



Assessing the Relative Participation of Teachers in Curriculum Development in Secondary Schools in OR. Tambo Inland Education District of the Eastern Cape: South Africa



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to assess teacher participation in curriculum development in the OR Tambo Inland Education District. In post-apartheid South Africa, there is a critical need for a transformed and inclusive curriculum in educational institutions, regardless of students' race, religion, gender, or disability. Addressing the imbalances created by the previous segregated curriculum is essential for developing a revised and inclusive educational framework. The researchers employed a case study approach utilizing qualitative methods. The sample comprised ten carefully selected secondary schools, with one teacher from each institution participating in the research. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with the ten teachers at the designated schools, and a thematic analysis was utilized to interpret the collected data. It emerged that the stakeholders, like teachers, principals, teacher unions, and communities, were marginalised in curriculum development by Department of Basic Education officials. The marginalisation of teachers has a negative impact on the implementation of the curriculum. Additionally, the study emphasized that their involvement in the curriculum development process can be severely hindered by the conflicting demands of administrative and teaching responsibilities. It is recommended that educational institutions dedicate time and resources for educators to concentrate on curriculum development, which could help alleviate the pressures of competing responsibilities. The study's contribution might be to support stakeholders' training and use of technology for online meetings and to enable students to access instruction and learning at any time, even during strikes that disrupt classes.

Keywords: *Teacher Participation, Curriculum Development, Curriculum Implementation, OR Tambo Inland Education District.*

INTRODUCTION

The adoption of democracy in South Africa brought many changes to the country. Before the 1994 Democratic Elections, the education system that was used in South Africa was treating people differently according to nationality. Education departments were more than one and each department had its own system to be followed. One was designated for Indians, Blacks, Whites, and Coloured people.¹ Not all South Africans could make use of the system; it was dependent on whatever racial group they belonged

¹ Nick Taylor, Johan Muller, and Penny Vinjevold, *Getting Schools Working: Research and Systemic School Reform in South Africa* (Pearson South Africa, 2003).

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to. Teachers have a crucial role to play in this education transition since they are familiar with the difficulties that schools encounter. Democratic change was desperately needed to address that scenario. Regardless of colour, race, or religion, a single curriculum had to replace the segregated education systems that had been in place and implemented in South African schools before 1994. All around the world, new curricula are frequently developed.² This suggests that a curriculum transformation strategy is in place in every nation to enhance standards and mentalities related to economics, society, education, technology, and politics. The design of a transformed and inclusive curriculum was crucial to redress the imbalances of the past. It should be noted that South Africa as an African country was not an exception in thinking and embarking on its curriculum transformation, especially after the receipt of their independence from oppressors who created segregated curricula to oppress Africans through education.³ After gaining independence, the Algerian government thought of and embarked on curriculum reforms for relevant curricula to be offered in learning institutions such as schools and universities as well as colleges.⁴ Curriculum revisions are sometimes necessary to address the modernization challenges that nations face as they strive to satisfy their political, social, economic, and historical obligations.

It should be noted that the world is in the fourth industrial revolution (4thIR) and the curriculum should be set to meet societal, political, technological, and global economic demands. This means that the graduates from universities and colleges and school-leavers from schools should possess responsive attributes like acceptable morals, impactful knowledge, entrepreneurial basic research and technological skills, coding, and robotics, to mention a few, to improve the economy and living standards of societies. For these few attributes mentioned to be developed, there is a need for commitment on the part of learning institutions like schools, universities and colleges and the involvement of other stakeholders as well as relevant resources to offer a transformed, responsive, relevant, technological-infused, and impactful curriculum to their clients i.e. learners, parents, communities, government, and businesses.⁵

In simpler terms, the curriculum offered in learning institutions such as schools, universities and colleges should be subjected to continuous reviews to check its suitability and responsiveness to prepare the learners and graduates holistically to become future-ready for purpose and fit in meeting and addressing the pressing societal needs. Since teachers are essential to the implementation of the curriculum, expectations might not be met without their participation. Teachers are the implementers at all costs, even if this essay concentrates on teacher participation and implementation. All stakeholders should be included and have a role. Teachers should be participating in daily activities that deal with curriculum creation, and establishing specific goals, materials, content, and procedures, according to Ornstein and Hunkins.⁶ The only way to guarantee that a curriculum prepared with specificity meets expectations is for teachers to be present in the classroom. The relative participation of teachers may have an impact on how well the proposed curriculum is implemented.

Furthermore, it should be noted that participation and empowerment of human capital are imperative for the education system to be effective. In this research, the curriculum is regarded as a tool for making the learners acquire knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Kara regards the curriculum as academic content that must be taught or offered in schools, universities, and colleges to empower and produce school leavers and graduates with relevant and impactful knowledge, requisite skills, and positive attitudes as well as desirable morals or values.⁷ This view is affirmed by Delgado who argues that any change in organisations, especially in learning institutions depends on human resources that is teachers and or lecturers in higher institutions.⁸ From experience, the participation and contribution of teachers in curriculum development is one of the critical ingredients if the curriculum is to be embraced

² John M Rogan and Diane J Grayson, "Towards a Theory of Curriculum Implementation with Particular Reference to Science Education in Developing Countries," *International Journal of Science Education* 25, no. 10 (2003): 1171–1204.

³ Fatima Bouchikhi and Barka Zine, "Higher Education in Algeria: Achievements and Challenges-1963 to 2017," 2017.

⁴ Bouchikhi and Zine, "Higher Education in Algeria: Achievements and Challenges-1963 to 2017."

⁵ Molise David Nhlapo and Lokesh Ramnath Maharajh, "Engaging Foreign Curriculum Experts in Curriculum Design: A Case Study of Primary School Curriculum Change in Lesotho.," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 5, no. 10 (2017): 1741–47.

⁶ Nhlapo and Maharajh, "Engaging Foreign Curriculum Experts in Curriculum Design: A Case Study of Primary School Curriculum Change in Lesotho."

⁷ S. Kara, *Modern Slavery: A Global Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

⁸ P Delgado, "The Role of Teachers' Unions. Observatory of Educational Innovation," 2021.

and successfully implemented by teachers. In light of this context, Alsubaie posits that the success of curriculum development primarily depends on teachers working together as implementers with other stakeholders, including communities, parents, unions, the government, the business sector, and anybody else interested in a nation's high-quality, pertinent, and responsive educational system.⁹ As sponsors and/or guardians of education in nations, Alsubaie warns Department of Basic Education (DBE) officials that if the government alienates stakeholders in curriculum development, such as parents, teacher unions, teachers, and students, to name a few, it will lead to failure and paralysis of the educational system.¹⁰ Assessing teachers' relative participation in curriculum development and implementation in OR Tambo Inland Education District schools is the study's main goal. Below is an explanation of the methodology, literature research, and conclusions drawn from the data analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mafisa asserts that teacher participations are intended to work in partnership with the DBE for the amelioration of education through the involvement as members of the union to take part in many departmental endeavors in improving the quality of education.¹¹ Teachers' participation in the curriculum's creation and development could have a significant impact and facilitate its implementation. Teachers may be putting their curriculum into practice, which could increase their commitment to and trust in the created curriculum. This is the reason why most teachers now find it easier to accomplish their aims because past experiences have demonstrated that if they are excluded from the creation of policies, they may persuade their colleagues to oppose and not implement developments. It is important to highlight that Mafisa did not ignore the similarities among teachers' approaches to defending their rights.¹² Developed nations such as the United States of America and Canada, to name a few, are said to have teacher organizations that fight for the rights of their members and place a greater emphasis on making sure that the standard of education is maintained.¹³

It is also evident that even in developed countries such as Germany, teachers play a crucial role in influencing the implementation and embracement of school policies. The German Ministerial of Education incorporates the teachers in any policy formulation.¹⁴ By extension, the resistance of teachers to embrace and implement curriculum changes is extremely limited if they ever occur because they believe that they have been part and parcel of all decision-making in producing the school curriculum. Some individuals believe that teachers are there to sabotage and oppose change. The presence of teachers in their communities makes certain individuals feel threatened, but others welcome them because of their positive influence and significant contribution to the operation of institutions like schools and their contributions to the communities. Research by Carlson presents a poor picture of teachers in relation to educational reform.¹⁵ As per his findings, a local teacher union in the United States of America (USA) turned down proposals for contractual clauses that included staff development programs designed to help teachers better understand the curriculum and do their jobs as effectively as possible.

The teachers' union consists of teachers who ought to participate actively in the development of the curriculum, and the sole method to accomplish this is to engage them in the creation process. Leaving teachers out of this chance would adversely affect the implementation of the curriculum. This conduct is not peculiar to the teachers cited by Carlson, and it is not exceptional to the USA.¹⁶ Generally, teachers are perceived to be antithetical to educational change and advancement. It should be noted that in the

⁹ Merfat Ayesh Alsubaie, "Curriculum Development: Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Development.," *Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 9 (2016): 106–7.

¹⁰ Alsubaie, "Curriculum Development: Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Development."

¹¹ Lekhotla James Mafisa, "The Role of Teacher Unions in Education with Specific Reference to South Africa," *Gender and Behaviour* 15, no. 4 (2017): 10553–66.

¹² Mafisa, "The Role of Teacher Unions in Education with Specific Reference to South Africa."

¹³ Mafisa, "The Role of Teacher Unions in Education with Specific Reference to South Africa."

¹⁴ Rita Nikolai, Kendra Briken, and Dennis Niemann, "Teacher Unionism in Germany: Fragmented Competitors," in *The Comparative Politics of Education* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 114–43, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316717653.005>.

¹⁵ M. Carlson et al., "Male Help-Seeking for Intimate Partner Violence: The Role of Social Support and Psychological Distress.," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 34, no. 17 (2019): 3639–61.

¹⁶ Carlson et al., "Male Help-Seeking for Intimate Partner Violence: The Role of Social Support and Psychological Distress."

United States, authors such as Cowen and Strunk opine that one of the teachers' roles is shaping education policy.¹⁷

In Germany for example, it is noted that teachers' presence in decision-making is recognised by the government to promote the adoption of curriculum and policies to enhance learning in schools.¹⁸ These authors divulged that teachers are one of the important stakeholders for decision-making in German education policies.

In developed countries like Germany, teachers are recognised for their contribution to the education system. This means that under-developed and developing countries should learn from developed countries to cope with the challenges prohibiting the success of the responsive and impactful curriculum to be adopted in schools. When it comes to helping the department, teachers around the world play the same role. Teachers must participate from the beginning to avoid opposition and criticism when they are asked to execute and follow the recommended curriculum. In Spain, for example, all occupational standards are reviewed every five years, leading to changes in the curriculum. In several countries, employers, professional groups, and Vocational Education and Training providers may request a review of vocational qualifications.

In places like Latvia and Germany teachers have the right to introduce new curricula. This assertion seems to suggest that professionals are trained as per their qualifications and used to review progress before changes in the curriculum. Therefore, implementers become aware of changes in the curriculum beforehand. Each sectoral centre of expertise is given a right to review the curriculum and qualifications structure for which it is responsible. This activity is overseen by a management board set for business, in institutions of different countries. By extension, it means management is making sure that all is in order as the overseer of the developments. If that could be the position in South Africa, teacher resistance could be avoided. In Poland, the working groups that prepare and change curricula are represented mainly by educationalists; the social partners usually participate during the consultation phase.¹⁹ In simple terms teachers are placed in front to lead other groups to attain success in the development and without their participation outcomes may be sour.

The recent literature on educational studies offers contrasting views on the role of teachers in the improvement of the standard and quality of education. Cowen and Strunk argue that teachers have a political and legislative influence on educational policy that favours them and their colleagues.²⁰ Teachers in South Africa, for example, initiated a strike in opposition to evaluations associated with the Performance Management Development System (PMDS), which has a direct impact on their career progression. However, if they had participated in the planning and decisions made, strikes would not have occurred.

In South Africa for instance, there has been resistance from the teachers whenever the DBE introduces a new curriculum.²¹ For example, the Department of Education (DoE) implemented what is commonly referred to as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) under the then-Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bengu. Despite opposition, Kader Asmal and Naledi Pandor, the later ministers of education, respectively, advanced the concept of OBE and further shaped it into the National Curriculum Statement.

The role played by teachers in the development of the curriculum becomes more political, and the statement is further supported by Dowden that curriculum is always part of politics.²² Education affairs at the national level lie with both the government and teachers' participation.²³ According to Wright, the failure of the South African system of education is putting teachers first, and the failure to

¹⁷ Joshua Cowen and Katharine O Strunk, "How Do Teachers' Unions Influence Education Policy? What We Know and What We Need to Learn. Working Paper# 42.," *Education Policy Center at Michigan State University*, 2014.

¹⁸ Nikolai, Briken, and Niemann, "Teacher Unionism in Germany: Fragmented Competitors."

¹⁹ Ireneusz Białeccki, Maciej Jakubowski, and Jerzy Wiśniewski, "Education Policy in Poland: The Impact of PISA (and Other International Studies)," *European Journal of Education* 52, no. 2 (2017): 167–74.

²⁰ Cowen and Strunk, "How Do Teachers' Unions Influence Education Policy? What We Know and What We Need to Learn. Working Paper# 42." p.10-12

²¹ B. M. C Masumbe and I. A Cotzer, "Curriculum Change in South Africa: Past and Present Scenarios," *Journal of Educational Studies* 5, no. 2 (2006): 208–28.

²² T. Dowden, *Understanding the Curriculum: Netherlands* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²³ Vimbi P Mahlangu and Victor Justice Pitsoe, "Power Struggle between Government and the Teacher Unions in South Africa," *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 2, no. 5 (2011): 365–71.

place teacher development at the centre of South Africa's educational transformation and renewal.²⁴ South Africa failed to cater for teachers' professional needs or nurture the quality of their personal education. Only educated people can educate others, and if stakeholders fail systematically to provide enriching opportunities for teachers themselves to become well-educated human beings and ensure as many as possible take advantage of the opportunities, it is of no surprise that the education system is not working.²⁵ This shows the challenge faced by teachers when they are to implement changes initiated from above without them being participants in the reforms. The above statement guarantees the importance of having teachers in all the developments that will directly or indirectly affect them especially since teachers are the ones to implement the proposed and agreed upon type of curriculum to be taken to schools. Govender agrees with this assertion and posits that the formulation of policy and curriculum development for schools has become the responsibility of government policymakers and policy specialists, while the implementation of curriculum development is perceived as the responsibility of teachers.²⁶

Msila has however argued that some of the findings of studies conducted by researchers divulged that some schools, circuits, Education district offices, and Departments of Education of countries find themselves in toxic and dysfunctional situations because of the participation of teachers in education-related activities.²⁷ There is literature that supports the successes and dysfunctions in schools' activities and education systems because of teacher participation claiming that teachers need to be trained before being taken on board by developers of curricula. There is a belief that those who doubt the importance of teachers in school-related activities have the potential to make schools disruptive and ungovernable.²⁸ When schools are ungovernable, it is likely that the teachers' and school management teams' relations, quality of education, communities' contribution to schools' operations, and learners' academic performance to mention a few, are negatively affected.

Msila is also of the viewpoint that when teachers collaborate with other school-related stakeholders in transformations and decision-making in a meaningful manner, they tend to contribute satisfactorily and optimally to the best interest of the schools, principals, teachers, parents, learners, and government.²⁹ This assertion seems to suggest that from the onset, teachers should be encouraged to actively participate in affairs to enhance the quality of education. If they are truly participating, they could play a vital role in influencing, promoting, and advocating for curriculum development amongst other members of the teaching fraternity. Teachers would embrace and adopt changes suggested by the Department of Education and other educational specialists knowing that their contributions would be of great value to improve education.

In a study conducted in Tanzania by Chale, the findings revealed that teachers have the power to influence the success or failure of the curriculum development process.³⁰ It is evident that the collaboration of teachers with other stakeholders of education, such as Department of Education curriculum officials, and school management teams (SMTs), businesses and any interested parties (AIPs) in the field of education could contribute to the ownership and success of curriculum development through their dialogues and roadshows. It is emphasised by Alsubaie that collaboration and feedback are important for the success of curriculum development.³¹

By extension, the collaboration of teachers with other stakeholders in education is a key factor in strengthening and aligning the curriculum to meet the country's societal needs. From the researchers' point of view, it can be noted that their feedback, insight, and experiences in the curriculum development processes could enhance the engagements and discussions to yield good and acceptable outcomes. Similarly, Obilo and Sangoleye contended that the task of implementing any curriculum successfully

²⁴ Laurence Wright, "Origins of the Eastern Cape Education Crisis," *South Africa's Education Crisis: Views from the Eastern Cape*, 2012, 1–18.

²⁵ Wright, "Origins of the Eastern Cape Education Crisis."

²⁶ R. Govender, *Understanding the Curriculum* (The Netherlands: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²⁷ Vuyisile Msila, "Teacher Unions, Schools and Success: Opportunities and Contradictions," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 21, no. 3 (2022): 263–80.

²⁸ Msila, "Teacher Unions, Schools and Success: Opportunities and Contradictions."

²⁹ Msila, "Teacher Unions, Schools and Success: Opportunities and Contradictions."

³⁰ Wilford Chale, "Teacher Participation in Curriculum Development Process: Views of Teachers from Selected Primary Schools in Mwanza City" (The Open University of Tanzania, 2018).

³¹ Alsubaie, "Curriculum Development: Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Development."

lies with teachers' input and participation because they are the custodians of knowledge, interact with texts and the learners, and understand the constraints and opportunities within the schools.³² In the South African context, it is argued by Govender that professionals could potentially contribute to more effective education service provision.³³ This implies that when teachers agree with other stakeholders in curriculum development, there are more opportunities for teachers to deliver the designed curriculum optimally, efficiently, and effectively to the best of their professional capacities.

Molapo and Pillay have affirmed that for an enhanced curriculum to be achieved by countries, the collaboration of Department of Education officials with teachers is imperative.³⁴ This implies that when there is connectedness and dialogues amongst the stakeholders involving teachers who are to implement the curriculum planned or decided upon, efforts to come up with a curriculum that is owned and embraced by all parties are likely to occur. Molapo and Pillay argue that the work of improving educational affairs at the national level lies with both the government and the teachers as they are expected to be positive in educational changes.³⁵ Molapo and Pillay From the researchers' point of view, it means that when teachers support the curriculum as proposed by the government, and changes to meet the social, technological, and economic demands of the countries, there are very few chances for the teachers to divorce themselves from embracing and adopting such curriculum where they also played part. It can be concluded that from the literature reviewed above, the participation of teachers in curriculum development is critical for it to be successful. Teachers, school administrators, parents, community members, students, district administrators, and school boards must all contribute to the development of curricula. Following the most recent technology advancements in the education sector, teachers' roles include defining various course components that are deemed pertinent. Teachers assist in implementing the curriculum development findings in addition to creating the curriculum.

By creating periodic course teaching plans and considering the unique needs of the students, teachers consistently contribute to the creation of school curricula.³⁶ As a result, a strong curriculum cannot support the attainment of learning objectives and goals without the participation of teachers.

Teachers continue to be at the centre of students' learning development, despite the rapid integration of contemporary technologies into the educational system. To put it another way, although technology must be incorporated into the curriculum, it cannot completely replace the roles that teachers play in both curriculum development and the overall learning process.

The administrators of the schools further hire teachers in the case of private schools to come and implement the curriculum planning. They are also in charge of buying educational resources, which is a crucial part of implementing the curriculum, but all cannot be done without teachers' participation in the development. In other words, by controlling the distribution of the required educational materials, school officials can affect how much of the curriculum is followed. Teachers, students, and even the community can provide information to school administrators on how well the curriculum implementation process is going. Additionally, they might hire experts to assess the curriculum's effectiveness. First, the teachers and the curriculum development leaders provide guidance and opinions regarding what should form the content of the curriculum. Since students spend most of their learning hours with the teachers, it is assumed that teachers understand the unique academic and social needs of the students better. The teachers start by analyzing the current curriculum, that is, the strengths, weaknesses and possible areas that need to be amended. Thereafter, opinions from the parents, community leaders and other stakeholders are considered before a final draft of the curriculum is compiled. Teachers, however, have the option to form teams to create and assess curricula. These teams typically have the duty of creating, assessing, and revising the curriculum to reflect the most recent

³² Princess Ijeoma Obilo and Solomon Adebayo Sangoleye, "Curriculum Implementation and the Teacher: Challenges and Way Forward," in *A Paper Presented at the 9th National Conference of the School of Social Sciences, AIFCE, Owerri. Http://Www.Globalacademicgroup.Com/Jour-Nals/Academic%20excellence*, vol. 20, 2010.

³³ Logan Govender, "Teacher Unions' Participation in Policy Making: A South African Case Study," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 45, no. 2 (2015): 184–205.

³⁴ Moyahabo Rodgers Molapo and Venitha Pillay, "Politicising Curriculum Implementation: The Case of Primary Schools," *South African Journal of Education* 38, no. 1 (2018): 1–9.

³⁵ Molapo and Pillay, "Politicising Curriculum Implementation: The Case of Primary Schools." p.2

³⁶ James T Dillon, "The Questions of Curriculum," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 41, no. 3 (2009): 343–59.

advancements in technology in the field of education. Additionally, the curriculum's output is evaluated by the curriculum teams of the teachers.

Relatively, teachers' participation may be of great importance because they are the right implementers of the curriculum, especially in our schools. They are the ones who are aware of teaching methods and teaching strategies, teachers understand better the psychology of the learners hence they are to be part of every curriculum change, participating in the planning.³⁷

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researchers employed Kliebard's "humanist curriculum theory" which focuses on teachers' participation in curriculum development and implementation.³⁸ This curriculum theory has taken its place in the curriculum theory classification as a theory that has principles about the process of curriculum making not about the teaching-learning process. The use of this theory is relevant for this research because basically, the researchers are looking for the participation of teachers in the development of the curriculum and its implementation. This theory is further supported by Taba's book Curriculum Development which argued that there was a definite order in creating a curriculum. According to Taba teachers who teach the curriculum should participate in developing it and that led to a model called the grass-root approach. Mishra agrees with Gordon by saying Taba believed that curriculum should be developed by the teachers rather than being given an already finalised curriculum from higher authorities of the government.³⁹

Taba noted seven major steps to her model in which teachers could have major inputs listed below.

1. **Diagnosis of needs:** The teacher who is also the curriculum designer, starts the process by identifying the needs of students for whom the curriculum is planned.
2. **Formulation of objectives:** After identifying the needs that require attention, the teacher specifies the objectives to be accomplished.
3. **Selection of content:** The objectives selected, or content created, and the relevance and significance of the content chosen.
4. **Organisation of content:** The teacher cannot just select content, but must organise it in some sequence, taking into consideration the maturity of learners, their academic achievements, and their interests.
5. **Selection of learning experience:** Students must be engaged with the content and teachers select instructional methods that will involve the students with the content.
6. **Organisation of learning activities:** Just as content must be "sequenced and organised, learning activities must be sequenced.
7. **Evaluation and means of evaluation:** The curriculum planner must determine what objectives have been accomplished. Evaluation procedures need to be designed to evaluate learning outcomes.

Contribution by teachers and principals in curriculum development would help to direct the developers toward learning needs and learner growth. Without teachers' participation in curriculum development humanist curriculum theory may not reach the goal of improving learners. Grade levels at school are known by teachers and principals. The level of thinking is again known by teachers who deal directly with learners and principals. The idea is fully supported by Taba's model of curriculum development.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a case study design and a qualitative research methodology. Schools in the Mthatha Magisterial District, which is a component of the OR Tambo Inland Education District, were the subject of a case study for the study. Because it includes a study plan that travels to collect data, analyze the

³⁷ Suman Verma, *Curriculum Planning and Development* (New Delhi: Astha Publishers, 2012).

³⁸ Herbert M Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (Routledge, 2004).

³⁹ M. Mishra, "Models of Curriculum," 2012, www.slideshare.net/chxlabastilla/principles-theories-in-curriculum-development; J. Gordon. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol 2, Genesis 16-50* (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1994).

data, and draw significant conclusions for creating workable and practical solutions to the stated problem, the researchers decided on this research strategy. The teachers working in 10 purposefully selected secondary schools from different circuits sampled secondary schools in OR Tambo inland education district formed the population for the study. Each secondary school was represented by one teacher as a participant in this research. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with the 10 teachers. A thematic approach was used to analyse the collected data.

The Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education, school administrators, and teachers who serve as executive representatives of teacher unions were contacted to request permission to conduct the study in a few chosen schools with teachers. Selected instructors who represented teacher union executives were given informed consent forms to complete to voluntarily and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. One-on-one meetings were held to explain the research goals and data collection procedures to them after authorization to perform the study was obtained. The secrecy and anonymity of the information they provided were guaranteed to prevent readers from identifying them. In order to select teachers as research participants who would articulate and express their experiences and opinions regarding the phenomenon under investigation, the OR Tambo education district was chosen, all of the sampled secondary schools with grades 8 and 12 happened to be odd numbers in the list.

Data Analysis

For this study, content analysis was employed to analyze the responses collected through interviews which were conducted face-to-face with ten teachers who have a minimum of ten years in their employment in the Department of Basic Education. Content analysis helps the researchers to look at and identify similar responses from different angles. The following steps were performed to analyze the collected data. The researchers started by familiarizing themselves with the data by playing the tape recorder and reading the notes taken during the interview sessions. Secondly, codes for similar responses were developed and refined from the collected data to produce statements having the same meaning. The content was generated from statements with similar meanings from those responses. The content was then regularly reviewed to check their correlation to the responses to the research questions to establish meaningful findings. The narratives were then presented with the support of primary and secondary sources.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

It was discovered that teacher's participation is crucial to curriculum development. Just nine of the ten professional teachers, who took part, answered the question about their participation in curriculum development and the role that they play as teachers. According to the responses of the nine participating teachers, six of them concur that the curriculum developers and planners ought to be including teachers in the creation and execution of curricula. "Yes," T1 responded, *"teachers' participation in the development of the curriculum may limit strikes"* T4 responded, *"Yes, it is crucial to include teachers and have their side and get the experience they have on the ground because they can motivate others to implement curriculum changes."* T6 replied *"Teachers need to voice their opinions,"* T3 said, *"Teacher participation could ease the implementation approach"*. However, T7 stated that *"since the implementation of the curriculum is for teachers, they must be participating."* However, teachers often face challenges, such as limited time, insufficient resources, and a lack of professional development opportunities. These obstacles can hinder their ability to effectively contribute to curriculum design. None participation of teachers in the curriculum development could be negative in achieving success of the designed curriculum. It is why teachers find it working with the department to achieve the set goals as experience has shown that if they are marginalised, they could influence other colleagues to oppose and not implement the set curriculum. It is reflected in T5 who said, *"Yes, it is of paramount importance to involve teachers because they can encourage their colleagues to implement curriculum changes"*

Additionally, balancing administrative tasks with teaching responsibilities can further complicate their participation. It was also found that the department invite teachers to face-to-face meetings only to be told what to do and how to do it. T8 said, *"The department used to call us for something that has been decided about us as teachers without having informed us."* This often leaves teachers feeling frustrated and undervalued, as their input and professional expertise are not

acknowledged. Many feel that their autonomy is being undermined, which can lead to decreased motivation and job satisfaction. There was a consensus from all the participants that there are educational, social, and economic benefits to the participation of teachers in curriculum development and implementation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The ramifications of the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the information gathered from the participating teachers who are fully employed by the department are covered in the section that follows. According to Mafisa, teachers are supposed to collaborate with the DBE to improve education by taking part in numerous departmental initiatives aimed at raising educational standards.

The influence that teachers could have may be negative or positive in making the implementation for the designed curriculum successful. It is why the department finds it working with teachers to achieve the set goals as experience has shown that if they are marginalized in curriculum development and planning, they could influence their colleagues to oppose and not implement such curriculum. This view is reflected in the assertion made by T9, *“Yes, it is important to give a chance to teachers because they can be influential to other colleagues to implement curriculum changes.”*

Developed countries like Canada and the United States of America to mention a few, are cited as having teachers who advocate for quality of education without compromising. This observation was also echoed by one of the teachers who participated that they do not feel comfortable and convinced about their participation since teacher unions finalise everything without them whereas they are expected to implement the curriculum developed. In other words, teachers do not have faith and confidence in teacher unions. Teachers complain that the Department of Education invites them for face-to-face meetings only to be told what to do and how to do it. To confirm this claim, T6 said, *“The Department decided to call us teachers to a meeting and tell us about the expectations by the department of education in terms of changes made and that we must implement the curriculum developed calling that empowerment and development.”*

According to the researchers, when teachers are acknowledged and accommodated as important stakeholders in curriculum development and policymaking, they can contribute their professional expertise and insights to make it effective. They can also encourage others to adopt it for implementation. To confirm this claim T7 said, *“We feel that our voice and concerns are overshadowed in the bargaining process.”* T8 said, *“Our department is fully supporting the government in the bargaining process without involving us as teachers in the curriculum development.”*

According to this pattern, teachers' participation in curriculum construction grows increasingly political, supporting Dowden's theory that politics always permeates the school curriculum. According to Govender, government policymakers and policy specialists are now in charge of creating policies and developing curricula for schools, while teachers are thought to oversee putting these policies into practice. Teachers are the ones who understand the difficulties encountered in the classroom or at the school level, therefore their exclusion from the planning process could result in curriculum implementation failure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers should be consulted and encouraged to participate in the planning process, as this could increase enthusiasm for implementing curriculum modifications, according to the findings and debate. The department needs to assist teachers with training, resources, and direction.

Teachers should be supported by unions to guarantee that they receive fair pay and benefits. For instance, in order to assist teachers in successfully implementing curriculum changes, unions can bargain for more chances for professional development. Additionally, they can collaborate with school officials to establish a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for educators as they adapt to these changes. Teachers who might encounter difficulties or resistance throughout the implementation process can also receive legal assistance and representation from unions.

It is advised that before making judgments, curriculum developers be receptive to the thoughts and opinions of teachers. The department must give teachers the tools and assistance they need to carry out the modifications. The Department of Basic Education should additionally guarantee that all teachers

have the tools and training they need to carry out the modifications. For instance, the department may set up frequent forums or meetings where educators can freely share their thoughts and worries. They can set up professional development opportunities or mentorship programs to assist teachers in gaining the abilities and information required to properly execute any changes in their classrooms. To guarantee that teachers have the assistance they need to successfully implement the suggested changes, unions can also push educational authorities for sufficient funding and resources.

It is recommended that the department actively involve teachers in the curriculum development process to ensure that their voices and concerns are heard and represented. This can help create a more inclusive and collaborative bargaining process that considers the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders involved. For example, unions can organize regular meetings or forums where teachers can provide feedback and suggestions for the curriculum. They can also establish committees or working groups that include teachers to actively participate in the decision-making process and contribute their expertise. By involving teachers in curriculum development, unions can ensure that their voices are not overshadowed and that their concerns are considered during the bargaining process.

CONCLUSION

The marginalisation of teachers has hampered the implementation of the curriculum as teachers claim not to be part of the planning. For the education system to be effective, teachers and lecturers must be empowered to teach what they also contributed when the curriculum was developed and produce school leavers and graduates with relevant and impactful knowledge, requisite skills, and positive attitudes. Alsubaie postulates that for curriculum development to be successful, teachers must collaborate with other stakeholders like unions, communities, parents, government, business sectors, and any interested parties to the quality, relevant, and responsive education system of a country.⁴⁰ Teachers are forced to comply with the Department of Education's requirements if they are allowed to participate in the development and find it easy to accept changes. According to this perspective, teachers ought to be involved in the conversations and decisions that lead to curriculum creation and implementation. Consultation with teachers is necessary to guarantee that their opinions are considered. They ought to have a voice in decision-making and be given the chance to offer input. It is important to respect and recognize their opinions and experience. Teachers should ultimately be viewed as significant decision-makers and participants in curriculum creation.

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