

A critical Analysis on Processes of Filling Promotional Posts in South African Schools: A Transactional Leadership Perspective

Thulani Zengele

Department of Educational Leadership and Management
College of Education, University of South Africa, Republic of South Africa
E-mail: tzengele@unisa.ac.za

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2013.v4n3p603

Abstract

The formulation and implementation of Resolution 6 of 1998 during the redeployment process has led to (un)intended consequences when promotional posts are filled in South African public schools. Redeployment was a process aimed at placing redundant and excess teachers in schools where they were mostly needed when learners migrated from poorly to well-equipped schools after the demise of apartheid education in 1994. The aim was to prevent the retrenchment of teachers by placing them where they were needed. Resolution 6 of 1998 states that even when promotional posts are vacant, redundant and excess teachers should be given priority when filling such posts. Focus group interviews with teachers, principals and a face-to-face interview with the Labour Relations Officer of the Department of Education were conducted using open-ended questions. Verbatim transcribed data were analysed using the constant comparative method while adopting the grounded theoretical perspective. Findings demonstrate that since schools tend to declare redundant and unionized teachers in excess, these teachers end up in promotional positions with the assistance of their unions. In this paper, the author argues that promotional posts filled in this way may lead to a state of anarchy in school leadership due to unprocedural promotions that are influenced by the union. The author further argues this could lead to the subsequent loss of highly qualified and deserving teachers to other professions. Recommendations focus on the rearticulation and implementation of a revised Resolution 6 of 1998.

Keywords: South African Democratic Teachers Union, Redeployment, Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, Resolution 6 of 1998, Promotions.

1. Introduction and background

Transformational leadership in educational management is a top priority at the University of South Africa's (UNISA) College of Education. Within the framework of Open and Distance Learning (ODL), the latter offers educational leadership training to students aspiring to become educational managers. In contrast to this, transactional leadership style seems to be embraced by the South African Department of Education (DoE). This paper argues that transformational leadership principles should inform and guide processes of filling promotional posts in South African schools – there is a theory-practice divide. However, teacher redeployment, as a bureaucratic and political construct, is a global challenge and has far-reaching significant implications for aspiring managers in education. Wide proliferations of literature suggest that, among others, teachers would be identified for compulsory redeployment on the basis of curricular needs of the school. In keeping with the vision of post-apartheid education transformation, the DoE introduced teacher redeployment through the Employment of Educators Act 79 of 1998 (EEA) and Resolution 6 of 1998 as a process aimed at transferring excess teachers from overstaffed to understaffed schools. Most importantly, redeployment was also aimed at ensuring that teachers did not become redundant and subsequently retrenched when learner numbers declined in their schools. As outlined in the Resolution 6 of 1998, Section 2.4, the decision to redeploy teachers should be based on the operational requirements of each school based on professional qualifications which should be limited to a change in learner enrolment, curriculum changes and a change in the grading of the particular school. Section 8(2) of the EEA states that redeployment and filling of promotional posts may only be done with the approval of the School Governing Body (SGB) and subsequently endorsed by the Director-General of the DoE. The principal, also acting as the resource person, has to ascertain that redeployment and filling of promotional posts take place accordingly. The purpose is to ensure that teachers can work in an atmosphere that is free of nepotism and discrimination when promotional posts are filled.

Currently, the teaching profession is becoming complicated, requiring the highest standards of professional

practice to perform well under the guidance of effective school leaders. While this paper recognizes that the South African education system demands quality and new skills from the school managers, the process of identifying and redeploying, as a policy discourse, excess teachers in South African schools has been problematic as it is linked towards the filling of promotional posts. There is a striking notion that teachers who perform poorly in the classroom and are regularly absent from school due to union activities, get easily declared in excess and redeployed. In a study by Diko and Letseka (2009) on teacher attrition, there are sufficient management aspiring teachers with Honours, Masters and even Doctoral degrees in educational leadership who get sidelined in favour of excess teachers when promotions are made. Resolution 6 of 1998 and Section 3.6 of the EEA state that all teachers should be fairly treated during the redeployment process. The fact that teachers in excess, according to Resolution 6, have to be given priority when promotional posts are filled leaves the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) with no choice but to consider such teachers for promotion. Sayed (2002:29) refers to this as the "policy gap" that is understood as the mismatch between policy intention, practice and outcome since those targeted as in excess and undesirable within the teaching profession, end up promoted to management positions.

Notwithstanding the critical roles played by teacher unions, more specifically the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), in the post-apartheid education transformation, their influence in teacher redeployment and filling promotional posts cannot be underestimated and taken for granted. Outstandingly, among others, the core values of democracy are not embedded in the current promotional posts. With devolution of management to the individual school site, this paper argues that the implementation of teacher redeployment policies and the filling of promotional posts are riddled with corrupt practice and favouritism as argued by Letseka, Bantwini and McKenzie (2012) and Pattillo (2012). Both processes lack the democratic values and a substance of meritocracy. From an instructional leadership perspective, this paper departs on the assumption that the perceptions of teachers, principals and labour relations officers are critical in the successful implementation of the teacher redeployment policies. This article therefore reports on the influence of SADTU regarding the redeployment process and subsequent filling of promotional posts. It further aims to demonstrate how teachers that are redeployed in this way end up filling promotional posts within the GDE. The author is of the view that once stakeholders understand the far-reaching implications of Resolution 6, care will be exercised when future recommendations for promotions are made. The article is divided into five sections. The first section provides a brief of the theoretical framework on the merits and demerits of transformational leadership, governance and management in education. The second section offers a research methodology and design. The third section presents the results. The fourth section captures the discussion section. The final section provides a brief conclusion

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts both the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms that dwell on the fundamental differences between what should be happening in schools compared to what actually happens. According to Weber (1958:68), the interpretivist approach is used to investigate the perceptions and aspirations of those that are investigated. In this study, the aspirations of educational leadership students at UNISA are investigated against those of unions and DoE officials when promotional posts are filled. UNISA is the largest ODL institution in South Africa responsible for the training of more than 55% of teachers in South Africa. UNISA becomes the institution of choice for the majority of post-graduate educational leadership students because its ODL nature allows them to study while employed on a full-time basis. This paper aims to determine the projected implications of sidelining well-qualified teachers under the guise of redeployment when promotional posts are advertised and filled. Diko and Letseka (2009) argue this standpoint as they contend that applications for promotions within the DoE are driven by a desire for attractive salary packages rather than devoted educational leadership. Diko and Letseka (*ibid*) further articulate that there are 'behind the scenes' campaigns by SADTU to have their comrades promoted by leaking interview questions as well.

In the light of the above, this paper focuses on the notion of transactional leadership styles of management as espoused by the DoE. As Burns (1978) posits, transactional leadership involves an exchange of rewards for positive and supportive behaviour. Bass (1985) also suggests that there are two forms of transactional leadership behaviour, the contingent reward behaviour and the contingent punishment by others theories as cited in Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich (2001:117-118). The contingent reward behaviour theory is evident when followers have shown support for the leadership because they get rewarded. In this study, the reward for loyalty to the union becomes the promotion which translates to power, recognition and higher salaries. As Diko and Letseka (2009) assert, the applications of teachers for management positions are driven by the high salary packages rather than motivation to lead schools effectively. The reward for loyalty to the union by its key members becomes punishment for suitably qualified and devoted educational leadership students that aspire to the same promotional posts. On the other hand, the contingent punishment behaviour

theory by Bass (1985) becomes prevalent when promoted union followers do not fulfil the mandate of the union and get ostracised, intimidated and even forced to resign from their management positions when they do not fulfil the SADTU mandate as earlier cited by Letseka et al (2012) and Pattillo (2012). The Ntombela case that was earlier cited by Pattillo (ibid) and supported by Fleisch (2010) in his study on "*The politics of the Governed*" bears reference to the prevailing conditions at schools when there is an attempt to promote well-qualified and deserving teachers against the wishes of the union leadership. This flies across the face of progressive educational reform principles aimed at ensuring that people get rewarded for good work that is performed when educating learners and providing an enabling environment for both learners and teachers.

Hoadely and Ward (2009) reveal that due to the significant role that parents play in School Governing Bodies (SGB), parents in mostly poor and township communities have little or no experience in school governance. This gives the teacher component of the SGB who are mostly SADTU members and union observers to manipulate the selection process in favour of their comrades thus sidelining suitably qualified applicants that are not affiliated to unions. In addition, Diko and Letseka (2009:232) reveal that sidelined teachers have stated that there is no reason why they should not resign from the DoE and look for employment elsewhere. Sayed (2002 in Hoadely and Ward 2009) contends that the circumstances within the South African education system call for a redress by all education stakeholders, especially the government.

The research by Letseka, Bantwini and King-McKenzie (2012) and Pattillo (2012) confirms that in union language doing well in education means carrying out the mandate of the union and not of the DoE. In view of this statement, the author contends that getting registered and passing post-graduate degrees and diplomas at university is not worth the while if the knowledge acquired in school management is not applied. The Ministerial Review on School Governance in 2004 resonates to the fact that there is a drive to transform school management by means of both decentralization and transactional leadership traits. The author argues that such a process tends to benefit certain groups. In the South African context, the dominant group that stands to benefit from decentralization is SADTU because of its alliance with the African National Congress (ANC) which is the ruling party in the South African government and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Besides, SADTU has been instrumental in keeping the current government in power through the votes by teachers who form a significant section of the informed population. The transactional form of leadership that has transcended through the ranks within the DoE tends to benefit SADTU while compromising on values of good school governance that is based on commitment and the ability to implement educational policies effectively. The transactional leadership theoretical perspective becomes relevant for this study on the basis that the current trends in educational leadership seem to focus on loyalty to the union rather than to the needs of schools as will be argued during the discussion section of this study. The following section addresses the methodological aspect of this article.

Research methodology

1.1 The research design

The author adopted the interpretivist paradigm for this study in order to probe what goes on in the minds of those who are investigated (Weber, 1958:38). Since the interpretivist paradigm is concerned about what should be happening compared to what actually happens, a qualitative enquiry was used to access data in words, not numbers. This qualitative study was conducted by means of two focus group interviews with teachers, principals, and a face-to-face interview with the Labour Relations Officer (LRO) in District 12 of the GDE. Krueger (1988:47 in Babbie 2010:323) contends that focus groups have high face validity as one can observe the body language by participants while allowing for some flexibility. During the interviews, one broad, probing and open-ended question was asked: *How do schools handle the filling of promotional posts?* This question was aimed at determining if schools implemented policy as prescribed. It also aimed at eliciting responses from all education stakeholders that were interviewed on how proper identification of candidates for promotional posts could be managed. The same question was asked during all the interviews to enhance the trustworthiness of findings.

To increase the possibility that the respondents would reveal their true feelings and opinions, the author followed-up with open-ended probing questions that would promote an in-depth discussion by the research participants during interviews as is supported by Lewis (2000:4). Measor (1985:57) maintains that it is important to build a cordial relationship with the participants because the quality of data is enhanced when there is an element of trust. The author had previously worked alongside some of the respondents, and they had no reason not to trust the author with the required data. Measuring validity and reliability was not difficult because the author was a former school teacher and

principal, and shared some of their experiences. Recording was done with the consent of the participants as an ethical prerequisite suggested by Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:73).

1.2 The population sample

The study was conducted in the D12 District of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) because of the district's representativity in terms of race, ethnicity and demographics. The Gauteng Province is one of 9 Provinces of South Africa and the business capital of South Africa. The D12 District consists of about 300 schools. Purposive sampling was employed in this study. The first focus group consisted of 10 teachers from the 4 neighbouring schools and 8 of them had an advanced qualification in Educational Management from UNISA and aspiring to become managers while the other 2 were registered for their post-graduate studies in educational management at UNISA. The second focus group consisted of 8 principals and deputies from 8 neighbouring schools. There was an individual interview with the District 12 Labour Relations Officer (LRO) because of her involvement in all labour-related matters in the district including dispute resolution processes. However, it was not an easy process to assemble such a group because most participants were not willing to discuss matters regarding union operations for fear of reprisals. They all expressed concern about their anonymity and the author assured them about the ethical issues of anonymity when they gave consent for the recording of the interviews by signing the consent forms. All the participants including the LRO had considerable experience of between 10 and 25 years in education.

1.3 Data analysis

The grounded theoretical approach was employed in this study while adopting the critical theoretical approach as well. Denscombe (2007:89) indicates that this approach is paramount when there is a need to link any explanation very closely to what happens in a practical situation, namely the real world. Turner (1983:335) also argues that the novelty of the grounded theory is not associated with the mode of investigation, but with the manner in which data are analyzed. In this study, data were analyzed by making use of the constant comparative method in 5 stages as characterized by Denscombe (2007:257). This method allows one to compare and contrast codes, categories and concepts as they emerge, while constantly checking them against the existing norms as enshrined in the EEA. Data analysis did not take place in linear fashion but was somewhat ambiguous, time consuming and messy (Rossman 1999:150). There was coding and identification of a theme and categories. The theme covered the filling of promotional posts. The categories consisted of teachers, principals and the LRO. All the recorded data were transcribed verbatim and are typed in *italics* in this research report. Selection and prioritization of topics emerged in coordination with Denscombe's (2007:303) support of prioritizing certain aspects over others as it is not possible to present all qualitative data at an equal level.

Results

Direct quotations as already explained have been used to substantiate certain findings. These quotations are typed in *italics* in this article. To gain momentum on specific aspects, the author used discourse analysis in order to reveal the implicit rather than the explicit responses because he knew most of the respondents well. Denscombe (2007:309) supports this method on the basis that a researcher who undertakes discourse analysis needs to use prior assumptions and existing knowledge about the respondents, as well as the politics around that area. In this context, the politics refers to the general perceptions among teachers on the filling of promotional posts. Below are the responses by the participants involved in the study.

1.4 The perceptions of teachers on the filling of promotional posts

Teachers generally stated that unions fully participate instead of becoming observers in processes that involve the filling of promotional posts. One teacher mentioned this, "*They only care about money and the fact that their member is in excess... so they will do anything to ensure that their comrades get more pay.*" Another one said, "*If it is a post level one position you hardly see them, but come promotional posts they start being aggressive and intimidating.*" Another teacher said, "*From post level 2 to 4 interviews they are there with a mandate from the union and if their member does not succeed there is a grievance.*" One teacher said, "*To the detriment of the learner, nothing is really done to support learning. They (the unionists) would rather see to it that they are promoted.*" Another teacher added, "*Instead of doing our*

work preparation we look for other posts advertised somewhere because we are not happy in this education department."

When asked why they complained because they were also union members, they answered that if you are not active enough in union activities like attending union conferences and workshops, you will not be considered and you will be sent to any school. When asked about the role of the SGB's, they said, *"There is no fairness, unions influence uneducated parents, and if the SGB is strong you see a lot of grievances."* One of the teachers said, *"Education is going down the drain"*. Another one asserted, *"They push you up so that once you are up, you look after those who are behind. So, there is no way of successfully reporting nepotism when the authorities themselves have been deployed by their union."*

Almost all teachers mentioned that promotional posts were filled according to the applicants' participation in union activities. The unions decide well in advance on who will be appointed to post level 2, which is the departmental head, post level 3, which is the deputy principalship and post level 4, which is the principalship as they have a list of teachers in excess. One teacher said, *"They caucus, I can't say it clearly because I am afraid, it depends on who are you. Who do you know? Otherwise you must make yourself known."* Through their involvement, the panel tends to look at union affiliation rather than the needs of the school when there is a union member in excess. Teachers indicated that the process became worse when the principal was also a unionist.

Another teacher expressed her concerns in this way, *"We have Sadtu occupying all the senior positions within the DoE. You know Sir, they come with their lists of who will be appointed at which school, and they call this the deployment of their own members to key positions, just like it happens in politics. All the political parties submit party lists for those who will be in parliament. Those who don't get onto the ANC lists jump over to COPE and the same applies in schools. You know, I always feel like leaving this department because I work hard but there is no reward."* (COPE refers to the Congress of the People Party which was the breakaway faction formed in 2008 by the disgruntled members of the ANC after the Polokwane ANC conference in December 2007). Teachers told the story of another experienced and highly qualified teacher who had acted as a deputy principal for nearly a year but was not appointed because the union dominated interviews and shortlisting. They said, *"This teacher feels used and dumped. We now have a poorly qualified and less experienced deputy principal just because she is connected to the union."* The following section reports on findings from the interviews with school principals.

1.5 *The perceptions of principals on the filling of promotional posts*

The principals agreed that the unions attended the shortlisting and interviewing process as observers, but things changed when their member was in excess and not recommended because there was a dispute lodged at the district office. When asked about the steps taken to fill promotional posts, one principal said, *"Sir, as usual they look after the interests of their members. If the employer is weak, they push their agenda and they win. They look for their member and say, this one is the correct candidate"* The same principal concluded by saying, *"That's why, today, we don't have quality teachers and managers in our schools."* These views were also shared by the teachers as reported in the previous section.

Regarding nepotism, another principal, as earlier mentioned by teachers said, *"You know what happens in politics, for instance there is COPE now, because the ANC did not give jobs to certain members."* The principal continued, *"You know, sir, in the olden days for a person to become a departmental head you had to prove yourself in the classroom, and to become a deputy principal you had to become a good departmental head, and lastly, to become a principal you had to become a good deputy principal. So, today you find a post level 1 classroom teacher getting promoted straight to the principalship simply by virtue of being an active union member on the excess list. Unions do not consider the quality of their members in the classroom. In my experience, teachers get involved in unions in order to get promotions and protection once they are declared in excess."*

The principals interviewed showed displeasure at the way teachers were appointed to promotional posts. They stated that what made matters worse was that qualifications were not considered when they recommended their members. One said, *"As long as you have a certificate and you are a union key member you will get the promotion."* There was also a degree of resentment among principals concerning the dropped performance rate among learners. One of them asked, *"What happened with the results in 2012? They are coming down because the Department of Education has lost its grip."* The following section reports on the interview with the Labour Relations Officer (LRO).

1.6 *The perceptions of the Labour Relations Officer (LRO) on the filling of promotional posts*

The LRO responded in this manner" *...the modus operandi for various unions differs, for example, some unions go*

according to the letter of the law." She further said that "...some unions violate the rules by placing friends for positions long before they are advertised. For instance, they know that a principal is about to retire. Strategically they have someone reserved for that position. In so doing, they do not consider the curriculum and leadership needs of the institution. They want to influence the SGB by bringing their lists of people to take over the positions." The LRO puts it in this manner, "They bring their lists; it's like political lists. They go to short-listing meetings and intimidate the SGB panel by threatening to lodge a grievance should their member be unsuccessful. The bigger union (SADTU) is always guilty of this. The bigger union also has a vast membership of younger educators who have little respect for authority."

The LRO explained that the trend amongst younger teachers was to look after their own interests rather than those of learners. She, however, indicated that there were isolated cases where young teachers were properly placed in positions. In her own words she remarked, "generally speaking, the union deploys members to schools rather than helping them to be employed." The LRO indicated that there was little that could be done to resolve the situation because the senior employees of the GDE were also well-known unionists. In the LRO's own words, "What do you do when the employer is also in the same organization? You are helpless in this kind of situation." The LRO even declared atrociously that she was not free to be interviewed in this respect because some of her senior colleagues at District and Head office have been appointed on, what is referred to as, "...the SADTU ticket."

Discussion and recommendations

This was a qualitative study within the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms aimed at exploring processes followed during the implementation of the redeployment policies. The transactional style of leadership is evidently prevalent within both the leadership hierarchy of the DoE and that of SADTU. According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership involves an exchange of rewards for positive and supportive behaviour. The LRO does support SADTU when acceding that sometimes the process goes peacefully when there is no opposition. The non-existence of opposition to SADTU expectations does not mean that such expectations are always legitimate as it could be the fear that unaffiliated teachers and DoE officials experience when SADTU becomes part of the process. Resolution 6 of 1998 and the EEA dictate that all unions should maintain the observer status during selection processes. Research by Diko and Letseka (2009), Fleisch (2010) and Pattillo (2012) supports the LRO and teachers' statements that there is indeed intimidation going on in schools during the selection process. Fleisch (2010) even goes on to say SADTU is prepared to use even physical violence when other stakeholders do not conform to their demands to have their key members promoted. The same sentiment is echoed by Pattillo (2012) when referring to the Ntombela case whose office furniture and car were savagely vandalized by SADTU when he refused to honour the similar SADTU mandate.

The LRO claims that the state of education in South Africa is compromised through the infiltration of senior positions by poorly-prepared SADTU dominated managers within the DoE. Reference is made by Zengele (2009) when alluding to the appointment of the past SADTU Presidents. For instance, Mdladlana became a minister of labour and Hindle became the Chief Director and later a Director-General of Education of South Africa and the list is endless. What drives the union's choice for candidates to be promoted seems to be loyalty to SADTU rather than the professional qualifications of applicants and this seems to peeve dedicated teachers. In this case, the implication is that no effective teaching goes on in schools until an identified SADTU member has been appointed to the SADTU identified position. Bass (1985) as referred to earlier in this paper suggests that there are two forms of transactional leadership theories, the contingent reward behaviour and contingent punishment by others as cited by Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich (2001:117-118). Findings show that the Bass (1985) contingent reward behaviour theory is evident when mere loyalty to SADTU becomes basis for promotion as espoused by Letseka et al (2012). Pattillo (2012), Fleisch (2010) and Fleisch and Christie (2011) posit that SADTU affiliated teachers spend less time in the classroom in favour of union meetings that often take place during teaching time as confirmed during the interviews with teachers.

The author professes that the SADTU invasion of the selection process as active members instead of participation as observers happens due to the ill preparedness by SGB's because of the low educational levels of parents who form the majority SGB component in poor communities. It is a well-known fact in South Africa that the majority of teachers belong to SADTU because of its history of having fought the South African apartheid regime in the past (Zengele, 2009:1). At the same time, the LRO posits that it is difficult to report SADTU members because the senior managers of the DoE are also there on the "SADTU TICKET" and this is the term that was used verbatim by the LRO during the interview. Recent research by Letseka et al (2012) and Pattillo (2012) confirms that in union language doing well in education means carrying out the mandate of the union and not of the DoE as clearly articulated by teachers during the interviews.

The DoE has the mandate to ensure that well-qualified school managers are appointed for schools to function effectively. The compromised state by the DoE since 1994 makes it difficult to carry out its mandate and this seems to be the reason various researchers like Fleisch and Christie (2004), Bloch (2009) and Fleisch (2010:), state that education in South Africa is in tatters and in a state of collapse. In the author's view, the reason the DoE is in such a compromised state is that the senior DoE management including the current Minister of Education are mostly SADTU deployees. They also know the consequences of not carrying out the SADTU mandate as Pattillo (2012) refers to the earlier cited Ntombela case in her study on "Quiet corruption" and in line with the contingent punishment by others theory as espoused by Bass (1985).

Common findings during all the interviews reveal that all the participants are aware of the enormous power that SADTU yields across the DoE because of its affiliation to COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), which is in a tripartite alliance with the SACP and the ANC, the ruling party in Parliament. All stakeholders that were interviewed also share doubt that there is an imminent solution because of the DoE concessions with SADTU since 1994 regarding the allocation of senior positions to SADTU key members as a "thank you" for supporting the present government to be in place. In the study by Fleisch (2010) and Letseka et al (2012), it is stated that it has become easy for SADTU to disrupt schooling if their mandate is not carried out. The same researchers also argue that the officials that have to take disciplinary action against them are SADTU deployed officials as well who are thus unable to discipline their members for fear of reprisals already mentioned. This is synonymous to Greece and the USA as Letseka et al (2012) relate to events leading to the resignations of four Education Ministers in Greece for supporting performance-related pay principles for teachers. The interview with the LRO reveals and confirms the compromised state of the DoE because of patronage-based appointments within the DoE when she labels such promotions as the "SADTU TICKET".

1.7 Recommendations

The following are recommendations based on findings during all the interviews:

- The DoE must engage the services of Employment Agencies to handle all the advertising, shortlisting, interviews and recommendations for appointment processes to avoid all forms of subjectivity and nepotism. This recommendation is viewed as having potential to allow serving union members who are teachers and principals to dedicate more of their time in preserving the culture of learning and teaching;
- There must be legal officers employed to observe all the selection processes to minimize the number of grievances pertaining to unprocedural appointments;
- Resolution 6 of 1998 should be reviewed and restructured by raising the minimum requirements for promotion to a Masters Degree for the principalship; and
- All management appointments must be secured on renewable 3 year contracts pending satisfactory work performance before they are considered for renewal. The same South African principle of filling senior positions from Director upwards for a fixed but renewable 5 year term should apply to all management positions within the DoE starting at school level.

Conclusion

The author does not allege that all management positions in schools are only occupied by SADTU unionists, but most of them are. In a similar tone, the author does not claim that all SADTU activists appointed to key positions are not suitably qualified, experienced or hard working, but it is undeniable that there are numerous lowly qualified and less experienced managers within the DoE hierarchy. The fact that the minimum qualification to be appointed to any management position within the DoE is a 3 year post-matriculation teaching qualification poses a massive challenge. It is also an undeniable fact that such individuals are SADTU members as this emerged during all the interviews. Finally, it is also spot on that more than 75% of teachers are affiliated to SADTU in South Africa. There is nothing wrong with the affiliation to unions, but reduced commitment to teach when promotional posts are advertised becomes a serious threat to the education of South African children. If the DoE is serious about becoming a reputable provider of basic education to all children, control of education has to be wrenched from SADTU. The big question is, who will take control of Basic Education in South Africa when the majority of all those appointed to management positions got there on the "SADTU TICKET" as coined by one of the research participants. The question that should be asked at this stage is: 'Is it worth the trouble for aspiring educational managers to register for management and leadership programmes when it only takes union membership to qualify for promotion?'

References

- Babbie, E. 2010. *The Practice of Social Research*. Twelfth Edition. USA: Wadsworth.
- Bass, B.M. 1985. *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- Bloch, G. 2009. *The toxic mix: Whats wrong with SA's schools and how to fix it*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers.
- Burns, J.M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Denscombe, M. 2007. *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Research Projects*. 3rd Ed. England: McGraw-Hill.
- Diko, N N, Letseka M 2009. Policy appropriation in teacher retention and attrition: the case of North-West Province. *Perspectives in Education*, 228-236.
- Fleisch, B. 2010. The Politics of the governed: South African Democratic Teachers' Union Soweto strike. June 2009. *South African Review of Education*, 16: 117-131.
- Fleisch, B. Christie, P. 2004. Structural Change, Leadership and School Effectiveness/Improvement: Perspectives from South Africa. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, 25(1): 95-112
- Henning, H., Van Rensburg, W. & Smit, B. 2004. *Finding your Way in Qualitative Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Krueger, R.A. 1988. *Focus Groups*. Newbury Park. CA: Sage.
- Letseka, M., Bantwini, B., and King-McKenzie, E. 2012. Public-Union Sector Politics and the Crisis of Education in South Africa. *Creative Education*, 13(7): 1197-1204.
- Lewis, M. 2000. Focus Group Interviews in Qualitative Research: A Review of the Literature. *Action Research E-Reports*, 2. Available at www.usyd.edu.au/arow/arer/2002.htm
- Mackenzie, S.B., Podsakoff, P.M., Rich, G.A. 2001. Transformational and Transactional Leadership and Salesperson Performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. 29(2): 115-134.
- Measor, L. 1985. Interviewing: A Strategy in Qualitative Research. In: *Strategies of Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, ed. R.G Burgess. London: Falmer.
- Moe, T. 2011. *Special interest: Teachers Unions and America's Public Schools*. Washington DC Brookings Press.
- Pattillo, K.M.C. 2012. *Quiet Corruption: Teachers' Unions and Leadership in South African Township Schools*. Thesis submitted to the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
- Rossman, G.B. 2003. *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Taylor, N. 2008. "Whats wrong with South African schools?" A Five Year Plan for South African Schooling. A Report Commissioned by the National Planning Commission. JET Education Services. Pretoria: Government Press.
- The Economist. 2011. Briefing: Public-sector workers. *The Economist*: January 8-14.
- Van Onsellen, G. 2012. South African Political Dictionary: *Cadre employment and cadre deployment at www.inside-politics.org* (retrieved November 30, 2012)
- Weber, M. 1958. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Scribner.
- Zengele, V.T. 2009. *The Involvement of Teacher Unions in the Implementation of the Employment of Educators' Act 76 of 1998*. D.Ed. Thesis (Published), Pretoria: University of South Africa.