





An Analysis of High Teacher Turnover and Attrition in the North-West Province of South Africa

Mubanga Mpundu¹ , Thomas E.B Assan²  and Mamolahluwa
Mokoena³

¹ Centre for Teaching and Learning, TRADE Research Focus Area, Economic and Management Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University, South Africa.

² Faculty of Education, School for Commerce and Social Studies Education, North-West University, South Africa.

³ Centre for Teaching and Learning, Student Academic Development Support, North-West University, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

In the past few years, there has been a shocking rise in the rate at which teachers are abandoning the teaching profession. What is more disturbing is the scenario that the numbers appeared to be increasing daily. This research used a mixed-method approach. The study provided information on the teacher profile, the capacity of staff in relation to workload and expertise, factors that influenced teachers to leave the teaching profession in the province, perception of the teaching profession and employment opportunities after resignation from 590 teachers in the province. The study found that there were several factors which have contributed to high teacher resignations in the North-West Province over the years. The study found that one of the main causes of attrition was the Government pension fund saga. On policy implication, the Department of Basic Education has been pushing for an increase in qualified teachers' deployment to different schools due to the high demand from the increased number of students. However, due to high attrition, it has been difficult to fill the void created by teachers who have left as they take with them high-value experience leaving a high rift of inexperienced, less effective teachers in classrooms which leads to increased recruiting and training budgets. Participants indicated the existence of peers from colleagues who have resigned and are undertaking industrious projects with the Government pension money. Their desire to make money pushes them to want to do the same and this makes efforts to change their mindset quite challenging. The study concluded that the Department of Basic Education needs to focus on teacher welfare to reduce the high attrition rate and ensure student success in the long run.

Correspondence

Mubanga Mpundu

Email:

mubanga.mpundu@nwu.ac.za

Publication History

Received 6th February, 2023

Accepted 29th March, 2023

Published online 5th April, 2023

Keywords: *Attrition, Resignation, Teacher Turnover, Teaching Profession, Pension Fund*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher turnover just like employee turnover describes the ratio of the number of teachers a school or department must replace each time to the average number of total employees.¹ Turnover in most cases

¹ WiseGeek.com, "Employee Turnover," accessed February 3, 2017, www.wisegeek.com/what-is-employee-turnover.htm.

occurs when teachers leave their jobs and must be replaced. It is believed that when there is odd dissatisfaction with the work environment, employee turnover is ultimately present in such environments.² When this happens, it becomes very costly for such organisations to replace the exit employees and to deliver good service.³

The dawn of the 21st century has seen a shocking rise in the rate at which teachers are abandoning the teaching profession.⁴ This incident is more disturbing as the numbers appear to be increasing daily. Statistics show that early career teachers are leaving in droves, with close to 40% exiting from the profession within the first year of their teaching career, a number that has tripled in the last 6 years.⁵ This is a worldwide problem. As of 2006, developing countries in the world needed to recruit between 14 and 22.5 million teachers by 2015 to cover up for the teacher shortage because of high teacher attrition.⁶ Attrition is not only common in the teaching profession. However, teachers have one of the highest attrition rates than any other profession.⁷

Teacher resignation in South Africa is on a rise. The alarming rate of turnover appears to be having an impact on the delivery of the curriculum as the teacher-learner ratio is rising to disturbing figures. This may further plunge the country into a situation of shortages of teachers as more than 50, 000 teachers are recorded to have left the profession between 2011 and 2020.⁸

This problem is more of particular concern in South African schools which are characterised by a rigorously repressed and impeding ethos that offers almost no professional satisfaction to the teachers.⁹ With such a culture in South African schools, the natural result of teachers' continuous search further afield for better opportunities has become imminent. The worst-case scenario sees a large proportion of teachers migrating from the teaching profession to the industries or other sectors or office-based officials within the department.

The Cape Professional Teachers Association argued that up to twenty thousand teachers leave the profession every year.¹⁰ When replying to a parliamentary question in 2009, Angie Motshega, the Minister of Basic Education indicated that "between 2005 and 2008, 24,750 teachers left the profession." She further mentioned that "South Africa only produces 8000 teachers annually whereas about 20000 teacher graduates are needed."¹¹ In another statement by the minister in 2016 to parliament, Motshega mentioned that from 2011-2015, 29,734 teachers resigned. "In 2014 alone, 8,619 teachers are said to have left the profession," the minister added.

It would be expected that the camouflaging nature of the profession would attract young and energetic youths to join. Instead, this is not the reality on the ground. Several factors seem to be blocking the youths and forcing the experienced ones already in it to exit. Mona reports a 7% annual turnover of teachers leaving the profession in South Africa and attributes their exit to the Department of Education's poor pay packages for teachers and poor learner discipline. Troubled by the large

² Thierry Karsenti and Simon Collin, "Why Are New Teachers Leaving the Profession? Results of a Canada-Wide Survey," *Education* 3, no. 3 (2013): 141-49.

³ Michael O Samuel and Crispin Chipunza, "Employee Retention and Turnover: Using Motivational Variables as a Panacea," *African Journal of Business Management* 3, no. 9 (2009): 410-415.

⁴ Alfred M. Nesane, "Selected School-Related Reasons Why Teachers Abandon the Teaching Profession: An Educational Management Perspective" (University of South Africa, 2008), <https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/2312/dissertation.pdf>.

⁵ Karsenti and Collin, "Why Are New Teachers Leaving the Profession? Results of a Canada-Wide Survey."

⁶ UNESCO, *Teacher Attrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Neglected Dimension of the Teacher Supply Challenge; a Review of Literature* (International Task Force on Teachers for EFE, 2010), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000188197>.

⁷ Daniel A Heller, *Teachers Wanted: Attracting and Retaining Good Teachers*. (ERIC, 2004).

⁸ B. Malingo, "Teacher Resignations Could Affect Delivery of Curriculum," *The New Age Online*, April 4, 2016.

⁹ South African Democratic Teachers' Union, "The Educators' Voice," *Teachers Migrate in Scores from Their Profession* 7, no. 4 (2003): 16-17; Julia Madibogo, "Sadtus's Top Five Reasons for Teachers Calling It Quits," 2016, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2016-09-16-sadtus-top-five-reasons-for-teachers-calling-it-quits/>.

¹⁰ IOL News, "Crisis Looms as Teachers Quit in Droves," 2010, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/crisis-looms-as-teachers-quit-in-droves-486341>.

¹¹ IOL News, "Sadtus Protest 'a Threat to Education,'" 2013, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/sadtus-protest-a-threat-to-education-1505217>.

margin of 7% teacher turnover on an annual basis, it becomes difficult to want to attribute all the numbers to just learner discipline and poor salaries, especially if one needs to consider that the very teachers were aware of the salaries before joining the profession. Judging from the large numbers of hard-working and motivated teachers that exited the profession after 1994. Pitsoe sees teacher turnover as a persistent evil that needs to be investigated properly to get researched-based reasons and solutions.¹²

The severity of this plight warrants the government and other stakeholders to come to the party and join the effort toward addressing the migration. The urgency of the matter is threatening as teachers are constantly getting involved in widespread demonstrations and protests of the dynamics of the education system in South Africa.¹³ This situation puts the government and teacher's unions in constant friction as they struggle to address the pressing issues of education, more especially the exit of the more competent and experienced teachers.

The study provides background information on the teacher profile, the capacity of staff in relation to workload and expertise, factors that influenced teachers to leave the teaching profession in the province, perception of the teaching profession and employment opportunities after resignation/destination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective planning for teacher supply requires timely information on the rate of attrition of different categories of teachers, including primary and secondary teachers, teachers posted to different areas, teachers with different subject specializations and in some cases teachers with different ethnic or linguistic backgrounds, as well as the reasons for departure.¹⁴ In many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the collection of data on teacher attrition is poor and does not allow the level of analysis required. As a result, some of the responses are based on assumed attrition rates and anecdotal reports. More details and more reliable data are needed to adequately manage education systems, particularly during periods of rapid expansion. Teacher attrition rates vary between countries and are likely to vary over time. Adequate planning for teacher supply requires an understanding of teacher attrition. While responses to teacher supply difficulties have often been seen in terms of changing the output of newly trained teachers, it is equally important to monitor and understand the losses of teachers. It is clear that some teacher attrition results from the retirement of teachers who have reached the prescribed retirement age, but that there is also a discretionary component to teacher attrition, as a large proportion of attrition is the result of voluntary resignation.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – A motivational Theory

When one reflects on the idea that teacher turnover is a common phenomenon in dissatisfactory teaching environments, a clear picture that connects teacher turnover and the satisfaction of human needs is painted. In agreement with this reasoning, Bennel and Akyempong point to the length at which Maslow's hierarchy of needs put forward human needs that must be met.¹⁵ These needs shape human compliance with certain environments. In the same way, when the environmental factors (working environment and conditions for teachers) responsible for providing human needs become unsatisfactory, humans turn to revolt or leave such environments. The same applies to the situation where humans see new environments where their needs are better met. They turn to prefer such environments. This theory explains why teachers leave the profession or their job with the government and turn to private or change professions. In Maslow's motivational theory on needs and satisfaction,

¹² Victor J Pitsoe, "Teacher Attrition in South Africa: Trends, Challenges and Prospects," *Journal of Social Sciences* 36, no. 3 (2013): 309–18.

¹³ V. Mona, "The Teacher," *Naptosa in Dispute over Wage Increase* 2, no. 11 (2004): 3; Pitsoe, "Teacher Attrition in South Africa: Trends, Challenges and Prospects."

¹⁴ UNESCO, *Teacher Attrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Neglected Dimension of the Teacher Supply Challenge; a Review of Literature*.

¹⁵ Paul Bennell and Kwame Akyeampong, *Teacher Motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia*, vol. 71 (Dfid London, 2007).

he explains that there are five ‘levels’ of need, namely physiological (thirst, sex, hunger), safety (security, stability, and protection), love and belongingness, self-esteem and self-actualization. A key submission of the theory is that the different levels need to depend on one another. When a lower-level need is not met, the higher-level needs cannot be satisfied.

The relevance of this theory to teachers explains the major daily challenges that teachers find themselves in daily. Meeting the basic survival needs for food and shelter as well as security in conflict situations is far fetch for most teachers on a daily basis across many countries. The ultimate reaction to this challenge is the ultimate turnover from the profession. Worthy of note in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is the inseparable relationship between high and low-order needs. This means that as much as teachers desire to achieve self-actualization, it is equally pertinent that low order needs pertaining to remuneration, and job satisfaction be satisfactorily addressed.

Teacher Resignation in South Africa

Table 1 below gives a glimpse of teacher terminations in South Africa from 1997-2004.

Table 1: Percentage Terminations by Cause for Educators 1997/98 to 2003/4

Termination Cause Excluding Contract Expiry							
Year	Deceased	Dismissal/Desertion	Medical Reason	Resigned	Retirement	Severance Package	Transfer
1997/98	7.0%	9.1%	4.6%	43.1%	6.5%	28.4%	1.3%
1998/99	12.7%	3.4%	7.5%	44.3%	13.0%	15.8%	3.3%
1999/00	15.5%	4.6%	9.9%	48.2%	15.9%	4.9%	0.9%
2000/01	15.9%	3.6%	9.5%	51.1%	16.7%	2.5%	0.6%
2001/02	15.6%	3.4%	8.6%	48.3%	14.1%	9.4%	0.5%
2002/03	17.4%	3.2%	8.3%	53.6%	16.1%	0.9%	0.4%
2003/04	17.7%	2.2%	8.7%	53.1%	17.7%	0.2%	0.3%

Source: MTT study

The average number of teachers in the system has declined over the last 8 years from 386 735 to 368 548 between 2003 and 2004. According to Table 1, attrition (total loss) in the teacher workforce fluctuated, declining from 9.3% in 1997/1998 to 5.5% in 2000/2001, before rising again to 5.9% in 2002/2003. The proportion of attrition due to mortality (all causes) increased from 7.0% in 1997/1998 to 17.7% in 2003/2004. The proportion of attrition due to medical reasons grew from 4.6% to 8.7% over the same period. The number to quit is higher than the number of teachers trained each year.

Teacher attrition in North-West Province

Information, obtained from the APOs of the Mafikeng and Bojanala (Rustenburg) districts and from the EMIS office in Mafikeng, suggests that North-West Province faces the challenge of teacher attrition. However, this is not yet a serious challenge. For instance, the DoE’s (2007b) EMIS data show that in 2007 the province’s headcount of teachers in “ordinary public schools” was 25,185. The North-West EMIS (2007b) estimates that 277 (or 0.01%) left the teaching profession.

Causes of Teacher Turnover/Attrition

Employee recruitment and retention challenges are enforced amongst others by excessive workloads, employee disillusionment and frustration, lack of career opportunities and growth prospects, unrealistic expectations by the demanding work environment – especially the employer and

dissatisfaction of employees.¹⁶ With regard to teacher resignations and early retirements, there are several reasons cited by other studies as being the causes – especially in South Africa.

Research generally points to several factors that potentially cause teacher attrition including low wages,¹⁷ poor working environment, lack of professional development activities,¹⁸ teaching workloads,¹⁹ lack of teacher's interest in pedagogy²⁰ constraints on their autonomy,²¹ fears and insecurities of beginning teachers,²² and most importantly the stress and depression associated with teaching.²³

METHODOLOGY

The research approach was collaborative, participatory and practitioner-led. Data from the semi-structured questionnaires were analyzed and coded using SPSS version 27. A total number of 590 participants were targeted. They were spread out across different locations in the North-West Province with 495 responding to the questionnaires. The respondents were teachers who had left the teaching profession as well as those who were in the system to give insight into why they believe colleagues leave. To collect data, which provides more in-depth insight into higher teacher turnover and resignations, semi-structured questionnaires with a mix of both open-ended and closed-ended questions were given to the respondents/teachers. All the data from the completed questionnaires were imported into the Statistical Product for Service Solutions version 27 software and analysed. The responses were measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. In this regard, 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 uncertain, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree. Descriptive statistics were used to understand the nature of data being used.

RESULTS /FINDINGS

Reliability analysis

Cronbach's alpha is a test used to check for the consistency of the survey data. Cronbach's alpha weighs how reliable and consistent participants responded to the questionnaire. A value is calculated by adding all the items' scores and this value is called a scale. The cut-off point is 0.7, meaning an alpha value less than 0.7 is not acceptable.

According to Johnson, "when using Likert-type scales it is imperative to calculate and report Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliability for any scales or subscales one may be using".²⁴ It is for this reason that in this study Cronbach's Alpha was utilized and gave a value of 0.9 which is more than 0.7 and therefore acceptable. The reliability analysis is presented in Table 2 below.

¹⁶ Chabaya Owence, Tshephe Geoffrey Pinagase, and Molotsi Matshidiso Mercy, "Causes and Effects of Staff Turnover in the Academic Development Centre: A Case of a Historically Black University in South Africa," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 11 (2014): 69.

¹⁷ Awelani V Mudau, "Exploring Teacher Mass Resignation and Early Retirement from Public Schools," *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 43, no. 5 (2016): 2243–54.

¹⁸ Doune Macdonald, "Teacher Attrition: A Review of Literature," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 15, no. 8 (1999): 835–48.

¹⁹ Livingstone Makondo, "Academics Attraction and Retention Trends at a South African University," *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology* 5, no. 2 (2014): 169–77; Mudau, "Exploring Teacher Mass Resignation and Early Retirement from Public Schools."

²⁰ Dan C Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (University of Chicago press, 2020).

²¹ F Haffajee and C Bisseker, "Teachers Give Revised Version the Star of Approval" (Financial Mail, 2002).

²² Michael T Luekens, *Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results from the Teacher Follow-up Survey, 2000-01* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

²³ Mudau, "Exploring Teacher Mass Resignation and Early Retirement from Public Schools."

²⁴ Susan Moore Johnson, *Teachers at Work: Achieving Success in Our Schools*. (Basic Books, 1990).

Table 2: Reliability results

Data	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Comments
Respondents	0.930	70	Excellent and consistent

Source: Authors computation (2023)

According to Table 3, a good proportion (47.1%) of the teachers were appointed between the period 2006 – 2016, followed by 30.4% for the period 1984 -1994 and the least being the period 1973 – 1983 with 6.7% of the teachers employed. The majority 53.5% of the teachers sampled were teaching at the primary level. The employment profile of the teachers indicates that on average 16 years of teaching years of service are accounted for by 495 teachers.

Employment profile

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for employment profile for teachers

Employment date			School Levels			Years of service				
Period	Frequency	Perc ent	Item	Frequency	Perc ent	N	Mea n	Mi n	M ax	Medi an
1973-1983	33	6.7	Primary	293	53.5	495	16.0	1.0	42.0	18.0
1984-1994	149	30.4	Middle	36	6.6					
1995-2005	78	15.9	Secondary	219	40.0					
2006-2016	231	47.1								

Source: Authors computation (2023)

The capacity of staff in relation to workload and expertise

In Table 4, the responses to the questions relating to the Capacity of staff in relation to workload and expertise is presented. The respondents were asked to rate each item on a scale of 1 to 4 (1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree and 4= strongly disagree).

Table 4: Capacity of staff in relation to workload and expertise

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
	1	2	3	4	
The workload I currently undertake correlate with my expertise	122 (21.7%)	253 (44.9%)	120 (21.3%)	68 (12.1%)	563 (100%)
My workload is reasonable, and I am able to undertake it effectively without constrains	85 (14.8%)	219 (38%)	182 (31.8%)	88 (15.4%)	573 (100%)
The subject(s) I teach are relevant to my field of study?	238 (41.4%)	222 (38.6%)	67 (11.7%)	48 (8.3%)	575 (100%)
I have a reasonable and acceptable number of slots work per week (DoE recommended Standard)	103 (17.9%)	293 (50.8%)	132 (22.9%)	49 (8.5%)	577 (100%)
The number learners in my class (Class size) are average and according to the DoE recommended standard	75 (12.8%)	169 (28.8%)	169 (28.8%)	173 (29.5%)	586 (100%)

Lack of a correlation between my workload and expertise affects my performance	73 (12.5%)	197 (33.8%)	212 (36.4%)	101 (17.3%)	583 (100%)
--	---------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	---------------

Source: Authors computation (2023)

Accordingly, 66.6% (21.7% and 44.9%) of the respondents indicated that the workload they currently undertake correlates with their expertise, that 52.8% (14.8% & 38.0%) agreed their workload is reasonable and they can undertake it effectively without constraints, 80% (41.4% & 38.6%) are of the view that the subject(s) they teach are relevant to their field of study. The majority 68.7% (17.9% & 50.8%) agreed that they have a reasonable and acceptable number of slots work per week (DoE recommended Standard), 57.3% (28.8% & 29.5%) disagree that the number of learners in their class (Class size) are average and according to the DoE recommended standard, and finally, 53.7% (36.4% & 17.3%) disagree that lack of a correlation between their workload and expertise affects their performance. It is very clear that the allocation of slots per week and responsibilities is done in line with the national norms and standards set by the DoE. Educators are of the view that their performance is not affected by a lack of correlation between workload and expertise. They believe they have a duty to perform, and they do it with their utmost ability.

Factors that influenced teachers to leave the teaching profession in the province.

In Table 5, the responses to the questions relating to the factors that influenced teachers to leave the teaching profession in the province are presented. Accordingly, the majority 78.3% (55.2% & 23.1%) of the respondents indicated the low salary/allowances/other benefits (Salary grade) as reasons for leaving. 71.6% (39.3% & 32.3%) cited issues of promotion, 68.7% (35.6% & 33.1%) indicated that the reason for leaving is primarily the nature of the contract (Permanent/Temporal) and 63.8% (26.6% & 36.9%) are of the view that ineffective recruitment and deployment process could be the reason for teaching professional leaving the province.

Table 5: Factors that influenced teachers to leave the teaching profession in the province.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
	1	2	3	4	
Low salary/allowances/other benefits (Salary grade).	299(55.2%)	125(23.1%)	73(13.5%)	45(8.3%)	542(100%)
Issues of promotion.	206(39.3%)	169(32.3%)	105(20%)	44(8.4%)	524(100%)
Nature of contract (Permanent/Temporal).	183(35.6%)	170(33.1%)	102(19.8%)	59(11.5%)	514(100%)
Ineffective recruitment and deployment process.	137(26.9%)	188(36.9%)	142(27.8%)	43(8.4%)	510(100%)
Late payment of salary.	113(21.8%)	105(20.2%)	169(32.6%)	132(25.4%)	519(100%)
Deployment of teachers to remote places.	144(28.2%)	135(26.5%)	151(29.8%)	80(15.7%)	510(100%)
Heavy workload of teaching and administration work.	244(45.4%)	151(28.1%)	101(18.8%)	41(7.6%)	537(100%)
Professional needs – lack of professional development opportunities.	134(25.8%)	176(33.9%)	174(33.5%)	35(6.7%)	519(100%)

Unequal work distribution or dual behaviour of my supervisor or school principal.	117(22.4%)	156(29.8%)	195(37.3%)	55(10.5%)	523(100%)
Lack of agreement with school leadership.	102(19.5%)	143(27.3%)	198(37.8%)	81(15.5%)	524(100%)
Unjust administration practices.	116(22.7%)	146(28.5%)	182(35.6%)	68(13.3%)	512(100%)
Work Stress.	255(47.5%)	150(27.9%)	89(16.6%)	43(8%)	537(100%)
Disrespectful behaviour of some students and/or their parents.	262(48.5%)	161(29.8%)	76(14.1%)	41(%)	540(100%)
Felt undervalued.	190(36.4%)	169(32.4%)	123(23.6%)	40(7.7%)	522(100%)

Source: Author computation (2023)

The majority 58.0% (32.6% & 25.4%) are opposed to the late payment of salary as the reason for leaving. 54.7% (28.2% & 26.5%) agreed that deployment of teachers to remote places could also be cited as the reason for leaving. 73.5% (45.4% & 28.1%) agreed that the heavy workload of teaching and administration work is the reason for teaching professionals leaving the province, and 59.7% (25.8% & 33.9%) concurred that the professional needs – lack of professional development opportunities can also be cited as reasons for leaving the province.

The majority 52.2% (22.4% & 29.8%) agreed that unequal work distribution or dual behaviour of their supervisor or school principal could lead to professionals leaving the province. 53.3% (37.8% & 15.5%) disagreed that lack of agreement with school leadership could be the reason. 51.2% (22.7% & 28.5%) are of the view that unjust administration practices is the reason. 75.4% (47.5% & 27.9%) indicated work stress as the reason, while 78.3% (48.5% & 29.8%) cited disrespectful behaviour of some students and/or their parents as the reason for departure. Finally- 68.8% (36.4% & 32.4%) felt undervalued.

Perception of the teaching profession

In Table 6, the responses to the questions relating to the Perception of the teaching profession are presented. Accordingly, the majority 60.4% (23.7% & 36.7%) of the respondents indicated that there is a disconnection between their initial perception of teaching and the harsher realities of the job, 64.6% (28.9% & 35.7%) agreed that teaching became much more challenging than they initially thought it would be, and lastly 51.8% (24.1% & 27.7%) concurred that they did not find it interesting like they used to envisage it would be.

Table 6: Perception of the teaching profession

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
	1	2	3	4	
There is a disconnection between my initial perception of teaching and the harsher realities of the job.	130(23.7%)	201(36.7%)	166(30.3%)	51(9.3%)	548(100%)
Teaching became much challenging than I initially thought it would be.	160(28.9%)	198(35.7%)	126(22.7%)	70(12.6%)	554(100%)

I did not find it interesting like I used to envisage it would be.	132(24.1%)	152(27.7%)	179(32.7%)	85(15.5 %)	548(100%)
--	------------	------------	------------	------------	-----------

Source: Author computation (2023)

Employment opportunities after resignation/destinations

The results presented in Table 7, revealed that the majority (72.7%) of the former teachers are currently not employed while 27.3% are currently employed. The chance of getting employment reduces with age.

Table 7: Employment opportunities after resignation/destination

Employment opportunities					
Items	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Frequency Missing
Yes	6	27.3	6	27.3	7
No	16	72.7	22	100.0	

Source: Author computation (2023)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Participants indicated the government pension fund crisis is the main reason for teacher turnover. They are of the opinion that teachers’ perception of the new pension fund policy is that they were going to lose some of their pension money if they do not resign given the new policy shift. Officials in the department of education believe that teachers were misinformed on how the calculation would be done on the new pension policy. They were made to believe that they would get more money if they resigned. Motivated by those who resigned and the evidence of six digits figures in their bank accounts, other teachers responded to the peer pressure and followed in their footsteps. Linked to the desire to make more money, was the hope of collecting the pension funds to clear their debts. Participants were quick to indicate that teachers are lamenting in poverty and a means to extra money cannot be ignored as this is a means to alleviate their economic situation. Furthermore, participants indicated that the department conducted several workshops across the province with the intention of clearing the misconception surrounding the government pension funds. Similar workshops and one-on-one sessions were conducted with teachers to understand their plight. Teachers who resigned were given the chance to return to the classrooms on a temporary basis and were given the option of permanent appointment after 24 months. Promotion opportunities are given to teachers within a school to fill vacancies created by others. School leaders were encouraged to make teachers aware of their importance and schools were renovated to attract teachers and make their working conditions better. Most of the findings are in line with existing literature and therefore support the norm that most teachers tend to leave the profession because of money.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the need to review the post-provision model. Teachers are of the opinion that if the curriculum needs of a school exceed the Post provision numbers, more teachers should be allocated to such schools. This in a way is suggesting that teacher capacities in schools should be in relation to workload and teacher expertise. Furthermore, the study recommends that the department continues to organise workshops with principals, unions, circuit managers and stakeholders on how to fill positions with the intention to ensure that positions are filled by deserving candidates. Efforts should be made to ensure timely advertisement which is sent across all schools via the department’s bulletin. Upon appointment, inductions or human resources should be made according to the stipulated acts, more especially the employment equity act. Suggestions for future studies would be to focus on

the effectiveness of new teachers recruited and employed by the Department of Basic Education in relation to teaching pedagogy and curriculum design and implementation for student success.

CONCLUSION

This study has analysed the high attrition rate among teachers in the North-West Province of South Africa. The data identified several factors which have caused the spike in teacher resignations in the last few years, but they attributed the main cause to the pension fund saga. Thus, the government needs to engage all stakeholders to ensure that the pension fund saga is resolved and welfare of teachers is improved. This will retain the teachers at their various posts and ensure student success in the long run.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bennell, Paul, and Kwame Akyeampong. *Teacher Motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia*. Vol. 71. DfID London, 2007.
- Haffajee, F, and C Bisseker. "Teachers Give Revised Version the Star of Approval." *Financial Mail*, 2002.
- Heller, Daniel A. *Teachers Wanted: Attracting and Retaining Good Teachers*. ERIC, 2004.
- IOL News. "Crisis Looms as Teachers Quit in Droves," 2010. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/crisis-looms-as-teachers-quit-in-droves-486341>.
- . "Sadtu Protest 'a Threat to Education,'" 2013. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/sadtu-protest-a-threat-to-education-1505217>.
- Johnson, Susan Moore. *Teachers at Work: Achieving Success in Our Schools*. Basic Books, 1990.
- Karsenti, Thierry, and Simon Collin. "Why Are New Teachers Leaving the Profession? Results of a Canada-Wide Survey." *Education* 3, no. 3 (2013): 141–49.
- Lortie, Dan C. *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. University of Chicago press, 2020.
- Luekens, Michael T. *Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results from the Teacher Follow-up Survey, 2000-01*. National Center for Education Statistics, 2004.
- Macdonald, Doune. "Teacher Attrition: A Review of Literature." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 15, no. 8 (1999): 835–48.
- Madibogo, Julia. "Sadtu's Top Five Reasons for Teachers Calling It Quits," 2016. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2016-09-16-sadtu-top-five-reasons-for-teachers-calling-it-quits/>.
- Makondo, Livingstone. "Academics Attraction and Retention Trends at a South African University." *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology* 5, no. 2 (2014): 169–77.
- Malingo, B. "Teacher Resignations Could Affect Delivery of Curriculum." *The New Age Online*, April 4, 2016.
- Mona, V. "The Teacher." *Naptosa in Dispute over Wage Increase* 2, no. 11 (2004).
- Mudau, Awelani V. "Exploring Teacher Mass Resignation and Early Retirement from Public Schools." *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 43, no. 5 (2016): 2243–54.
- Nesane, Alfred M. "Selected School-Related Reasons Why Teachers Abandon the Teaching Profession: An Educational Management Perspective." University of South Africa, 2008. <https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/2312/dissertation.pdf>.
- Owence, Chabaya, Tshephe Geoffrey Pinagase, and Molotsi Matshidiso Mercy. "Causes and Effects of Staff Turnover in the Academic Development Centre: A Case of a Historically Black University in South Africa." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 11 (2014): 69.
- Pitsoe, Victor J. "Teacher Attrition in South Africa: Trends, Challenges and Prospects." *Journal of Social Sciences* 36, no. 3 (2013): 309–18.
- Samuel, Michael O, and Crispin Chipunza. "Employee Retention and Turnover: Using Motivational Variables as a Panacea." *African Journal of Business Management* 3, no. 9 (2009): 410.
- Teachers' Union, South African Democratic. "The Educators' Voice." *Teachers Migrate in Scores from Their Profession* 7, no. 4 (2003): 16–17.
- UNESCO. *Teacher Attrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Neglected Dimension of the Teacher Supply*

Challenge; a Review of Literature. International Task Force on Teachers for EFE, 2010.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000188197>.

WiseGeek.com. "Employee Turnover." Accessed February 3, 2017. www.wisegeek.com/what-is-employee-turnover.htm.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors wish to thank the Department of Basic Education in South Africa, The North-West University and all the schools and teachers who participated in the research.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr Mubanga Mpundu is a Senior Postgraduate Research Advising Specialist at the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus. His research centres around applied economics and economics of education.

Professor Thomas Assan is a Research Professor of Educational Studies at the North-West University, Mahikeng campus in South Africa.

Dr Mamolahluwa Mokoena is a Director Educational of research at the North-West University Potchefstroom campus in South Africa.