfy.

He puts his emphasis on hygiene factors which are the first factors in his theory and they seem to be undermined by the DoE according to the findings on the study. They are factors such as working conditions, quality of supervision, salary, status, safety, company, job, policies, administration and interpersonal relations. His argument is based on the fact that these factors although they do not cause higher level of motivation, they are essential because without them there is dissatisfaction and the DoE seemed to have turned a blind eye on them.

The findings proved that school managers are trying their best to remove factors that are dissatisfying to teachers, but most of these factors like salaries and policies are beyond their level of operation and, as such, they only wait for the government's response on them. In addition, the treatment of teachers in South Africa is not good at all. Cumming (1993:2) argued that 'personnel management is concerned with getting staff for the

organisation and having obtained them, they have to look after them, so that they will want to stay and give their best to their jobs’.

Lumby et al (2003) asserts that people who work in an environment that constantly changes need support. However, this is not true for teachers in Mopani District as they are not well looked. If the policies governing the HRM in education could be designed with the hygienic factors in mind, the control of teacher mobility would be easier.

Furthermore, the study revealed that there are no exit policies that could control the movement of teachers out of the profession and that teachers are free to exit anytime they wish to. The only thing that the teacher is expected to do is to provide a resignation letter explaining everything about the reasons for resignation for filing purposes. The availability of exit policies would give room for the conduction of exit interviews where teachers would clearly explain their exact reasons for leaving.

The study also witnessed the absence incentive policies which can best be used for recruiting teachers with scarce skills. Darling-Hammond and Ducommun Professor (2007) suggested in their discussion about recruiting and retaining teachers that increasing the supply and quality of teachers targeted to high need fields and locations can be achieved through service scholarships for entering teachers, with special focus on high-need schools and locations and recruitment incentives for expert, experienced teachers to teach in high-need schools.

### **5.3 Retention Strategies**

In relation to retention strategies, the study found that there are strategies that are being put in place to manage the situation. The strategies include induction and mentoring programmes; teacher development programmes, clusters for different subjects and workshops. It was revealed by the study that the way these strategies are implemented is not as comprehensive as they ought to be and as a result they are less effective.

Research suggests that induction for beginner teachers, if done accordingly, can reduce teacher turnover and increase teacher effectiveness. Hare et al (2001) said that the giving of support to beginning teachers is strongly recommended to make them stay in the profession. Comprehensive induction provides a package of support systems for new teachers such as mentors; supportive communication from the principal, other administrators and department chairs; common planning or collaboration with other teachers in the field; reduced preparations and held teacher's aide and participation in the external networks of teachers.

Similarly, proper utilization of the whole package of support systems for new teachers in Mopani District would help reduce the rate at which teachers are leaving. Mopani District has some of the good strategies for managing teacher attrition even though they need to improve in the implementation process and include all the teacher support systems needed.

Their approach to induction and mentoring is seeing it as a responsibility and accountability of heads of departments whereas a package of support systems need to work together to support new teachers. A problem arises when the HOD is overloaded with administrative work and do not find enough time to attend new teachers. However, experienced teachers can successfully play the role of mentoring.

The approach was given by Austin (1987) when he asserted that successful mentoring programmes are characterized by pairing new teachers with experienced teachers in the same field. The pair has to be in close contact with each other so as to have time to plan together. Another mentoring programme is suggested by Christensen and Conway (1990) as the self-selection of mentors as opposed to assigning partners that give more independence to the new teacher to look for the best mentor.

In addition, Fulton (2005) also gave four principles under which comprehensive induction programmes are based and they include building and developing teacher knowledge, integrating new practitioners into a teaching community and school culture

that support the continuous professional growth of all teachers, supporting the constant development of the teaching community in the school and encouraging a professional dialogue that articulate the goals, values and best practices of the community.

Furthermore, in relation to the other strategies for teacher retention the study found that Mopani District also have teacher development programmes. The problem is that school managers wait for the DoE to initiate such programmes. This entails that if the DoE is silent about initiating teacher development programmes, teachers will not be developed and as such they get more confused about the job as things are changing now and then. Hare and Heap (2001)'s emphasis on teacher support programmes is that schools must learn to grow their own teachers and treating teachers as professionals. Their main emphasis is that school managers must also learn to initiate and implement teacher development programmes for teachers in their schools and not only wait for the department.

#### **5.4 Workloads of teachers**

The study found that the approach to lessen the workload of teachers is not an easy task. It is strongly and commonly believed that where there is a shortage of laborers, there is more work to do and this is the case in Mopani District, more teachers are leaving the profession and, as a result, there is a shortage of teachers and more work for those who remain.

#### **5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of Teachers**

The findings reveal that there is a tool known as Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) which is used for monitoring and evaluating teachers for incentives. However, the study found that the tool is not properly implemented and that there is no quality supervision in its implementation. The monitoring aspect of IQMS is lacking and, as such, the tool is seen to be failing.

There is also no transparency on how the incentives are given to teachers from the assessment through IQMS as teachers are given the same amount of money. “A sound teacher evaluation and reward system is essential to ensure quality teaching in our schools and to provide teachers with useful performance feedback and incentives for improving” (Lisa and Foss, 1999: II- 17).

The uniform incentives given to teachers from the IQMS assessment which gives different scores for different teachers is a clear indication that there is lack of understanding about the incentive plan. Lisa and Foss (1999) further said: “Incentive plans ...that leads to collaboration and collegial work environment are likely to be more fruitful in producing quality teaching”.

Therefore, the incentive plan in the form of IQMS is failing to produce quality teaching and, instead, adds frustration to most teachers who would improve their living standards through the necessary incentives based on their work efforts and would like to excel. Shaw’s model in Figure 3 shows a step by step approach to managing turnover the application of which could help make effective use of various strategies for managing teacher attrition. According to Shaw (1991:58), “Implementation of the strategy requires constant and rigorous measurement and monitoring of the strategy’s effectiveness and the maintenance of leadership focus on the implementation of the strategy”

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter analyzed and interpreted the data collected from the study. It made attempt to interact with managers in various levels of education department (from school to district level) to find out what teacher retention strategies are being put in place to control teacher movements positively. It analyzed and interpreted data in accordance with the themes given from data presentation, which are human resource policies in education, retention strategies, and workloads of teachers and monitoring and evaluation of teachers.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study and gives recommendations thereof. The recommendations are based on the findings of the study. The aim of the study was to explore on the challenges pertaining to the retention of teachers facing the department of education in Mopani Province. The main point of interest was to find out which approaches/strategies were being put in place to regain teachers' loss of confidence and pride about teaching and to keep them in the teaching profession. The study attempted to give answers to these questions:

- What are the factors leading to teacher attrition?
- What are the trends in teacher movements in the education system in Mopani Districts?
- How is the department of education handling teacher attrition?
- What are the strategies for consideration in dealing with teacher attrition?

This study presented factors leading to teacher attrition as well as the trends in teacher movements in Mopani District. It was aimed at bringing into the attention of the department of education factors to look for when handling the challenge of teachers' exodus.

The last chapter presents findings, the interpretation and analysis of data. It further gives recommendations for school managers, circuit managers, human resource managers and districts managers in all education departments provincially and internationally.

#### **6.1 Factors that Contribute to Teacher Attrition**

The study used factors revealed by literature as the main causes of teacher attrition elsewhere to be able to compare and contrast them with the situation in Mopani District. This was done to call the DoE to come up with strategies to address these challenges. The

factors include the impact of HIV and AIDS; lack of interest in the profession among young people; increased workloads of teachers; professional stress; restructuring of the education system; school staffing actions; personal pursuit of other jobs and dissatisfaction; low salary and growing salary gaps between educators and other college graduates; demands for complex teaching abilities; inadequate induction programmes; and poor working conditions.

## **6.2 Findings**

Despite the many challenges teachers are facing in their teaching profession, it is imperative to embrace and maintain the value and dignity it had. This could be possible if best strategies or approaches are used to keep teachers in schools. It is suggested by literature that strategies like motivation, management of teachers' workloads, teacher development programmes, incentives and compensations, comprehensive induction and mentoring programmes and monitoring and evaluation, if implemented well, can be able to keep teachers in schools.

From the interviews conducted with managers from various levels of the education department, it is revealed that managers are actually doing something to arrest the exodus of teachers in the profession. Strategies like motivation, distribution of teachers' workloads, induction and mentoring programmes, teacher development programmes and evaluation of teachers' performance are being practiced.

However, their approach to managing teacher attrition is not fruitful since most of the strategies are improperly implemented. This has a very strong implication in that instead of reducing the number of teachers who are leaving, the number is increasing. Those who are still in the field also show no evidence of satisfaction and if they are not arrested in teaching by the implementation of good strategies, they too can leave. A more serious impact of this is seen in learners' performance which is deteriorating year after year.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings as detailed in the chapters above, the following are recommendations to bring about improvement in the department of education as well as the Human Resource Department (HRM). The recommendations have been classified in accordance with the following headings: teachers' experiences, incentives, compensation and salary, working conditions of teachers and monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of policies in education.

#### **Teacher's Experience**

The restructuring of the education system in South Africa brought many challenges one of which is ignoring / undermining the experience of teachers. There is a need for the department of education to reconsider the experience of teachers. Experienced teachers are coaches or mentors who have the ability to coach and mentor novice teachers in the system. "Supporting new teachers is a critical strategy for improving retention and increasing teacher effectiveness", (Goldrick, 2009). Goldrick further indicated that high quality mentoring and induction can reduce the rate of teacher attrition and accelerate professional growth of new teachers. It is confirmed by Sing Kong Lee in Mckinsey as cited in Auguste, Kihn and Miller (2010) that the experience of a teacher is a valuable asset hence the need to retain experienced teachers.

#### **Incentives, Compensations and Salaries**

Since the district operates under state policies, it is imperative for the national department of education to make and implement policies for incentives to encourage teachers to stay. The inclusion of teachers in various districts in the formation of policies is of necessity as this will give them a chance to voice their concerns. Incentive policies should be taken as a priority for districts such as Mopani because a higher percentage of schools are found in rural communities where resources are not easily accessible. The department of

education should include in their budget, the provision of retention bonuses at recurring intervals for educators to alleviate teacher attrition.

Moreover, the national department of education should provide competitive compensation and salaries to educators in order for them to stay. The department should learn from countries like Singapore that monitors starting salary in the market to ensure that teachers are paid competitively. Achieving this would be a very strong motivating factor that would go a long way to attract young students to the teaching profession. The department should also consider the salary of the experienced teachers as compared to that of the recently employed ones. The stagnation of the salary is another contributing factor to teacher attrition hence the need for competitive salaries for both new and experienced teachers.

### **Working Conditions of Teachers**

The national department of education should foster professional working conditions for teachers. This could be achieved by continuous professional development; workshops, career path, ongoing training, and opportunities for advancement aimed at benefiting educators and improve teaching and learning. The department of education should improve the quality of district-based induction programmes by designing and implementing high quality induction programmes for new teachers to capacitate them. This will need carefully selected and trained mentors as well as proper time for mentor-new teacher interaction and commitment is necessary in this regard. The frustrations caused by continuous curriculum changes would be lessened if districts could manage how and where teachers work.

The challenge for school infrastructure should also be addressed both in Mopani District and nationally as this is another issue causing teachers' movement to better schools. It is not easy to maintain discipline in a poor building or under a tree hence there is a need to build proper classrooms. Teaching and learning should take place in an environment that is conducive in all respect. A school that is well resource gives pride to both teachers and

learners and the department of education should try by all means to provide such a school to them.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Education Policies**

Good policies need dedication and accountability to be well implemented. The country should learn something from other regions as to how education policies are implemented, especially a step by step monitoring and evaluation of the policies. The use of an implementation plan as suggested by Shaw (1999) in the literature which include executive accountability and responsibility, taking retention as a national concern, and setting turnover benchmark.

### **6.4 Recommendation for Further Research**

Further research should be conducted on the implementation of teacher retention strategies and the flexibility of the policies in education department. It should be done to find out the limitations of powers given to managers, especially school managers responsible for implementing change in their own schools.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES**

Interviews will be conducted with the district manager, circuit manager, the human resource manager and school managers. Below are interview questions that will guide during the process of interviewing.

#### **Questions for the District Manager**

1. How widespread is teacher attrition in Mopani District?
2. How are new teachers inducted in your district? What supports are available to new teachers to increase the likelihood of their remaining in teaching?
3. What evidence is there that such strategies (if available) are making a difference?
4. Who has control over teachers' mobility? What is your department doing to maintain the balance between demand and supply of educators in your district?
5. What policies do you have for teacher support? Do state level policies have impact on the support programmes initiated?
6. In the event of teacher shortages, have you hired or explored the option of hiring candidates who have taken alternative route to certification?
8. Does your district have policies for incentives to recruit minority teachers with scarce skills? If so what are they and how effective are they?

### **Questions for circuit managers**

1. We are running short of quality teachers in the Province. What do you think is the reason behind this?
2. What strategies do you use to regain teachers' loss of confidence and moral about teaching as a profession?
3. How is the transfer of teachers controlled? Who is responsible for this?
4. What are you doing to help school managers to motivate teachers to stay?
5. What retention programmes are being introduced to support teachers?
6. Who is responsible for monitoring the success of these programmes when they are implemented?
7. Teachers are complaining about the workload which does not match with the remuneration they get. What is being done to improve this situation?

### **Questions for School Managers**

1. There are a growing numbers of teachers who are leaving the profession to work for other department, what do you think are the causes for this kind of movement?
2. What are you doing as a manager to regain teachers' loss of confidence and moral about the teaching?
3. Do you have beginner teachers in your school? What are you doing to support them in their new job?
4. What mentoring programs are being put in place to support these teachers?
5. What are you doing to ensure that the workloads are equitably distributed among the staff?

### **Questions for Human Resource Manager**

1. What is expected of you as a Human resource Manager in Education? Are your functions extended to the school context and how?
2. Is your organization an “at will” (free to go if you want to) employer in terms of resignations and termination of service?
3. Do you conduct exit interviews to those teachers who are quitting the job? If not, how do you manage the exodus of teachers from the profession?
4. What policies determine the movement of teachers from the profession and how are they monitored?

## **APPENDIX 2: REQUEST FOR PERFOMISSION LETTER**

Enq: 0791394067

P.O BOX 2195

GIYANI

0826

28 November 2007

The Circuit Manager  
Shamavunga Circuit  
Giyani

0826

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWS**

I am a student who is doing Masters in Public and Development Management with the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and would like to request for your permission to conduct a research in your Circuit on the following topic: TEACHER ATTRITION IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

I would like to collect information on the topic from the district manager, Human Resource Manager, circuit's managers and school managers.

I hope my request will receive your attention.

Yours Faithfully  
Mabasa Mikateko Maria (Mrs.)

### **APPENDIX 3: Consent Form**

UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

TITLE OF THE STUDY

“Approaches to managing teacher attrition in Mopani District”

Research conducted by: Mabasa Mikateko M

Student number : 0618789T

Cell number : 0737774656

Dear Interviewee.

I am a student at the University of Witwatersrand. I am registered for the master’s degree in Public and Development Management (P&DM). I am conducting research as one of the requirement for the completion of the programme.

The aim of the study is to explore on the challenges facing the department of education in Mopani District to retain teachers in schools. It wants to examine whether the department of education is coming up with best approaches and/or strategies to regain teachers’ confidence and pride with regard to their profession.

The study will identify different approaches and/or strategies that the department of education is putting in place to keep quality teachers in schools. It will look at factors leading to teacher attrition as well as the trends in teacher movement in Mopani District. It will then look at how the department of education is handling the challenge and as well as the strategies for consideration when dealing with teacher attrition.

#### **APPENDIX 4: Participant's Agreement**

I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I understand the intent and the purpose of this study. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

I have the right to review, comment on and/or withdraw the information for reasons of my own. The data collected in this study are confidential with respect of my personal identity unless I specify otherwise. I understand if I say anything that I believe may incriminate myself, the interviewer will immediately rewind the tape and record over the potentially incriminating information. The interviewer will then ask me if I would like to continue the interview.

If I have any questions about this study, I am free to contact the researcher or the faculty adviser. If I have any question about my rights as a research participant, I am free to contact the supervisor of the researcher. (Contacts will be provided) I have been given of this consent form that I may keep for my own reference.

I have read and understood the above form and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatsoever reasons, I consent to participate in today's interview.

Participant signature: .....

Date .....

