

# The Unionization of the Teaching Profession and its Effects on the South African Education System: Teacher Unionism in South Africa

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**ABSTRACT** Cadre deployment in South Africa has led to the emergence of a new type of educational manager whose main criteria for promotion is not suitable qualifications and readiness to lead but political connectedness and affiliation to a particular teacher union. This qualitative study aimed to investigate how the selection process during the filling of promotional posts was managed in schools. A focus-group interview was conducted with key South African Democratic Teachers Union members who were in school management and union positions. The process was followed by a face to face interview with the Labour Relations Officer from the Department of Education to uncover the stance of the department regarding the selection process. Another face to face interview with the union's National Education Officer was conducted in order to elicit the senior union official's viewpoint and responses on the filling of promotional posts. The empirical data were analysed by means of the constant comparative method. Findings reveal that there is undue involvement of unions during the selection process when promotional posts are filled in South Africa as a system of cadre deployment seems rife and spreading. Recommendations focus on the possibilities to overhaul the system of identification and selection of candidates for promotional posts.

## INTRODUCTION

The South African education system faces the risk of collapse because of the undue process of selection and promotions to school management positions. Bloch (2009), Fleisch (2010) and Pattillo (2012) in their research reveal that the education system in South Africa (SA) is in tatters and in a compromised state. It is argued in this article that the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) is presumably unjustly advocating for the promotions of their loyalists to management positions within the Department of Education (DoE). This study aims to investigate how the selection process for the filling of promotional posts is managed in schools. The rationale was to offer proper ways of filling promotional posts in schools to ensure that schools are run by suitably qualified and deserving managers for sustainable teaching and learning, as an outcome of this inquiry.

Diko and Letseka (2009), Fleisch (2010) and Letseka et al. (2012) in their research reveal that those who have opposed SADTU are harassed, intimidated and sometimes threatened with violence. Letseka et al. (2012) cite similar incidents

in Greece where Moe (2011) contends that in the USA the bureaucracy of the Department of Education is plagued by patronage-based appointments of union comrades.

According to Diko and Letseka (2009) when promotional posts are advertised in the Government Gazette there is behind the scenes campaigning by SADTU to have their comrades appointed to senior positions. Another puzzling issue is that Gwede Mantashe, the Secretary-General of the African National Congress (ANC), has publicly supported cadre deployment (*City Press* 14 September 2011). Meanwhile opposition party leaders like Mangosuthu Buthelezi in the same publication (*City Press* 14 September 2011) have labelled cadre deployment as "be-devilling the education system since inexperienced people occupy senior positions". Mangosuthu (*City Press* 14 September 2011) cites cadre deployment as the reason for poor service delivery. Gwede (*City Press* 14 September 2011) alludes to cadre deployment as the correction of what was inherited after the demise of apartheid in 1994. The impending collapse of the South African Education system has been cited by the various researchers like Fleisch (2010) who de-

scribe education as in a state of collapse. Letseka et al. (2012) refer to Bloch (2009) saying that the SA education system is “in tatters and in need of a revamp”.

Cadre deployment as espoused by SADTU is the term that has been used by the ANC led government when placing loyal party members to management and cabinet positions. Pattillo (2012) and Van Onsellen (2012) also refer to cadre deployment as a form of unwritten policy of patronage-based political appointments to school leadership and top management positions. SADTU is an affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) which is a federation of unions in SA and forms part of the tripartite alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the ANC which is the ruling party.

Gershwin Chuenyane (*City Press* 11 June 2009) reported that SADTU affiliated teachers who form 96% of district 12 of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) embarked on a strike for two full weeks. Gauteng is one of the 9 South African provinces. The reason for the strike, according to the Chuenyane report (*City Press* 11 June 2009), was that the GDE District Director had refused to endorse the appointment of 2 candidate principals who were Sadtu preferred and redeployed members. Although the GDE explained to the union that it was the responsibility of the School Governing Body (SGB) to recommend such appointments, teachers refused to go to class. They took to the streets leaving learners on their own in the classrooms. Findings from the research conducted by Fleisch (2010) and Letseka et al. (2012) reveal that SADTU has used intimidation tactics on School Governing Bodies (SGB) to influence the promotion of their loyalists. Committed teachers that wanted to teach during the strike were threatened with violence by the striking SADTU members (Fleisch 2010; Diko and Letseka 2009) allege that there are sufficient teachers with Honours, Master’s and Doctoral degrees in educational management that have been overlooked for promotions. The Minister in the Presidency Trevor Manuel (2011) who is also an ANC leader and is a Minister in the Presidency has criticized SADTU for causing disruptions in education by “jostling for promotions”. Fleisch and Christie (2004) state that SADTU affiliated teachers spend little time in the classroom due to disruptions.

The author refers to Govender (2004) when he relates about cadre deployment in Mexico in 1966 where the National Union of Education Workers (NUEW), a teachers’ union was established with the strong backing of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (IRP). The IRP won the Mexican Government elections and in return for their loyalty, NUEW leaders were rewarded with management positions and appointed to key positions in government (ibid). Govender further reports that the NUEW appointees became loyal to their union rather than the education department because they owed their promotions to their union membership and positions. This, according to the author resembles the relationship between SADTU and the ANC in 1994 after the first democratic elections in South Africa. SADTU, as an affiliate of COSATU played a significant role in assisting the ANC win the 1994 elections with the teachers’ votes. The ruling party is again reported by Govender (2004) to have offered SADTU leadership key positions as a sign of gratitude for their support during the election campaign. Ironically, these are the same officials who are tasked with ensuring that the filling of promotional posts at all levels is not marred by the deployment of cadres. The author argues that similar conditions in Mexico could still be avoided in South Africa.

The author posits that there is a potential threat posed by some highly qualified and politically unaffiliated post level 1 teachers who may feel that they, rather than their SADTU counterparts, deserve management positions. The study on teacher attrition that was conducted by Diko and Letseka (2009) in the North West Province is testimony to the sidelining of highly qualified teachers during the short listing process.

This study is therefore important for the Ministry of Education, Education Policy makers and the South African community where unionism has become rife. The state of affairs in the SA education system has made it difficult to take decisions that could be beneficial to learners and revive the education system. Reference to countries like Greece and the USA by Letseka et al. (2012) shows that patronage-based appointments are becoming a scourge worldwide and a virus that has to be eliminated before the entire education system in South Africa collapses. The compromised state of the DoE bears the potential to drive deserving and dedicated teachers to other professions and cause the state of educa-

tion to collapse which Bloch (2009) has referred to as “a national disaster”.

The following section forms a brief discussion on the theoretical underpinnings of the research conducted, followed by the methodological description of the study. Results from the interviews conducted are presented and followed up with a discussion on findings. Conclusions and recommendations round up this article.

### **The Epistemological Underpinnings of the Inquiry**

This study adopts both the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms that dwell on the fundamental differences between what should be happening in schools compared to what actually happens in reality. According to Weber (1958), the interpretivist approach is used to investigate the attitudes and aspirations of those that are investigated. In this study the aspirations of unionists that are in promotional positions and aspire for the promotion of their comrades were under scrutiny using semi-structured interviews. During the research process, the author got to understand what really drove union members while candidates were identified and recommended for promotional posts with the use of probing questions. The research findings could help explain whether union leaders aspire to the fulfilment of educational principles by appointing deserving managers or it could be their personal ambitions for high salary perks, power and recognition. Diko and Letseka (2009) argue this standpoint when they allege that applications for promotions within the DoE are driven by a desire for attractive salary packages rather than devoted educational leadership.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This article focuses on the notion of transactional leadership as espoused by the South African Department of Education (DoE). Burns (1978) posits that transactional leadership involves an exchange of rewards for positive and supportive behaviour. On the other hand, Bass (1985) suggests that there are two forms of transactional leadership behaviour, the contingent reward behaviour and the contingent punishment by others theories as cited in Mackenzie et al. (2001). The contingent reward behaviour theory is evident when followers have shown sup-

port for the leadership because they get rewarded. In this study the reward for loyalty to the union becomes the promotion which translates to power, recognition and higher salaries. On the other hand, the contingent punishment behaviour theory by Bass (1985) becomes prevalent when followers do not fulfil the mandate of the union and get ostracised, intimidated and even forced to resign from their management positions as earlier cited by Letseka et al. (2012) and Pattillo (2012). This flies across the face of progressive educational reform principles aimed at ensuring that people get rewarded for good work that is performed when educating learners and providing an enabling environment for both learners and teachers.

The research by Letseka et al. (2012) and Pattillo (2012) confirms that in union language doing well in education means carrying out the mandate of the union and not of the department of education. In the view of the author there is an urgent problem that needs to be investigated. The Ministerial review on school governance in 2004 resonates the fact that there is a drive to transform school management by means of both decentralization and transactional leadership traits. The author argues that such a process tends to benefit certain groups. In the SA context the dominant group that stands to benefit from decentralization is SADTU because of its stake within the ANC and the transactional form of leadership that has transcended through the ranks within the DoE.

The transactional leadership theory becomes relevant for this study on the basis that the current trends in educational leadership seem to focus on loyalty to the union rather than the DoE as will be argued after the results section of this study. The following section addresses the methodological aspect of this article.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The author adopted the interpretivist paradigm for this study in order to probe what goes on in the minds of those who are investigated (Weber (1958)). Since the interpretivist paradigm is concerned about what should be happening compared to what actually happens, a qualitative enquiry was adopted to access data in words, not numbers. Data was collected by means of a focus group interview and face to face interviews that will be later discussed un-

der the sampling section of this article. Krueger in Babbie (2010) contends that focus groups have high face validity as you can observe the body language by participants and they also allow for some flexibility. During this study the following question was posed: how is the selection process for the filling of promotional posts managed in schools?

This question needed a lot of probing during the interviews. The same question was asked during all the interviews to enhance the trustworthiness of the inquiry. Lewis (2000) also supports this questioning strategy when suggesting that open-ended questions allow respondents to answer from a variety of dimensions. To increase the possibility that the respondents would reveal their true feelings and opinions, the author used the same open-ended questions that would promote an in-depth discussion by the research participants during interviews. The author had previously worked alongside some of the participants, and they trusted the author with the required data. Measuring trustworthiness was not difficult because the author is a former teacher and school principal from the same district. The author was also able to share some of his experiences and challenges within the teaching profession. Furthermore, the author identified respondents who were involved in the various SADTU structures and all were in promotional posts including the trainers of teacher members of the union. Measor (1985) maintains that while it is important for the researcher to build a cordial relationship with the participants, the quality of data is ensured when there is an element of trust. To ensure that bias and partiality did not prevail, the author used tape recording equipment during interviews in order to isolate his views from the actual findings when reporting. The recording was done with the consent of the participants, as suggested by Henning et al. (2004) as one of the ethical prerequisites for a scientific researcher. All the participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the interview process. Anonymity was a priority for all interviews.

### **The Population Sample**

The study was conducted in the D11 and D12 Districts of the Gauteng Department of Education in SA because of their representation in terms of race, ethnicity and demographics.

The D11 District consists of more than 300 schools while the D12 District consists of more than 250 schools. The National Association of Professional Teachers' of South Africa (NAPTOSA) unionists were also invited to the interviews but did not respond to numerous requests. NAPTOSA is the association of smaller teacher unions in SA and mainly consists of older and previously advantaged teachers. This was quite a high number of participants considering that the unionists and politicians are very reluctant to be interviewed on such sensitive and political matters. This makes the study very important because of the rare nature of findings. All participants had between 5 and 20 years of experience in education. The participants were already in management positions in their schools while others were based at the district office. They were all holding various positions within SADTU at local and regional levels. One of the unionists was stationed at the SADTU regional office in Soweto as the Regional Coordinator. The LRO was a former teacher and unionist currently serving in her position due to her prior involvement in union and ANC activities. The LRO was selected for the face to face interview because she was knowledgeable on most labour matters within the DoE as she had to mediate on all disputes involving redeployment and the filling of promotional posts within District 11. There was also another face to face interview with the National Education Officer (NEO) for SADTU who previously held the principal position in one of the schools in SA before joining SADTU on a full time basis.

### **Data Analysis**

The grounded theory approach for analysis was selected as Babbie (2007: 296) says this approach is used to formulate a theory after the constant comparison of the empirical data. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 43-46) posit that in the use of the grounded theory approach the researcher can be creative and scientific at the same time. Data were therefore analysed by means of the constant comparative method through grouping of data into themes and categories and then comparing them according to the themes as espoused by Babbie (2007: 380). Glaser and Strauss (1967: 105-113) claim that there must be the comparison of incidents according to the themes, integration of categories, remov-

al of irrelevant data and recording the findings for sharing. The process of analysing was somewhat ambiguous, time consuming and messy as Rossman (2003: 150) says it is not a neat process. All the recorded data were transcribed verbatim for ease of analysis. The author went through the transcriptions repeatedly while listening to the recordings to ensure that transcriptions were relevant and accurate. This was aimed at increasing trustworthiness of the study. The author became selective when reporting as indicated by prioritizing certain aspects over others because it is not possible to present all qualitative data (Denscombe 2007).

## RESULTS

Direct quotations have been used to substantiate certain findings. These quotations are typed in *italics* in this article. Responses were elicited from unionists, the LRO and the NEO regarding their role expectations during the implementation of policy.

### The Responses of the Unionists

The author asked the unionists how the process of filling promotional posts within the DoE structures was conducted? The answer was that as a labour movement they had to look after the needs of their members before those of the learners. Another unionist explained that for effectiveness of schooling, "... *once the needs of educators have been attended to, then those of the learners will also be satisfied*". They further explained that their members were able to deliver in respect of learners' needs because the union has capacitated them in terms of the curriculum and during their own workshops. They also stated that sometimes the interviewing panel handed over its powers to the union observer who was a SADTU member and NAPTOSA hardly delegated their officials to observe selection proceedings in schools. When asked what prompted the takeover they replied that when the SADTU observer provided all the answers to the issues raised at such meetings, the panel then abdicated, and SADTU then took over the process. They asserted that a decision taken in this way would be a fair one for SADTU, because it had been influenced by them. Another unionist reiterated that all unions were invited to attend the short listing and interviewing pro-

cesses and those that were not present during the selection process could not nullify the process, according to the Employment of Educators' Act 76 of 1998. When asked about the changing role of the observer, another unionist explained that it was in the interests of the school and the department that the observer should be allowed to help the panel to avoid a dispute. Another unionist explained, "*Remember that we get there as unions with different agendas, if I have to put it that way.*"

The unionists explained that the reason for taking over the selection process was that the DoE only provided short training sessions that *looked like meetings, instead of a workshop*. So, the SGB was not well trained hence the takeover. The takeover could also be influenced by the fact that the principal as a resource person, together with the teachers on the panel, could also be SADTU members themselves. In that way the union took over the situation. Another unionist explained that in a specific case the union observer even phoned the union (SADTU) regional office and said, "*Hey Comrades, send another observer to the school now because I am already a panel member here.*" At this point all the members laughed. One unionist added, "*In schools where this happens we think that the panel shouldn't exist at all because we take over.*" They also added that the principal, by virtue of his knowledge as a resource person and a unionist, could also end up becoming a panel member and recommending a candidate instead of remaining the resource person. One unionist also explained that problems occurred when the principal, who had to assume the position of a resource person, was asked by the panel to assist during short-listing and interviewing. The principal then got a chance to manipulate the process. This is how one of them justified this action, "*The observer status of the union member does not mean that he has to keep quiet all the time but must intervene when the panel does not follow correct procedures. Sometimes you have to assist the panel because they don't know the process and sometimes the principal might take advantage of the panel. So, because you are there the panel says, 'Let's do the process the way it should be done'*".

When asked if the unionists should be part of the panel, they responded that by virtue of their knowledge they should be allowed to "*assist*" the panel in order to avoid disputes. One

unionist also explained as follows, *sometimes the union gives the principal, who is a unionist, the instruction to appoint a certain member. In union terms, the principal is told to deploy a comrade, and he or she is bound to do so.* In his own words, the unionist said, *“The union will say, ‘Mr. X, you are given a mandate to appoint a SADTU member at the school’. The principal has no option but to see to it that the member is appointed”*. Another unionist mentioned the situation where a competent person had to be appointed, but he could not do anything without the union’s approval. When the researcher asked if the involvement of the unions during interviews was viewed as assistance or a hindrance, one unionist replied, *“it’s twofold Sir. We can’t say it hampers the process because some union members are very informed regarding policies and procedures, and some of the unions are not (implying NAPTOSA) which is the second major union). So it is always advisable to keep people who are informed like unionists on the panel to avoid disputes being lodged.”* The other unionists seemed to agree with the point that union representatives on the panel needed to assume an active status because *“...most parents on the SGB were ill-informed and needed the assistance of the observer that was informed.”* This observer could be the Sadtu unionist. When asked about the process of filling promotional posts, the unionists responded rather interestingly. They stated that the union member as an observer has to be present throughout the process in case there is some form of malpractice by the principal or the SGB that was not knowledgeable about the process. One member said, *“It is very important for the observer to be there because principals might take advantage of the SGB that is not so educated. Sometimes the SGB itself is poorly equipped to manage human resource matters.”* The unionists further reiterated that this was to the benefit of the school.

#### **The Responses of the National Education Officer of SADTU (NEO)**

When the Education Officer (NEO) was asked about union involvement during the interviews he said, *there is no evidence to suggest the taking-over of the selection process by the unions from the SGB selection panel, and thus influencing the decisions of the panel.*

However, he did indicate that it could be happening in a very subtle way that could make it difficult for stakeholders to report and win a case of corruption. The unionist maintained that procedures did exist for reporting such malpractices. When further asked if the union received any reports of such inappropriate involvement of unions at school level he responded *it was not impossible, but could be reported, if there was sufficient evidence.* The EO argued that when principals and the DoE fail to do their work they tended to place the blame on the union. The union has the responsibility to ensure the protection of its members and to promote professionalism. The EO further argued, *“What kind of a union would we be if we failed to protect our members?”* Here the assumption could be that the unions are scared of losing members if they do not support them. This raises the question whether the unions are interested in protecting the educators, or in merely gaining popularity and the members’ affiliation fees.

#### **The Views of the Labour Relations Officer (LRO) of the DoE**

The LRO reported that *“...the modus operandi for various unions differs, for example, some unions go according to the letter of the law”*. She further continued *“...some unions violate the rules by placing friends for positions long before they are advertised. For instance, they know that a principal is about to retire. Strategically they have someone reserved for that position. In so doing, they do not consider the curriculum and leadership needs of the institution. They want to influence the SGB by bringing their lists of people to take over the positions.”* The LRO further put it this way, *“They bring their lists; it’s like political lists. They go to short-listing meetings and scare or intimidate the SGB panel by threatening to lodge a grievance should their member be unsuccessful. The bigger union (SADTU) is always guilty of this. The bigger union also has a vast membership of younger educators who have little respect for authority.”* The LRO explained that the trend amongst younger educators was to look after their own interests rather than those of the learners. The LRO, however, indicated that that were isolated cases whereby young educators were properly placed in positions. Generally speaking she said, *the union*

*deploys members to schools rather than helping them to be employed.* The LRO indicated that there was little that could be done to resolve the situation because the senior management of the DoE were also well-known unionists. In the LRO's own words, "*What do you do when the employer is also in the same organization? You are helpless in this kind of situation.*" The LRO even stated fearfully that they were not free to be interviewed in this respect because some of their colleagues at District office have been appointed on, what is generally referred to, "*...the SADTU ticket.*" The following section forms a discussion on findings during the study.

### DISCUSSION

This was a qualitative study within the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms that aimed at exploring what goes on during promotional appointments. The transactional style of leadership is evidently prevalent within both the leadership hierarchy of the DoE and that of the union. According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership involves an exchange of rewards for positive and supportive behaviour. Findings show that the NEO refuses to take responsibility for the improper behaviour of SADTU members when selection does not go their way. The NEO argues that the reason the union cannot stand to its members' wrong doing is that they would not be a union if they did not protect their members. The author argues that it is not improper for the SADTU representatives on selection panels to protest when they realise that the DoE appointed officials are clueless when it comes to the selection process. The DoE as the custodian of educational policies has the responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient training for SGB selection committees before the process starts. The existing challenge in most schools is that most parents serving on SGB's have low or no literacy levels at all. Unionists argue that they take over the selection process because the DoE does not sufficiently train its SGB's. The author posits that it is not the fault of the union that the process ends up being handed over to SADTU because the SGB's are poorly equipped to handle the process. The SGP selection panels reportedly voluntarily hand over the reigns to SADTU. The LRO argues this point when asserting that SADTU uses intimi-

dation tactics to wrench the control of the selection process from the SGB. Research by Diko and Letseka (2009), Fleisch (2010) and Pattillo (2012) support the LRO's statement that there is indeed intimidation going on in schools. The LRO does support SADTU when acceding that sometimes the process goes peacefully when there is no opposition. The LRO asserts that the state of education in SA is compromised through the infiltration of senior positions by poorly prepared mostly SADTU managers within the DoE. What drives the union's choice for candidates to be promoted seems to be loyalty to SADTU rather than to the goal of education. The SADTU NEO also makes it clear that they are a union because of their members and do not have a reason to look after the interests of the DoE. This confirms that the interest of learners does not come first to the SADTU membership. Unions proudly state that the learners' interests only become important after those of SADTU members have been met. In this case the implication is that no teaching goes on until an identified SADTU member has been appointed to the SADTU identified position. Bass (1985) suggests that there are two forms of transactional leadership theories, the contingent reward behaviour and contingent punishment by others as cited by Mackenzie et al. (2001). Findings show that the Bass (1985) contingent reward behaviour theory is evident when mere loyalty to SADTU becomes basis for promotion as espoused by Letseka et al. (2012). Fleisch (2010), Fleisch and Christie (2011) and Pattillo (2012) posit that SADTU affiliated teachers spend less time in the classroom in favour of union meetings that often take place during teaching time as confirmed during the interviews with unionists. The unionists also confirmed that they threaten to disrupt proceedings when their member is not promoted as earlier confirmed by Letseka et al. (2012). The author purports that the SADTU invasion happens due the poor preparedness by SGB's because of the low educational levels of parents who form the majority SGB component in poor communities. It is a well-known fact in SA that the majority of teachers belong to SADTU because of its history of having fought the SA apartheid regime in the past (Zengele 2009). The author therefore posits it can be expected that if NAPTOSA does not attend the selection processes, SADTU cannot be blamed for being the only union that is trou-

blesome during the selection process. The NEO also argues that when things go wrong, the DoE easily blames the union when the DoE should be taking full responsibility. At the same time the LRO posits that it is difficult to report SADTU members because the senior managers of the DoE are also there on the “SADTU TICKET” and this is the term that was used verbatim by the LRO during the interview. The research by Letseka et al. (2012) and Pattillo (2012) confirms that in union language doing well in education means carrying out the mandate of the union and not of the department of education since the unionists have clearly expressed during the interviews.

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

Common findings during all the interviews reveal that all the participants are aware of the enormous power that SADTU yields across the DoE because of its affiliation to COSATU which is in a tripartite alliance with the SACP and the ANC. All stakeholders that were interviewed also share doubt that there is an imminent solution because of the DoE concessions with SADTU since 1994. In the study by Fleisch (2010) and Letseka et al. (2012) it is stated that it has become easy for SADTU to disrupt schooling if their mandate is not carried out. The same researchers also argue that the officials that have to take disciplinary action against them are SADTU deployed officials as well. This is synonymous with Greece and the USA as Letseka et al. (2012) relate to events leading to the resignations of four Education Ministers in Greece. The interview with the LRO reveals and confirms the compromised state of the DoE because of pa-

tronage-based appointments within the DoE when she labels such promotions as the “SADTU TICKET”.

## CONCLUSION

The author does not allege that all management positions are occupied by SADTU unionists, but most of them are. In the same vein, the author does not allege that all SADTU activists appointed to key positions are not suitably qualified, experienced or hard working, but it is a fact that there are some poorly qualified and less experienced managers. Such managers occupy senior positions within the entire bureaucratic structure of the DoE. It is also an undeniable fact that such individuals are SADTU members as this emerged during all the interviews. Finally, it is also true that more than 75% of teachers are affiliated to SADTU. There is nothing wrong with the affiliation but reduced commitment to teach when positions are advertised becomes a serious threat to the education of South African children. If the DoE is serious about becoming a reputable provider of basic education to all children, control of education has to be wrenched from SADTU. The big question is, who will take control of Basic Education in South Africa when the majority of all those appointed to management positions got there on the *Sadtu ticket* as referred to, by one of the research participants. The question that should be in the mind of the reader at this stage is; has the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union taken over the control of Basic Education in South Africa?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- ♦ The Department of Education must engage the services of Employment Agencies to handle all the advertising, shortlisting, interviews and recommendations for appointment processes to avoid all forms of subjectivity and nepotism. This recommendation is viewed as having potential to allow serving union members who are teachers and principals to dedicate more of their time in preserving the culture of learning and teaching.
- ♦ There must be legal officers employed to observe all the selection processes to minimize the number of grievances pertaining to unprocedural appointments.



- ♦ Management positions in under-performing schools and districts must be re advertised and filled with agency appointed managers to enhance professionalism.
- ♦ All management appointments must be secured on renewable 3 year contracts pending satisfactory work performance before they are considered for renewal. The same SA principle of filling senior positions from Director upwards for a fixed but renewable 5 year term should apply to all management positions within the DoE starting at school level.

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