MANAGING TEACHERS' PASSION IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH

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Abstract - Teachers without passion for their profession have become endemic to the sustainability of secondary school education in South Africa, most especially rural schools. Therefore, the study examined the challenges responsible for dispassionateness of teachers in the teaching profession alongside it possible solutions in the rural located secondary schools of Thabo Mofutsanyana Municipality of South Africa. The study was underpinned by assets-based community development theory. A simple qualitative research approach was used to pilot the study. The population for the study comprises secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District of the Free State province. The participants consist of six members of the stated population, that is, two secondary school teachers, one principal and two retired teachers including one member of the district employees in the Department of Education using a purposive sampling technique. Unstructured interviews were used to collect data from the participants. The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis (TA). The study revealed that novice teachers love the teaching profession, but the problem comes when they face challenges such as the lack of resources, are underpaid, there is conflict between co-workers and learners and also stress emanated from the organisation. These challenges were confirmed to be responsible for low teachers' morale towards effectives teaching. The study conclusively recommends a commensurate salary for teachers, adequate provision of teaching and learning resources and that the school management should devise a practicable means of managing organisational conflict.

Keywords - Management, Passion, Rural Secondary Schools, Teacher.

I. INTRODUCTION

In order for the country to develop, there must be factors of production and labour is one of them. In other words, a country full of skilled labourers is likely to develop compared to the one with none. In South Africa, secondary schools are the ones that prepare learners for the outside world. The secondary school learners all fall under the same age group, i.e. they are all teenagers. According to the general aims of the South African curriculum (Section B): The National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 (2011:5) aims to produce learners that are able to: use critical thinking skills in problem solving; work in a team, be responsible citizens and have the ability to communicate effectively. Teachers add value to the country they work for in multiple ways (Chamundeswari 2013:420). This simply means that the direction that a nation is going to take can be as a result of the determination of its teachers rather than the lack of it (Gkolia Belias, & Koustelios 2014:321). In any case, given the evidence it is safe to say that, the government officials in the Department of Education should be fully responsible for employing teachers that are going to lead the country in the right direction. A good education system consists of teachers that define their profession as a calling (Gkolia et al. 2014:321); a calling to serve the children of the community, and the country as a whole. As said by Carbonneau, Valler, Ferner and Guay (in Serin 2017:60), passion is having an interest in what one is doing. Even if there is no financial compensation for the work done, that does not diminish the interest in the work/profession. From these, we argue that assion is spending time, energy and money to assist another human being or to improve the systems/machines utilised in the workplace or at home. Though, Villarroel (2015:2) argues that it is very difficult to define passion, because it is not tangible and it is not easy to determine whether an individual has a passion for what s/he is doing. The hours that one spends at work are more than the hours spent at home, minus the sleeping hours. Therefore, passion could be seen as what you found yourself doing even when you are supposed to be resting or catching fun.

In this situation, take the case of a teacher with no passion for his/her profession. For this type of a teacher, teaching is just like any other job, whereby one works for a certain number of days and collects a pay check at the end of the month. Rampa (2012:1281) is of the opinion that, teachers with a passion for what they do can easily be spotted by the following habits (holding other things constant): they have the energy for what they do, they are committed to their work and they motivate their colleagues to be in the same way. However, for some, along the way their passion for the profession begins to diminish. Subsequently, those teachers end up doing the opposite of what they used to do before. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that teachers are provided with the necessary support, in order for the passion not to diminish (Ali, Zaman, Tabassum, & Iqbal 2011:32). A better performance from the teachers is necessary, for any nation, particularly South Africa to have a good education system.

In another case, the teachers who are passionate about their profession tend to contribute positively towards the education system. As said by Gkolia et al.

(2014:321), passionate teachers can survive any education system available. In other words, no matter the situation they find themselves in, they still strive and achieve excellence. These types of teachers will go as far as furthering their studies, for the love they have for knowledge. Subsequently, Asif, Fakhra, Tahir, and Shabbir (2016:3345) have noted that most of the outstanding performance by learners is because of teachers with passion for teaching. Learners that are taught by teachers who love their profession have a high chance of learning. In this situation, learners actually end up enjoying the process of learning itself (Serin 2017:60). As a result, the number of teachers with no passion for the teaching profession has to be reduced, so that the schools are full of teachers who love their profession.

II. SITUATING THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study is the obvious presence of teachers with no passion for teaching in rural secondary schools. This is evidenced in my personal observations in the selected rural schools. This dispassionateness as observed could be because of deficiencies from the recruitment process that brought such teachers into practice. This seems to have led to many setbacks to students and schools' development in rural communities. This may not be unconnected to a lack of importance attached to the teacher's passion for his/her profession but mainly on academic qualifications. In this vain, I argue that passion for work and academic qualification seems to be of equal importance if truly the aims and objective of teaching must be actualised. This is opined by Oxford South African school dictionary 9th edition, that passion is a strong feeling, usually of love. That is, where there is love and true feeling for one's profession, there is likelihood of success. Therefore, passion plays a pivotal role in the success of the learners in their life after school. As said by Rowe (in Day 2009:4), passion matters for this reason, "There are strong empirical grounds for believing that teachers can and do make a difference and that consistent high quality teaching, supported by strategic professional development, can and does deliver dramatic improvements in student learning." In other words, learners need teachers with a passion for teaching in order for teaching and learning to take place.

According to Day (2009:5), some teachers were born passionate about teaching but with some, they had to acquire the love for teaching along the way. In this case, passion is affected by personal and social factors. For instance, a novice teacher may be so passionate about teaching only for the passion to diminish along the way. One may then end up with no passion for teaching, due to the external factors that influenced the direction of the chosen career (teaching). A passionate teacher will therefore, identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking. They will work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team; they will organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively; as well as collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information. Passionate teachers will also demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation among others (National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12, 2011:5)

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ASSETS-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD) APPROACH

In different communities, it is believed that when there are social, economic and any other type of problem within, then external help is required to solve these problems. Subsequently, it leads to the members of the society not having faith in their capabilities. Fuimaono (2011:1) recommends an assets-based community development (ABCD) approach as a solution for this type of thinking, which is not only goal-driven, but also people-driven. However, Assets-based Community Development (ABCD) is a collaborative approach focused on discovering and mobilizing the available resources present in a community to respond to the community problems. The ABCD approach provides a way for people living in a community to find and mobilize what they have in order to build a stronger community (Green et. al 2006:2). As said by Bruce (2017:341), the ABCD approach was started by John L. McKnight who concluded that "words don't mean, people do" while he was still at a Northwestern University. Thereafter the 18 associates together with Professor John McKnight and Professor Jody Kretzmann went on to build what is known today as assets-based community development approach.

From our perspective, this theory assumed its principles on collaborative utilisation of the available resources by the people themselves to proffer solutions to their own problems without external dependency. Fuimaono (2011:17) also supported this, that the ABCD is not driven by the external forces, but by the community members. The principles of ABCD according to him are the acknowledgement of the unity of the members of the community and the external members towards providing solutions to their problem by themselves; it also believes that all the strategies that could be used, should be used for a betterment of the society. Gathering and giving credit to the skills and knowledge that is provided by the members of the society is another principle of the ABCD. ABDC also assumed that participatory approaches are better to empower the community members towards developing themselves. This in our argument is because the community members will have faith in their abilities and the abilities of other community members. This is in line with the

conclusion of Jakes and Miller (2014:4) that when all the principles of ABCD are applied, this goes to show that the members will come together and share their skills, knowledge and resources, consequently friendships and oneness will also be formed.

This theory is appropriate to rationalise this study because of its unanimous and participatory tendencies towards solving problems by the people that live with the problem. This is not the best, but has been rated useful for the development of people and the community they live it (International Association for Community Development, 2009:6). This is so because every member of such community is regarded as an asset, useful and important to the growth of such community. However, the unanimous combination of all stakeholders in the secondary school community is regarded as a stakeholder in the input, process and output of secondary education system. Therefore, they are all responsible for the success and the failure of the system. In order to ensure teachers are passionate about their job, all hands must be on deck. The school principals, teachers (both serving and the retired), members of the Department of Education and the representative of the community are the hood for which passion could be created in the teaching profession since education is seen, as a device for the advancement of individual and national development, according to Omodan and Tsotetsi (2018:82). It is assumed that when the community, the Department of Education, school principals and other stakeholder do their societal responsibilities, will not only affect the learners positively, but will create passion in teachers as result of their feelings of unity and oneness towards the development of all.

This will in turn lead learners to become economically active citizens that contribute positively towards the society. This is further complemented by Chamundeswari (2013:421) that it is not only the responsibility of the teachers to ensure they are passionate about their job, but all the stakeholders in schools are the needed assets that can contribute towards assisting teachers to be passionate about their profession.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The specific purpose of this research is to use the ABCD approach to manage teachers' passion in rural secondary schools. Subsequently, this will ensure that the Department of Education employs teachers that have a passion for teaching. In other words, the teachers with passion for teaching will ensure that learners achieve their full potential in life after school. This research will consequently lead to a reduction in the number of teachers without passion for teaching. However, in order to achieve these, the study investigates the challenges of teachers' dispassionateness for teaching and explores the possible solutions to teachers' dispassionateness to teaching. In order to achieve this, the following question was raised.

A. Research Question

How can passion be created in rural secondary school teachers?

V. METHODOLOGY

In order to get answers to the research question from the people that are affected by the issue at hand, a qualitative research approach was adopted. According to Jameel, Shaheen and Majid (2018:1), this is an approach that is used to provide data for the research question using the "why" and "how" questions. Apart from this, it helps the researcher to understand people and the social and cultural contents within which they live (Creswell, Ebersöhn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, & Clark 2016: 53). By so doing, unstructured interviews were used to collect data from the participants. The six participants comprised the serving teachers, retired teachers, principals and staff of the Department of Education all from the Free State Province, in the rural secondary schools of Thabo Mofutsanyana district. The selection of participants was done with the use of the purposive sampling method. This was appropriate because it allows the research to select people that are purposefully needed with which their personality could not be represented by another entity (Suri, 2011:65). The data for this study were analysed using the Thomas and Harden three steps of thematic analysis. These three steps involve coding text; developing descriptive themes and generating analytical themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008:7–8). This thematic analysis is relevant to this study because it helps the researcher to be able to categorise the data based on the objectives of the study with appropriate interpretation. In other words, there needs to be consistence with the collected information and the thematic analysis can assist to detect and identify the different themes to which the information will fall under (Alhojailan, 2012:40).

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to provide answers to the research equation responding to the purpose of the study, the analysis below were made. This was done thematically by identifying the challenges and the possible solutions to the teacher dispassionateness in rural secondary schools. Below is the actual implementation of the stated methods of the study. Challenges of teacher's dispassionateness for teaching were categorised thematically, analysed and discussed below. Also the solutions to teachers' dispassionateness to teaching were generated to provide the possible solutions to the problem under the following headings; pay for teachers, improved working conditions, conflict

management within the workplace and stress/depression management.

A. Underpaid teachers

The fact that teachers are underpaid is still a challenge in schools. Keefe (2018:1) confirms that this is also happening in Pennsylvania. In other words, it is not only a South African problem. Being underpaid simply means that teachers cannot afford to compensate for their basic needs (Keefe 2017:12). Therefore being underpaid still poses a challenge for teachers. The participants also agree by saying:

Most came to teaching because of no jobs, only for the sake of security not passion.

Demand from teachers by Department, e.g. pass rate, they attend Saturday and Sunday classes without remuneration or rewards.

No car allowance for educators at all.

Foundation teachers are not earning money, they earn nothing. And they teach the small kids, they train them how to write even how to talk. Most of them they don't talk you have to iron those things so that the learner could talk.

Participants have mentioned that most teachers entered the profession because of money, but now they are not being paid for extra time, which serves as being underpaid for the work done. In addition, hardworking teachers that are at the entry level i.e. early childhood development are the least paid amongst the teachers. The participants have agreed with the existing literature that teachers are underpaid which according to Chamundeswari (2013:421) will consequently lead to deterioration of the quality of teaching.

B. Poor working Conditions

In a secondary schools, where the right resources are not available at the right time, can sabotage the effort of teachers and teaching activities. This is supported by the opinion of Hlongwane (2013:4) that when there is lack of resources, there will be poor performance on the part of learners. Mfaume and Bilinga (2017:47) even go as far as saying that the poor working conditions that the teachers come across lead teachers to breach their code of conduct. Most teachers are not happy with their work environment; this is what the participants have to say about this:

The learner-teacher ratio increases each and every year, of which this means that the work burden or the work-based for a teacher is going to be high.

The educator: pupil ratio, classes overcrowded, which does not seem to receive attention by the authorities, hence the redeployment system. Of which is going to drive away the motivation to teach or the passion to teach as it was initiated.

Sometimes is the lack of resources that are not there that cause educators not to have passion because you go to the management and tell them that ok, I'm teaching physics I need certain books that are good in physics. Then the management will take years to give you those notes or maybe by the time, they respond with those resources is already late.

In other words, these participants agree that having overcrowded classes still poses a challenge to teaching, because it becomes very difficult to manage such a large group of learners, therefore discipline becomes a big problem. Another participant even confirmed that the educator: pupil ratio in classes is not the same as on paper. Hence, on the part of the management of the schools, not providing the requested resources is as though the teachers' needs are not taken into consideration. Ye (2018:29) also confirmed that many teachers retire very early in their career, because of the conditions they have to work under.

C. Conflicts among co-workers and learners

Each individual has problems from home, but that does not mean that one has to drag them into work. Hence, having healthy relationships as co-workers is of utmost importance (Rampa 2012:1283), and when there are no healthy relationships, teachers will not be happy to go to school. Mart (2013:438) is of the idea that learners will not be motivated to learn, if they have no idea of how they are going to apply the learnt knowledge in the real world. Going to work where there are more people frowning than smiling is not good for one's morale at a workplace.

Educators struggle to employ the Department policies on learners' discipline, so lack of discipline by learners. Most of educators are stabbed nowadays by learners.

Another thing that can cause a teacher not to have passion is, the environment at school, you know with other educators. Because you can be in a school whereby teachers do not get along.

One participant said that nowadays teachers' safety is no longer guaranteed within the school's premises, as learners are no longer disciplined, to such an extent that they even stab their own teachers. Moreover, another one said that teachers who do not get along at work make it difficult for other teachers to do their job. Now, coming to work where colleagues do not get along becomes strenuous. These data is confirmed by Rampa (2012:1284) that the love of teaching will diminish every time when the teacher has to teach ill-disciplined learners and not forgetting that the age factor of the teacher also plays a big role in terms of learners respecting their teachers.

D. Sufficient Pay for Teachers

According to Yasar and Sozbilir (2017: 178), the teachers and even the student-teachers need be compensated for their practice teaching in schools. This will go on to attract more people to the teaching profession. Ali, Zaman, Tabassum and Iqbal (2011:35) are of the idea that teachers will have passion for their profession if they are provided with

better salary packages. When any kind of salary is not welcome, the first thing that comes to mind is, it must be raised for workers to be satisfied. The participants also agree by saying the following:

The salaries they receive must match the amount of work they do. For instance, specialisation, the salary must match. When I specialise in something the salary must match that specialisation because I specialised.

…if the government could try to involve teachers in terms of salary negotiations and stuff, so that if the government could stop applying the top-down approach and start to speak with the teachers from the ground roots, they will be able to give teachers a competitive salary of which is going to invite intrinsic motivation that is going to increase their drive or their passion for teaching.

According to the participants, if a certain teacher works harder than other teachers then that simply means that one should get paid more money than the others. However, if that is not the case, then teachers do not feel valued and appreciated at all. Another participant said discussing with teachers to decide what amount is enough for teachers, will be a solution to the problem of underpaid teachers. The more they are involved in decision making the more they feel valued by the Department of Education. These are in agreement to the suggestion of Sutcher, Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2016:5) that a solution would be considered as one, if their (teachers') salaries were more than full-time employment elsewhere with the same qualification. With satisfying salaries, the teachers will be happy at work and they will be able to produce productive learners.

E. Improved working conditions

No teacher will be happy if every time one comes to work, there is no chalk for writing on the board. Therefore, Ali, Zaman, Tabassum and Iqbal (2011:35) recommend that providing better working conditions is a solution to this problem. However, Ye (2018: 124) thinks that before providing teachers with resources, first they should be asked what they need, then the problem will be solved if they are provided with what they asked. Working under poor conditions makes no one happy and the participants say what they have shared will improve the teachers' working conditions.

…learner ratio should be moderate, because the more the learners are in the class, the more we have the complex in types of behaviour. Poor working conditions, let's say the school does not have proper resources there, bit by bit maybe the school gets funds and they are able to buy those things or the school writes the report and sends it to the department. If the Department of Education can give them extra chairs or whatever or a board, they are attended to maybe the environment gets better, then maybe the educator can slowly become the one that you want him or her to become and have passion for teaching.

As said by Alyaha and Mbongo (2017:129), providing teachers with their physical needs will lead to learners achieving their highest performance. One participant mentioned that the number of learners should be moderate in classes, actually, it should be as it was stated on paper that a certain number of learners should be in one class. That will not only help with overcrowding, but it will also help in terms of discipline. Then the other participant said, when it comes to a lack of resources, the schools' principal should ask for assistance from the Department of Education to get assistance when it comes to the resources required for learning to take place such as the furniture and the prescribed textbooks. Therefore, the good working conditions will result in a teacher loving their workplace and consequently loving the teaching profession

F. Conflict management within the workplace

Asif, Fakhra, Tahir and Shabbir (2016:337) are of the opinion that when teachers and learners get along, that on its own is a solution to their conflict. Actually, learners have once agreed that if teachers possess these qualities (have lessons that are well prepared, are friendly and have a sense of humour) learners consider them as effective teachers (Lupascu, Panisoara & Panisoara (2014:538). In each and every household there are disagreements and the number one general rule of engagement is do not let the sun set without resolving the issue at hand. The same goes for any other organisation. The participants share their solutions:

And another thing school and safety policy should be amended so that it can put all stakeholders together so that they can come with a rapid strategy that will improve safety in the school. Because it is a given fact "no safety, no conducive environment.

…as an HOD (Head of Department) you need to call a teacher and have a one-on-one talk (communication) were you are going to ask the problem, because there is a problem that lead a teacher not to have a passion. So once you have discovered that problem, then as the HOD you need to one-on-one come up with a solution that how can you overcome that, so that at the end the teacher is able to have a passion and once the teacher has passion, believe me, that teacher will be able to produce results.

Participant number one is of the opinion that, if all the stakeholders can come together and draft safety polices for the schools, then the school will become a conducive and safe environment for teaching and learning. Another participant said, communication is key when it comes to solving many problems. Therefore, as a leader of teachers, when there is a problem, a one-on-one communication channel can be opened to solve the conflicts that arise within the school's premises. According to Serin (2017:61), learners will take schooling very seriously if they are motivated by the teachers. The communication that

will take place every day in schools, solving issues day in and day out, will result in a productive work environment.

VII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings were discussed based on the constructs highlighted in the data analysis of the study, that is, the challenges and the solutions for those problems.

A. Unpaid teachers to adequate remuneration

The findings of the study shows that, month in and month out teachers do not stop complaining about being undercompensated by the government, as a sign of being underappreciated for the work they do. This is not only my observation but, the literature also confirms that teachers are under paid, not just in South Africa but in other countries too (Keefe 2018:1). The participants' statements also confirmed that teachers are not taking enough money home. The participants also mentioned that they are not receiving any car allowances from the government. Therefore, this provides enough proof that being under compensated is a challenge in the teaching profession, it was happening in the past and it is continuing now. When teachers are underpaid, that does not say anything about being appreciated, rather they do not feel valued. By receiving that type of treatment, they do not act like assets anymore.

On the solution side, it was confirmed that when there is adequate payment for teachers, it would enhance their passion to work. Yasar and Sozbilir (2017: 178) support the idea of the government paying for training and practical allowances that will motivate them to work. This will make teachers feel appreciated by the Department of Education even before they are fully immersed in the profession. In brief, the finding is that, adequate teachers' salaries will contribute towards keeping teachers happy and the rate of teachers who have no passion will not increase; instead, it will decrease and a number of teachers with passion for their profession will increase. Receiving sufficient pay for the work done is another way of appreciating the job done by teachers, as assets of a community.

B. Poor working conditions to good working conditions

It was found that overcrowding and a lack of resources were mentioned amongst the list of conditions that are considered to affect the teaching profession. Those two contribute towards a teacher ending up not loving the teaching profession any more. From the reviewed literature Mfaume and Bilinga (2017:47) said the poor working conditions lead teachers into breaching the code of conduct, but the lack of resources affects learners more because their academic performance will deteriorate (Hlongwane 2013:4). One solution was found that the provision of good working conditions such as provision of adequate facilities and good environmentalism would help to develop teachers' passion for teaching. This is supported by the conclusion of Alyaha and Mbongo (2017:129) that when the physical (schools') needs of teachers are satisfied then learners' performance will improve. However, in-sourcing resources within a community for assistance are one of the characteristics of the ABCD theory. The learning resources received on time will help teachers to contribute positively towards the community.

C. Conflicts and its management among co-workers and learners

The study revealed that there is perpetual conflict, misunderstanding and disagreement among the teachers, teachers and the principals and even students. That is, there is no peace and quiet within the school premises; instead, sometimes teachers will not agree on something or the teachers and learners or even the teachers and the principals are guilty of this. This seems to be the response to the recommendation of Rampa (2012:1283) that having healthy relations amongst co-workers is vital. Therefore, the absence of peace is found to be one of the challenges facing teachers to be dispassionate about their job. However, proper management of the conflict is found to be a good response to the school conflict. When all the stakeholders get along with themselves, it becomes easy to achieve their aims and objectives. According to Lupascu, Panisoara and Panisoara (2014: 538), if teachers can be friendly to learners, there will be fewer conflicts between the teachers and the learners and this will enhance teachers' readiness for work and performance. Based on the participants' statements, proper management of conflict and peace will enable teachers to be passionate.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The topic for this study is all about strategies to manage teachers who have no passion for teaching, which is becoming a problem in schools all over the world. The ABCD theory was adopted for this study, as teachers are believed to be the assets of a community and taking care of the community's assets will result in the very same assets contributing towards the development of the community. As one of the principles of the ABCD theory, help is insourced and not outsourced, teachers will also be able to reach deep within for assistance for them to produce economically active participants of a community. Based on the findings of the study, inadequate salary payments for teachers, poor working conditions and organisational conflicts are the dimensions of teachers' dispassion for the teaching profession. On the other hand, the study confirmed that adequate salary payments for teachers, conducive working

conditions and an environment devoid of conflict are the factors of teachers' passion for the teaching profession. Based on this, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Department of Education should provide adequate salaries for all the teachers, which also includes the student teachers being compensated for their practise work that gets done in schools for a certain period during their undergraduate years as students. This can take place after teachers have been consulted about which criteria the salary has to meet in order for it to be considered as adequate for teachers. This will increase teaching passion in teachers and the prospective teachers towards the teaching profession.
2. The principals should ensure that the educator: pupil ratio in the classroom is the same as the one that is on paper. In a way, this ensures the full implementation of the Department of Education requirement on pupil-teacher ratio.
3. Harmonious relations are encouraged between co-workers and between the teachers and the learners. This will therefore be achieved through communication when there are disagreements involving other parties (teachers/learners) in decision-making and it will create a healthy environment for the co-workers and the learners.

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